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Abstract

Political corruption became one of the most pressing problems of our time. We may say that corruption replaced repression as the main threat to the rule of law. This work attempts to articulate the role of corruption in relation to system legitimacy, assuming Czech Republic and the CEE countries as a model. This work approaches corruption as a narrative, which is being mobilized by the public as a critique of the way the system works. Conventionally, corruption is thought of as a pathology, which damages democracy, quality of governance and economic growth. It will be argued that it also makes sense to think about corruption the other way around – as an interpretive structure which allows introducing sense into the complex organization of society and particularly its negative outcomes. Corruption is a narrative, which allows the public to relate to problems stemming from the workings of the system. This work identifies several dimensions of the problem. It argues that corruption has a notable social dimension, which addresses inequality and injustice in general. The corruption narrative also addresses the worrisome prospect of inability of the political representation to manage risks and to steer the development of society.