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Corruption and the Rise of Modern Politics in Europe in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: A Comparison between France, the Netherlands, Germany and England

Introduction¹

In recent years, political corruption has received widespread attention from a historical perspective.² Historical questions regarding political corruption range from finding out what exactly constituted corrupt behaviour at certain moments and in certain contexts to the questions of when, how and why assumptions about and expectations of (public) officials may have changed.³ The importance of historical questions concerning political corruption cannot be overestimated, for they allow us to better understand fundamental issues of human political and social interaction. The very term «corruption» immediately reflects the assumptions, interests and values held by countless actors in an ever-changing political environment. Investigating corruption enables us (directly or indirectly) to determine changes in implicit or explicit ideas about such contested issues as «the good life», «the common good», «the public interest» or the necessity of a delineation between a public and a private sphere. The historical study of corruption can indeed help us to better understand the purpose and function of government, and to place these in a historical perspective. Which acts are condemned or condoned, after all, has as much to say about

1 The editors wish to thank the *Netherlands Institute of Government* (NIG) for a generous grant for the editing and correction work involved in this special issue.

2 For a recent volume on theoretical perceptions of political corruption, see G. de Graaff / P. von Maravic / F.P. Wagenaar (eds.), *The Good Cause. Theoretical Perspectives on Corruption*, Opladen 2010. For historical studies on corruption, see, for instance, J. I. Engels / A. Fahrmeir / A. Nützenadel (eds.), *Geld – Geschenke – Politik: Korruption im neuzeitlichen Europa*, München 2009; N. Grüne / S. Slanička (eds.), *Korruption. Historische Annäherungen an eine Grundfigur politischer Kommunikation*, Göttingen 2010; F. P. Wagenaar / O. van der Meij / M. van den Heijden, «Corruption in de Nederlanden, 1400–1800», in: *Tijdschrift*

voor sociale en economische geschiedenis 2 (2009) 4, 3–21 and R. G. Asch / B. Emich / J. I. Engels (eds.), *Integration – Legitimation – Korruption. Politische Patronage in Früher Neuzeit und Moderne*, Frankfurt am Main 2011.

3 See for instance R. M. Dekker, «Corruptie en ambtelijke ethiek in historisch perspectief», in: *De Gids* (1986) 149, 116–121; J. van Klaveren, «Corruption as a Historical Phenomenon», in: A. J. Heidenheimer / M. Johnston / V. T. LeVine (eds.), *Political Corruption: A Handbook*, New Brunswick 1989, 73–86; D.P. Moynihan, «Our Usable Past: A Historical Contextual Approach to Administrative Values», in: *Public Administration Review* 69 (2009) 5, 813–822 and S. Tiihonen (ed.), *The History of Corruption in Central Government*, Amsterdam 2003.

individual officials or groups of officials as what government as a whole should or should not be about.

Contributions to the historical study of corruption mainly fall into the category of single case studies on the occurrence and meaning of corruption in various national contexts. These are often informative, especially when they combine national, historical, contextual and in-depth case studies of corruption with the use of explicit theoretical, thematic and/or methodological frameworks.⁴ Cases such as these have provided us with considerable knowledge on the occurrence and meaning of corruption and underlying public values, and any related historical changes. The only downside to these case studies is that they are somewhat limited in their temporal and geographic scope: cross-national and/or cross-temporal (diachronic) comparative perspectives are rarely taken. In this special issue, we seek to improve on this state of affairs and offer contributions that add to a small but growing «second category» of cross-national and/or cross-temporal historical research on corruption. This allows us to investigate possible over-generalisations (see our hypothesis below) that are based on information that otherwise remains limited to separate and isolated cases. This, we believe, will reduce misconceptions, allow us to look beyond the superficial and is likely to generate and answer new questions such as how, why, when and where large scale (European-wide) changes in public morality occurred. Furthermore, we believe that it is only through cross-national and/or cross-temporal comparison that we are able to gain a better understanding of differences and similarities between European states for instance regarding «cultures of corruption» (or: the influence of various political systems on the occurrence of political corruption), attempts to end corruption and changing public value systems.⁵

The main difficulty with such a comparative perspective, however, lies in comparing and connecting cases that are quite different, if not in principle then in practice.⁶ Can we really systematically investigate corruption on a cross-national or wider

4 See, for instance, some contributions to recent journal issues and edited article collections: M. P. Hoenderboom / A.D.N. Kerkhoff, «Corruption and Capability in the Dutch Republic: the Case of Lodewijk Huygens (1676)», in: *Public Voices* 10 (2008) 2, 7–24; H. von Thiessen, «Korruption und Normenkonkurrenz. Zur Funktion und Wirkung von Korruptionsvorwürfen gegen die Günstling-Minister Lerma und Buckingham in Spanien und England im frühen 17. Jahrhundert», in: Engels / Fahrmeir / Nützenadel, *Geld – Geschenke – Politik*, 91–120; A.D.N. Kerkhoff et al., «Dutch Political Corruption in Historical Perspective: From 18th century Value Pluralism to a 19th Century Dominant Liberal Value System and Beyond», in: Grüne / Slanička, *Korruption*, 443–468; S. Gorißen, «Korruption und merkan-

tilistische Staatswirtschaft. Die preußische Zoll- und Akzisepolitik in Schlesien und in den westlichen Provinzen unter Friedrich II.», in: Grüne / Slanička, *Korruption*, 327–344.

5 Consider, for instance, A. Fahrmeir, «Investitionen in politische Karrieren? Politische Karrieren als Investition? Tendenzen und Probleme historischer Korruptionsforschung», in: Engels / Fahrmeir / Nützenadel, *Geld – Geschenke – Politik*, 67–88, 70–71. See also D. Tänzler, *Cultures of Corruption – An Empirical Approach to the Understanding of Crime*, Konstanz 2007 and D. Tänzler, *Korruption als Metapher*, Konstanz 2007.

6 See B.G. Peters, *Comparing Public Bureaucracies: Problems of Theory and Method*, Tuscaloosa 1988.

European level? Can we compare what are arguably different political-administrative systems at different places and times? Fahrmeir is right to raise the question of whether a focus on different national and synchronic cases will not always yield different developments and/or processes.⁷ Still, he also suggests that such comparisons are indeed possible, if we go beyond strictly period-based analyses and, for instance, focus on a discourse analysis of the political debate across time and place. We, too, believe that cross-national and/or cross-temporal comparisons make sense when taking further steps in historical corruption research. When confronted with the task of generating meaningful cross-national and cross-temporal insights into any changes in corruption and public values in a wider European context, cases from different times and national contexts can be explicitly connected, namely by examining a central hypothesis.⁸

1. A Central Hypothesis and Question

The central hypothesis underlying this special issue is that a shift in debates on and perceptions of corruption occurred somewhere during the «long nineteenth century» as a result of modernisation processes (see below). Essentially, this involved a shift from the early modern plurality of values to clashing political ideologies in modern times.⁹ For the seventeenth century, von Thiessen has shown how parallel norms (*Parallelität von Normen*) existed within societies.¹⁰ According to von Thiessen, early modern administrators constantly had to deal with values from two distinct «moral codes». The first involved legally and formally fixed norms in service of the community. The other consisted of the informal or «face-to-face» norms of administrative praxis. Early modern diplomats, for example, were constantly confronted with the problem of finding a balance between them.¹¹ Other studies on different functionaries in different countries and periods have yielded similar results.¹² Most recently, Wagenaar has elaborated on the distinction between face-to-

7 Fahrmeir, *Investitionen*, 81. Compare also D. Reuschmeyer, «Can One or a Few Cases Yield Theoretical Gains?», in: J. Mahoney / D. Reuschmeyer (eds.), *Comparative Historical Analysis in the Social Sciences*, Cambridge 2003, 305–336.

8 See on this T. Skocpol / M. Somers, «The Uses of Comparative History in Macrosocial Inquiry», in: *Comparative Studies in Society and History: an International Quarterly* 22 (1980), 174–197. See also J. C. N. Raadschelders, *Handbook of Administrative History*, New Brunswick 2000, 49.

9 This hypothesis was first published in J. I. Engels, «Politische Korruption in der Moderne. Debatten und Praktiken in Großbritannien und Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert», in: *Historische Zeitschrift* 282 (2006) 2, 313–350, 321–327.

10 von Thiessen, *Korruption und Normenkonkurrenz*,

94–98; H. von Thiessen, «Korrumpierte Gesandte? Konkurrierende Normen in der Diplomatie der Frühen Neuzeit», in: Grüne / Slanička, *Korruption*, 205–220. See also J. I. Engels, «Politische Korruption und Modernisierungsprozesse. Thesen zur Signifikanz der Korruptionskommunikation in der westlichen Moderne», in: Grüne / Slanička, *Korruption*, 35–54.

11 von Thiessen, *Korrumpierte Gesandte*, 211–212. See also A. Nützenadel, ««Serenissima corrupta» – Geld, Politik und Klientelismus in der späten venezianischen Adelsrepublik», in: Engels / Fahrmeir / Nützenadel, *Geld – Geschenke – Politik*, 121–142.

12 See Hoenderboom / Kerkhoff, «Corruption and Capability»; F.P. Wagenaar, «Classical Corruption: Hugo van Arckel, Dike Warden of the

face societies and more bureaucratic ones in his enquiry into seventeenth-century Dutch bailiffs. He described face-to-face societies as «lacking central population registrations, large state bureaucracies, police files, social security, insurance companies and so on» and consisting of members who were «compensated by simply knowing anyone they had to do business with, and knowing his or her family».¹³ In such a system, Wagenaar says – following van de Pol¹⁴ – «one's credit depended on one's reputation, and losing reputation could mean losing one's livelihood». Of course, a face-to-face society's highly personal and «particularistic» norms could easily come into conflict with the impersonal and «universalistic» norms attached to the budding bureaucracy also known in early modern society. In effect, there were two distinct moral codes and administrators would often be judged according to both. Behaviour was considered corrupt as soon as the balance was disturbed.

This early modern world of value plurality ended, so the hypothesis goes, sometime in the long nineteenth century. Debates on corruption – as modes for the articulation of value conflict in Early Modern Europe – were transformed into a mode of articulation for opposing political ideologies. Public functionaries could no longer be in two worlds at the same time. Now, there was a public world in which one set of norms and values was idealised, and where the personal (private) sphere no longer played a part. As a result, debates on corruption in early modern times differed greatly from those in modern times. Previously, debates had centred mostly on questions of whether or not to follow the rules of face-to-face society and/or the rules of an emerging bureaucracy. Now, it was accepted that only one set of norms should dominate the public sphere and government. Ideological debates emerged and dealt with wider political questions, for instance, regarding the functioning of the state and government. In modern times, again, according to our hypothesis, debates on political corruption seemed to have acquired an increasingly ideological frame. Certain acts were now considered corrupt, for instance, because they were «liberal», «conservative» or «bureaucratic». As a result, we hypothesize that debates on and perceptions of corruption changed dramatically in the course of the long nineteenth century.

Of course, there is also great geographical diversity in the specific periods when these changes potentially occurred. Any shifts from early modern to modern came

Krimpenerwaard, and the Corruption of his Times», in: *Public Voices* 10 (2008) 2, 44–57 and P. Wagenaar / O. van der Meij, «Johan van Banchem en de zedenwets handhaving. De morele dilemma's van een zeventiende eeuwse baljuw», in: M. Ebben / F. P. Wagenaar / S. Groenveld (eds.), *De cirkel doorbroken. Met nieuwe ideeën terug naar de bronnen. Opstellen over de Republiek*, Leiden 2006, 71–84.

¹³ F. P. Wagenaar, «Extortion and Abuse of Power in

the Dutch Republic: The Case of Bailiff Lodewijk van Alteren», in: *International Journal of Public Administration* 34 (2011) 11, 731–740.

¹⁴ L. C. van de Pol, «Prostitutie en de Amsterdamse burgerij. Eerbegrippen in een vroegmoderne stedelijke sameleving», in: P. te Boekhorst / P. Burke / W. Frijhoff (eds.), *Cultuur en maatschappij in Nederland 1500–1800: een historisch-antropologisch perspectief*, Meppel-Amsterdam 1992, 179–181.

about at different times or moments across the countries discussed in this special issue. This reflects neither a linear development, nor probably an inevitable one. We also acknowledge that the concept of modernisation and its link with corruption are, for good reasons, contested issues. We do not wish to contend, for instance, that conflicts about corruption were phenomena exclusive to the modern world.¹⁵ As Niels Grüne has pointed out, attributing specific forms of corruption perception and criticism to merely one epoch or another would indeed be wrong.¹⁶ And as Moritz Isenmann has recently emphasized, one can easily find «modern» notions of public office in pre-modern times and vice versa.¹⁷ Thus categories such as «early modern» or «modern» should not function as a «Procrustean solution» by means of which historical data are tailored to fit the concepts. Given the valid objections against an overly dogmatic view of «modernisation», it is not our aim to uncritically adopt such an approach in order to explain the occurrence and/or change in the discussion or discourse on corruption in the long nineteenth century. At the same time, worries about «Procrustean» practices should not lead to a situation in which theories, models or hypotheses are rejected out of hand.¹⁸ A hypothesis (controversial to some) is therefore deduced in this special issue from existing literature which is tentatively tested through empirical historical research.

With these considerations in mind, we have derived a central question from our hypothesis that guides the following various contributions. The question concerns what corruption perceptions exactly consisted of in four Western European countries (see below) during the long nineteenth century, and whether our hypothesis of a shift in this period from «parallelism of norms» to «clashing ideologies», and a change in perceptions of corruption, holds true when we look at corruption cases in specific «snapshots» in time. This question required the contributors to pay specific attention to debates and discussions or discourses on corruption surrounding notorious public scandals. This means that the articles presented here do *not* consider what might be called «normal» or «regular» crime. By the latter, we mean corruption

15 Some scholars have rightly warned against doing so, e.g. A. Suter, «Korruption oder Patronage? Außenbeziehungen zwischen Frankreich und der Alten Eidgenossenschaft als Beispiel (16.–18. Jahrhundert)», in: Grüne / Slanička, *Korruption*, 167–203, 169.

16 N. Grüne, ««Und sie wissen nicht, was es ist.» Ansätze und Blickpunkte historischer Korruptionsforschung», in: Grüne / Slanička, *Korruption*, 11–34, 32–33; N. Grüne, «Anfechtung und Legitimation. Beobachtungen zum Vergleich politischer Korruptionsdebatten in der Frühen Neuzeit», in: Grüne / Slanička, *Korruption*, 409–425, 409–410.

17 M. Isenmann, «Review of N. Grüne / S. Slanička

(eds.), *Korruption. Historische Annäherungen an eine Grundfigur politischer Kommunikation, Göttingen 2010*», in: *H-Soz-u-Kult*, <<http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/id=16067>> (08.12.2011). Isenmann doubts the implications of J. I. Engels' article «Politische Korruption und Modernisierungsprozesse» in the volume of Grüne / Slanička, arguing that «problems arise in particular where authors accentuate the boundaries between epochs».

18 Compare B. Laslett, «Beyond Methodology: The Place of Theory in Quantitative Historical Research», in: *American Sociological Review* 45 (1980) 2, 214 and M. G. Murphey, *Our Knowledge of the Historical Past*, Indianapolis 1973, 148.

in which the only question was whether someone was guilty or not. It was corruption, in other words, that was not accompanied by scandal and/or debate because there was no normative ambiguity. Instead, the focus here is exclusively on extraordinary instances of scandal and debate in order to find out what was explicitly considered and labelled corrupt, wrong or reprehensible behaviour in certain times and places, and how and why such perceptions changed. Our question also required the various authors to pay attention to changing values as a result of dramatic shifts in the political-administrative system in the long nineteenth century.¹⁹ It is likely, for example, that in some of the countries under investigation the rise of new nineteenth century institutions such as parliaments, constitutions and a professional bureaucracy caused perceptions of corruption to change, as attention was paid to «new» or reinterpreted public values and new expectations towards government and public officials. Yet the opposite could also be true.

Finally, the four countries investigated – France, the Netherlands, Germany and England – have been selected for various reasons. First, this special issue is an outcome of a conference held in Amsterdam in 2010 in which papers on these countries – for reasons mentioned below – were presented.²⁰ Second, the four countries are in close geographic proximity to each other and share similar cultural and/or political traits. Third, the above-mentioned hypothesis has been made for Western Europe in general and applied to France, England, the Netherlands and Germany in particular. Finally, this special issue is essentially a first attempt at a cross-national and/or cross-temporal comparison of these four countries. While these nations fit well together – for the reasons mentioned – other countries could in theory be selected as well. In fact, we welcome such research.

2. Changing Political Corruption: Pre-modern Plurality and Modern Clashes of Ideologies?

How are we to put our hypothesis to the test? In the following, we briefly introduce and discuss three approaches and/or «grand theories» that have proved useful in the contributions to this special issue in better understanding changes in forms of and notions about corruption over time. We draw upon the work of Michael Johnston,

19 See F. Bösch, «In Defence of the Taxpayers: Korruptionspraktiken und -wahrnehmungen im Edwardischen Großbritannien», in: Engels / Fahrmeir / Nützenadel, *Geld – Geschenke – Politik*, 175–202; Engels, «Politische Korruption in der Moderne»; D. B. R. Kroeze, «Political Corruption Scandals in the Netherlands in the Nineteenth Century: The Letters Affair of 1865», in: *Public Voices* 10 (2008) 2, 25–43; S. Schattenberg, «Die Ehre der Beamten oder: Warum die Staatsdiener nicht korrupt waren. Patronage in der russischen Provinzverwaltung im 19. Jahrhundert», in: En-

gels / Fahrmeir / Nützenadel, *Geld – Geschenke – Politik*, 203–230.

20 The conference was entitled «Corruption, Morality and Good Governance in Public Administration and Politics: Dutch-German Comparisons in Historical Perspective, 16th to 20th Century». It was held in Amsterdam on 4 and 5 November 2010 and hosted and organized by the Dutch research group *Under Construction* (www.corruptionproject.nl) in collaboration with the *Germany Institute Amsterdam* (DIA).

Max Weber and Niklas Luhmann, who (in different ways) view possible transitions from «old» to «new» public value systems as transitions between different phases of political development. In such transitions, assumptions of what constitutes right or wrong public administrative behaviour (i.e. corruption) also changed. In this way, their theories are highly useful to the discussion of the central hypothesis underlying our approach to the historical analysis of corruption in modern politics.

Michael Johnston: Corruption Scandals and Political Contest

In his approach, the American political scientist Michael Johnston urges scholars to adopt an open and contextual rather than a «universalistic» understanding of corruption.²¹ Johnston's view on corruption is broad enough to encompass wrongful individual behaviour as well as the political and social processes that define it as such in any particular context. According to him, any definition of corruption should not just take specific individual actions into account but also the broader contextual processes of consent, influence and authority. Johnston states that what he calls a «neo-classical» approach to defining corruption «might have it that corruption is the abuse, according to the legal or social standards constituting a society's system of public order, of a public role or resource for private benefit. Like others, this notion incorporates the basic idea of the abuse of public roles or resources for private benefit. Unlike them, it is not intended to specify a precise category of behaviour as corrupt, but rather is concerned with corruption as a political and moral issue [...]» Johnston adds that «this kind of definition directs our attention to the forces contending over the meanings of concepts such as «abuse», «public role», and «private benefit».²² This has been called a «social constructivist» approach to corruption, because it is based on the idea that corruption is defined through the contestation of these concepts (and other ones) in specific places and periods. «Corrupt» is what is *considered* corrupt at a certain place and time.²³

According to Johnston, concepts such as corruption therefore acquire their true meaning from the discussion, debate and contestation in corruption scandals that are themselves, essentially, clashes between different views on what is right or wrong. Corruption, in other words, is socially constructed as a result of disagreements between fundamentally different notions of what government should or should not be about.²⁴ At the very least, converging and/or conflicting values reflect a debate about which values and norms should prevail and what kind of behaviour is acceptable or unacceptable. As Alasdair Roberts has put it, different «syndromes», codes or value

21 M. Johnston, «The Search for Definitions: The Vitality of Politics and the Issue of Corruption», in: *International Social Science Journal* 149 (1996) 3, 321–336.

22 Johnston, «The Search for Definitions», 329–331.

23 G. de Graaff et al., «Constructing Corruption», in:

de Graaff / Maravic / Wagenaar, *The Good Cause*, 99.

24 F. P. Wagenaar, «Recent Corruption Studies: a Review / Aktuelle Korruptionsforschung – ein Überblick», in: *Neue Politische Literatur* 56 (2011), 61–69.

systems are «the product of social struggles and popular arguments about proper conduct».²⁵ In other words, when value systems clash or come into contact, people have to make up their minds and seek a balance of values and norms. Somewhere and somehow, bureaucratic values such as impartiality or neutrality came to substitute, replace or were added to existing «pre-bureaucratic» values such as individual reputation or family honour. Accordingly, an analysis of corruption provides insight into the development of a new political value system. Or as Johnston puts it: «The real issue [...] is not what constitutes a corrupt action. Instead, it is what the concept of corruption tells us about a political system and its continuing development.»²⁶

Max Weber: Corruption as Imperfect Bureaucratisation

Johnston's approach is extremely useful for tackling such contingent and contextual concepts as corruption and public values, especially in a historical and political context where relatively recent notions such as the public-private divide or clear principal-agent relations are often lacking. It does not, however, provide theoretical explanations for the possible causes of change. A second theoretical perspective that has proved a useful tool for investigating changing assumptions of corruption and public values comes from Max Weber, who understood corruption to be a deficient rationalisation of the public service, and a phase on the route from patrimonial to rational legal administration.²⁷ Weber also had a notion of clashing value systems or an (evolutionary) transition from one phase to another. «For him», write Rubinstein and von Maravic, «corruption was the hallmark of an earlier, more «primitive» stage of society, and would eventually vanish with the triumph of a professionalized bureaucracy».²⁸ Using his famous bureaucratic ideal type, Weber argued that in a modern bureaucracy a non-corrupt public official behaves rationally, obeys standardised rules of behaviour and recognizes a strict distinction between the office and the office holder. As these norms slowly became dominant, traditional patrimonial behaviour came to be called corrupt.²⁹

Niklas Luhmann: «Corruption» Arising from the Merging of Social Systems

The work of Niklas Luhmann offers a third perspective on competing and changing value systems. Luhmann views contemporary society as divided into «self-referential» functional systems. Corruption occurs when these systems merge, for instance,

25 A. S. Roberts, «Systems of Survival: A Dialogue on the Moral Foundations of Commerce and Politics, Jane Jacobs (Book Review)», in: *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 13 (1994), 410–414, 412.

26 Johnston, «Keeping the Answers», 71.

27 B. J. S. Hoetjes, *Corruptie in het openbare leven van ontwikkelingslanden: een verkenning van theorie en onderzoek, in het bijzonder gericht op India sinds*

1947, Leiden 1977, 53–55; see also W. D. Rubinstein, «The End of «Old Corruption» in Britain 1780–1860», in: *Past and Present: a Journal of Historical Studies* 101 (1983), 55–86.

28 W.D. Rubinstein / P. von Maravic, «Max Weber, Bureaucracy, and Corruption», in: de Graaff / Maravic / Wagenaar, *The Good Cause*, 21.

29 M. Weber / J. Winckelmann (eds.), *Wirtschaft und Gesellschaft*, Tübingen 1980, 551–579.

when the legal system is influenced by the economy or the political system. According to Luhmann, pre-modern society did not separate these functional systems, but was primarily based on social rank (stratification). As Niels Grüne and Tom Tölle demonstrate in their article, the evolution of horizontal functional differentiation (e.g., bureaucracies) within a predominantly vertical, stratified society is a central analytical key to the «*Normenkonkurrenz*» in the early modern period. In corruption debates, political actors could either refer to the legal and moral values of, for example, public administration or to the principles of social stratification. Furthermore, Luhmann's distinction between «semantics» and «social structure» can help us to discriminate between long-standing ideas and vocabularies of corruption (critique), on the one hand, and changing social and institutional contexts of their historical usage, on the other.³⁰

3. Modern Corruption: Bureaucratisation, Democratisation and Industrialisation?

The approaches described here seem especially fruitful when we examine the rise of modern political-administrative organisation in the long nineteenth century. As we have already seen above, «modernisation» is a contested concept and should be treated with caution. It refers to a highly diffuse and elusive development, consisting of intellectual as well as practical changes. While the concept defies definition, modernisation is nonetheless often believed to have begun in the sixteenth century (the «early modern» period). The period of its fastest development, however, was from the second half of the eighteenth century onwards, only then to slow down around the First World War. There have certainly been many definitions of modernisation. Sometimes the concept is simply not defined at all. In this special issue, we have decided to follow Bayly, who does attach a specific meaning to it.³¹ According to him, modernisation consists of three major processes that took place during the long nineteenth century: bureaucratisation, democratisation and industrialisation. Bureaucratisation is a twofold process. On the one hand, it denotes the rise of the state and the ever-growing presence of its administration; on the other hand, it refers to the advance of the rational-legal approach in politics and

30 For a similar argument, see W. Plumpe, «Korruption. Annäherungen an ein historisches und gesellschaftliches Phänomen», in: Engels / Fahrmeir / Nützenadel, *Geld – Geschenke – Politik*, 19–47. On Luhmann, see M. Brans / S. Roszbach, «The Autopoiesis of Administrative Systems: Niklas Luhmann on Public Administration and Public Policy», in: *Public Administration* 75 (1997) 3, 419–439. For Luhmann, see: N. Luhmann, *Gesellschaftsstruktur und Semantik. Studien zur Wissenssoziologie der modernen Gesellschaft*, vol. 1,

Frankfurt am Main 1980, 162; N. Luhmann, «Das Problem der Epochenbildung und die Evolutionstheorie», in: H.-U. Gumbrecht / U. Link-Heer (eds.), *Epochenschwellen und Epochenstrukturen im Diskurs der Literatur- und Sprachgeschichte*, Frankfurt am Main 1985, 11–33, 24; N. Luhmann, *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*, 2 vols., Frankfurt am Main 1997, 550–551.

31 C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914: Global Connections and Comparisons*, Malden 2008, 9–12.

society.³² Democratisation is the process of increasingly structuring public influence over time, which resulted in parliamentary control and growing popular influence on state behaviour, for example, in the form of extended male suffrage. Taking a political perspective, we note that industrialisation gave rise to new types of public-private cooperation in the form of state concessions and new elites who profited from them such as the railroad barons.

It is interesting to analyse these three processes from a corruption perspective, as corruption itself appears to have become a more significant element in public and political discourse from the end of the eighteenth century onwards.³³ According to Bayly, the French Revolution – and similar occurrences throughout Europe – started a debate on the nature of good governance in which representations of corruption played a central role.³⁴ Jens Ivo Engels has similarly argued that the content of corruption changed and that corruption became a political issue in the long nineteenth century. For example, democratisation started a debate about what was the best form of political organisation and who were most capable to safeguard the common interest. The rise of the state increased the threat of more state misbehaviour and administrative dominance (*Beamtenherrschaft*), as an ever growing amount of (public) money, resources and offices had to be distributed by state officials.³⁵ The new economic elites who emerged as a result of industrialisation used their economic position and private money to argue for and acquire political influence, which, in turn, incited debates on corruption. At the beginning of the twentieth century, a peaceful integration of the different value systems that had thus started to clash seemed much less likely than a century before.

4. Contributions

In the first article, Niels Grüne and Tom Tölle use a modified systems-theoretical approach to place early modern discourse on corruption in the sphere of *Normenkonkurrenz*, between stratified estate society and functional organisations such as public administration. By way of this model, they compare six corruption conflicts in German territories and Great Britain over a period covering the seventeenth to the early nineteenth century. Grüne and Tölle find a high degree of continuity at the semantic level of vocabularies and patterns of argumentation, which shaped debates under different and changing socio-structural conditions. They show that discussions over bureaucratic values not only loomed large long before 1750, but could be closely intertwined with constitutional and ideological issues even at an early stage. Second, Toon Kerkhoff discusses changing perceptions of and debates on political

32 B. Wunder, *Geschichte der Bürokratie in Deutschland*, Frankfurt am Main 1986; B. G. Peters, *The Politics of Bureaucracy*, London 2001.

33 Asch / Emich / Engels, *Integration – Legitimation – Korruption*, 7–9, 19–27.

34 Bayly, *Birth of the Modern World*, 101, 159 and 286.

35 Engels, «Politische Korruption in der Moderne», 313–350. On *Beamtenherrschaft*, see: M. Weber / J. Winckelmann (eds.), *Politik als Beruf*, Tübingen 1980, 505–560.

corruption in the Netherlands, juxtaposing a general outline of Dutch early modern debates and perceptions of corruption with modern, long-nineteenth-century debates and perceptions, which he illustrates with a detailed case study of Dutch political corruption in 1798. Kerkhoff shows how a transition occurred from early modern value pluralism to the coherent political views on corruption of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, and describes considerable differences in the debates, discourses and perceptions between the two periods. Kerkhoff's case shows how, despite some remaining «pockets» of *Normenpluralität*, modern perceptions started to predominate in debates. In the third article, Robert Bernsee discusses perceptions of and discourses and debates on corruption in the German lands around 1800, focusing on recurrent, dominant and central «categories» of corruption that were used to criticise corrupt public behaviour. The accusatory and ideological categories surrounding «secret societies», «*ancien regime*» and «bureaucracy» played a crucial role in shaping the corruption debates. The fourth article by Christian Ebhardt deals with corruption in railroad companies in Great Britain and France between 1830 and 1880. Ebhardt argues that industrialisation (an element of Bayly's concept of modernisation) gave rise to new economic elites who tried to get a place in the democratic system by leveraging their economic position. The author uses cases of electoral corruption to study the integration of new participants into the existing political arena. This, in turn, provides insight in the negotiation processes between different social groups, the debates on the separation between the public and private (personal) spheres and the increasing influence of economic interests in politics. In the fifth article, Ronald Kroeze and Annika Klein examine corruption scandals in the Netherlands and Germany both during and shortly after the First World War. They show how the close cooperation between politicians, state officials and private entrepreneurs during the war resulted in a corruption debate which undermined general confidence in modern politics. This final case is therefore a clear example of the growing disbelief in modern concepts such as bureaucracy and parliamentary democracy, and of the clash of ideological viewpoints on how the state should be democratically governed.

Thus, whereas these five contributions cover different countries, periods and theoretical approaches, by analysing corruption they all focus on the development of political-administrative behaviour. Second, the contributions aim – to varying degrees – to provide new perspectives on the question of whether changes in values and perceptions of corruption resulted from the confrontations or clashes between systems and if so, how new might have replaced old. Third, each author adopts a critical attitude towards the volume's main hypothesis and the theory of modernisation, sometimes adding some nuance or corroborate evidence. These three elements can help us to analyse whether, and in what way, the corruption discourse itself changed throughout the long nineteenth century, and this might have related to the development of a new «modern» public morality and new political-institutional set-

tings. In the end, this may enable us to discuss changing assumptions of corruption and public values in a broader Western European context, while covering a relatively long time span. In a short concluding essay Wagenaar, Kroeze and Kerkhoff will provide such a brief discussion. We obviously cannot presume to offer either hard evidence or universal laws, but we hope this issue will nonetheless contribute to what is still a small body of literature on cross-national and cross-temporal comparative research into corruption and public values.

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