

Quality of Government and Political Behavior

Resignation and Agency

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Abstract

Most people in the world live in countries where poor quality of government and corruption are a pressing problem. Research also shows that these are issues that citizens are deeply concerned about. Yet, questions about quality of government and corruption are largely absent in the traditional literature on political attitudes and behavior. This dissertation aims to fill some of the gaps in the previous literature by exploring how poor public institutions structure political life. The dissertation argues that the quality of government crucially affects individuals' relationship to the state and their belief about what can be achieved through the democratic process. The results in three individual research papers highlight many of the adverse effects of corruption on various political outcomes, where corruption often is associated with widespread political resignation. At the same time, the results also show that citizens in settings with high corruption at times show strong agency and try to find ways to express themselves politically, despite the many obstacles to effective political participation that widespread corruption entails.

Key Words: Quality of government, Corruption, Political attitudes, Political behavior