Corruption in International Business. Understanding the impact of anti-corruption measures on company practices and attitudes

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ABSTRACT

Anti-corruption strategies over the past two decades have expanded to include a variety of measures ranging from international conventions and anti-corruption toolkits to business and NGO (Non Governmental Organisation) initiatives. While these strategies are undeniably essential in the fight against corruption, recognising their impact on the behaviour of companies is vital to assessing and improving them.

Surveys conducted by accountancy and auditing firms over the last decade identify some general issues concerning company practices and attitudes to combating corruption and indicate some of the limiting factors. While these insights are a useful starting point the survey findings provide only a descriptive and fragmented understanding of the issues due to the diversity of scope and approaches applied.

In order to obtain a more thorough understanding of the impacts of different strategies and how these might be strengthened the authors are currently engaged in an in-depth survey of both businesses and NGOs. In focusing on the role of NGOs as important stakeholders in the field of anti-corruption the scope of this research extends further than the previous surveys which report only on the perspective and practice of businesses.

Prior to engaging in the full survey a pilot survey of both companies and NGOs was undertaken and this paper presents the finding of this pilot survey. This paper firstly outlines the scope of the present analysis. Section II proceeds with an examination of the key findings of the existing surveys to provide a picture of the extent to which company attitudes to corruption have been explored and the broad themes that emerge. The insights identified in this section provide the context for the pilot study findings which are presented in Section III, which concludes with observations and points for further research.