

The Illinois Culture of Corruption and Comparisons with Indiana

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Abstract

The recent indictment and conviction of the sitting Illinois governor has renewed academic interest in political corruption in the states. Research has focused on the extent of corruption as well as the causes and consequences of such wrongdoing. This paper reviews the state of academic research into corruption in the states and examines attempts to measure its relative strength in the neighboring states of Illinois and Indiana. Indiana shares many cultural characteristics with Illinois, including strong political parties and governmental practices that have been viewed by many as visibly troubling. We discuss the various problems associated with measuring public corruption and we also attempt to identify the factors that contribute to differential levels of corruption in these states. Finally, we propose a structural equation model (SEM) that that may prove applicable more widely.

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## THE ILLINOIS CULTURE OF CORRUPTION AND COMPARISONS WITH INDIANA

Political corruption in America always has attracted the attention of journalists and academics alike, perhaps because wrongdoing always makes for a good story or research topic. The literature is replete throughout the last century of stories of crime and corruption in American cities and states. These studies were largely anecdotal, biographical, or tending toward the sensational and much of this literature focused on Chicago and Illinois. (Banfield and Wilson, 1966; Barnhart and Schlickman, 1999; Brackett, 2009; Campbell, 2005; Dobyns, 1932; Hartley, 1999; Johnson and Sautter, 1998; Kenney, 1990; Laski, 2008; Merriam, 1929; Merriner 2004; Nash, 1985; Ross, 1988; Royko, 1971; Schmidt, 1989; Simpson, 2001; Tarr, 1971; Walker, 2007; Wendt and Kogan, 1967; 2005). The neighboring state of Indiana also has been on the receiving end of several corruption-related stories and studies (Indiana Writers' Project, 1961; Leibowitz, 1964; McNeill, 1966; Niblick, 1973; Nye, 1959; White, 1962; Scheele, 1983; 1994).

### Political Corruption and the Political Cultures of Illinois and Indiana

In this section, we consider the possibility that corruption is an outgrowth of political culture and consider the application of this argument to Indiana and Illinois. Over forty years ago Daniel Elazar's work broke new ground for an understanding of the connections between political culture and political corruption (Elazer, 1972). He formulated three major categories of political culture in the states: Individualistic, Moralistic, and Traditionalistic. Each of these was an outgrowth primarily of migration patterns into the various states and the religious affiliations of the residents.

The Individualistic political culture "emphasizes the conception of the democratic order as a marketplace" where government is created "for strictly utilitarian reasons, to handle those functions demanded by the people it is created to serve" (94). Consequently, the persons in this culture base politics "on a system of mutual obligations rooted in personal relationships" (95). Elazar contends that

“a fair amount of corruption is expected in the normal course of things,” and there is “relatively little popular excitement when any is found unless it is of an extraordinary character” (95).

The Moralistic political culture “emphasizes the commonwealth conception” and considers politics to be “one of the great activities of man in his search for the good society....” (96). Politics, then, should be the concern of everyone, not just those who are professionally committed to political careers and political parties are useful political devices but are not valued for their own sake (98).

The Traditionalistic political culture “reflects an older, pre-commercial attitude that accepts a substantially hierarchical society as part of the ordered nature of things, authorizing and expecting those at the top of the social structure to take a special and dominant role in government” (99). The Traditionalistic political culture shares one particular attribute with the Individualistic culture when it comes to corruption: “those active in politics are expected to benefit personally from their activity though not necessarily by direct pecuniary gain” (99).

Elazar categorized the two Midwestern states of Illinois and Indiana as Individualistic political cultures, although strong strains of the Traditionalistic culture were to be found in the southern parts of both states. Likewise, particularly in the far northern parts of both states there are traces of the Moralistic culture (106-7, 112).

Historians have an extensive literature on the concept of “place” in American history, including life in the Midwest. Andrew Cayton (2001) points out that in terms of definition

“...the Midwest is a mushy place; experts cannot even agree on where it begins and ends. Is it the drainage area of the Great Lakes, or the upper Mississippi? What do northern Wisconsin and southeastern Ohio have in common with each other, or Cook County and southern Illinois, for that matter, where are the shared events in the Midwest’s past and present?” (149).

Indeed, the “Middle West” label “...did not even enter the language until the first decades of the twentieth century” (149). These facts pertain to the overall geography that now are accepted as the

“Midwest,” but the individual states of Illinois and Indiana show many distinctive cultural patterns due to settlement of different groups of people as well as transportation networks and business and commercial placements. These two states, particularly the northern portions of both, share many similarities in these areas.

Elazar’s work built upon the research of Almond and Verba (1963) and inspired several scholars to operationalize the concept of political culture. Research moved in the direction of using political culture as the underlayment for a host of public activities, such as the state adoption of public policies, the types of political attitudes and ideology, voting participation and voting behavior, as well as political corruption. (Erickson, *et. al.* (1987); Dran, *et. al.* (1991); Johnson (1976); Nice (1986).

Relying on census data reporting membership in various religious denominations, Charles Johnson (1976) calculated an index for each of the three types of political cultures within each state, comparing Elazar’s classification of states to a discriminant analysis of the key indices of political culture. The indices for Illinois and Indiana were the following (496):

	<u>Moralistic</u>	<u>Individualistic</u>	<u>Traditionalistic</u>
Illinois	.398	.590	.010
Indiana	.353	.623	.023

Johnson’s figures demonstrate that Illinois and Indiana are closely aligned in terms of the extent of each of the cultures found in the two states. The other adjacent Midwestern states (Michigan, Ohio and Wisconsin) also showed similar figures and Johnson categorized the five Midwestern states as predominately Individualistic political cultures.

Johnson's research also reinforces Elazar's findings that the Individualistic political culture is associated with government activities promoting social welfare programs and economic development, along with centralized decision-making, a sense of importance of political parties, and strong interparty competition (505).

Another study by Robert S. Erikson and his co-authors investigated the connection between political culture and public opinion (Erikson, *et.al*, 1987) and concluded that "variance in state-level partisanship and ideology is due to state-level differences in political culture rather than the demographic characteristics of residents of different states." (812). This finding corroborates the connection between political culture and political attitudes in the states.

Michael Johnston's work zeroes in directly on the connection between political culture and corruption (1983). Johnston agrees with Elazar's assertion that Individualistic cultures are more tolerant of political corruption because politics in the Individualistic cultures are viewed as "a marketplace in which self-interest comes first," and that "corruption in individualistic areas produces relatively little public outcry" (30).

However, Johnston's research diverged from Elazar's categorization of Illinois and Indiana as having predominately individualistic political cultures. Bringing the analysis down to the lowest level--the eighty-five federal judicial districts in the United States--where actual indictments and convictions for political corruption take place, Johnston identified the prevailing political culture in each, using religious affiliation as the predominant indicator. His method provided scores for the prevailing political culture based on the percentage of the total population rather than the percentage of total persons adhering to selected religious denominations. This analysis moved the Central and Southern

Illinois judicial districts into the Moralistic political culture. Similarly, the two judicial districts in Indiana (Northern and Southern) also moved from the Individualistic to the Moralistic culture.<sup>1</sup>

Johnston's research highlights the major problem in using political culture as the explanatory variable for political corruption. Meier and Holbrook (1992) describe the problem this way:

Most cultural explanations of corruption rely on case studies so that the rich detail of culture can be examined. Quantitative studies... must of necessity rely on explanations that are measurable across jurisdictions.

We do not use Elazar's (1972) political culture measure for two reasons. First, culture as a variable is often described in terms of participation, political corruption, and a wide variety of other factors. As a result it is unclear if political culture is conceptually distinct from political corruption. Second, our reading of Elazar suggests that individualist cultures should have the most political corruption. Johnston (1983), however, presents evidence that moralistic cultures are most corrupt. Any hypothesis concerning culture and corruption, as a result, lacks precision (139, n.5; 140; n. 8).

### Beyond Political Culture: Measuring Political Corruption

As slippery as the concept of political culture is to capture, measuring differences in levels corruption between states presents even greater challenges. Measuring corruption is inherently difficult given the obvious incentive of those engaging in such activities to conceal their behavior. In this section, we explore the literature on these approaches and consider how Indiana and Illinois compare along three alternative measures. Because of the measurement problems and lack of consistency across studies, we propose a measurement model of corruption that combines indicators.

Initially, we note that there is conceptual ambiguity in what actually constitutes corrupt behavior. These problems are explored in Robert Dalton's chapter "Governors and Ethics," where first-hand observations from sitting governors pinpoint some of the ethical demands they face (Beyle and Muchmore, 67-76). Dalton opens his chapter as follows:

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<sup>1</sup> The Northern District of Illinois was not included in Johnston's analysis because of missing conviction data from the Public Integrity Section of the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice over the three-year period, 1976-78 (Johnston, 22-23).

In 1973, Otto Kerner, U.S. circuit court judge and former two-term governor of Illinois, was convicted and imprisoned on charges of mail fraud and tax evasion committee while governor.... (67).

Dalton proceeds to cite other convicted former or sitting governors including men such as Spiro T. Agnew (MD—tax evasion), David Hall (OK--bribery), Marvin Mandel (MD—mail fraud and racketeering), Edwin Edwards (LA--bribery) and Ray Blanton (TN—conspiracy, extortion and mail fraud). Dalton documents that governors readily admit that there is a “moral ambiguity” in their jobs, regardless of the laws, regulations and perceptions that pervade the political office of the governor (69). Several examples are cited by governors of the “ambiguity” that surrounds the notion of acceptable behavior in public office. One governor acknowledged that “people might differ with him on what is right and what is wrong,” and another chief executive cited the example of depositing the state’s money in a certain bank that might lead some people to “wonder if a deal was made between the governor and the bank” (69). Overall, the perception of the state’s citizens emerges as a key ingredient in the governors’ assessment of ethics in government.

A comparison of governors of Illinois and Indiana reveal the huge lead of Illinois in corrupt practices in the governor’s office. Indiana has not sent a governor to the federal penitentiary since 1924, when Republican governor Warren McCray was convicted of mail fraud. Currently, of course, two former Illinois governors are in jail and five of the last eleven Illinois governors have been accused of crimes, although in two occasions the charges were for actions after gubernatorial service.

While these cases certainly constitute corruption and create major headlines, they do not give clear insight into how pervasive corrupt behavior is in public life across the states. Moving away from more qualitative approaches associated with studies of political culture, recent research into public corruption adopts quantitative designs to assess the impact of a number of potential explanatory

variables on state-to-state variation in corruption. The most common measurement of corruption in these studies is the number of federal convictions.

### Convictions

A number of studies across the states have used the number of criminal convictions for corruption as the main measure (Adsera, *et.al*; Cordis; Glaeser and Saks; Maxwell and Winters; Meier and Holbrook). Meier and Holbrook (1992) pursued the quantitative modeling approach, measuring corruption as the number of convictions from 1977 to 1987 by the Department of Justice's Public Integrity Section. They rejected the political culture concept for a quantitative model with variables that were "measurable across jurisdictions," and found that corruption is associated with "historical/cultural forces (especially turnout and party competition), and bureaucratic forces e.g., government size and policies that increase bribe opportunities" (135). Somewhat surprisingly, in this 1992 study, structural factors, including campaign finance reporting requirements, were unrelated to the incidence of corruption.

Maxwell and Winters (2011) measured corruption by dividing the number of convictions in their time period by the number of elected officials. In order to deal with a skewed distribution and to account for differences in populations, they used the log of convictions per 1,000 elected officials. They proposed a model focusing on seven indicators of four fundamental traits in the states, with the level of corruption denoted by the corruption convictions from the Department of Justice. The traits are: 1) the number of "corruptible governmental bodies" in the states, meaning that prosecutions should vary negatively with the number of elected officials; 2) the larger the population of a state, the more the corruption; 3) high levels of demographic diversity in a state will have correspondingly high levels of corruption; and 4) civic-minded, well-informed political cultures will have lower rates of corruption.

Each of these traits was specified with indicators. The authors concluded that more “corruptible constituencies lead to lower corruption rates, but at a diminishing rate” (1). States with well-informed and highly-participant political cultures have lower rates of corruption and the greater the state’s population, the greater the corruption. High socio-ethnic diversity also positively affects corruption rates (1). The traits used by the authors showed Illinois to be at the “upper end of the distribution of [elected] officials, averaging about 42,000 officials *per annum* over the 1977-00 period” (9, emphasis in original). Indiana, having approximately 30 percent of the elected officials as Illinois, would be expected to have fewer prosecutions. Neither Illinois nor Indiana ranked in the five most corrupt states on this measure, with Florida, Virginia, Maryland, Louisiana and South Carolina in the lead (9).

Two other recent studies have examined other aspects of political corruption in the states, such as the “watchdog role” of newspapers in covering political corruption and, similarly, whether the isolation of the capital city in a state has a bearing on the amount of corruption in that state.

Puglisi and Snyder, in their article titled “Newspaper Coverage of Political Scandals,” (2010), focused on the newspaper coverage of political scandals and found “a strong correlation between the partisan-leaning of newspapers as measured by their endorsement behavior and the partisan bias in their coverage of political scandals” (16). In short, Democratic newspapers gave substantially more news coverage to Republican scandals and Republican newspapers reacted in the opposite manner.

Campante and Do (2012) explored the idea the “having a capital city that is geographically isolated from the main centers of population is conducive to higher corruption, as the distance would lead to less accountability”(1). Also using the average number of federal convictions for corruption as reported by the US Department of Justice for the years between 1976 and 2002, the authors found that the spatial distribution of population resulted in isolated capital cities being associated with greater levels of corruption (28). This finding may have application to the two states of Illinois and Indiana.

Illinois is regarded as having an isolated capital city at Springfield, with most of the state's population concentrated in northern Illinois. Indiana's capital in Indianapolis, on the other hand, is in the most populous city in the state.

Table I includes scores from the Justice Department's annual study of Public Integrity which lists the number of convictions attained by prosecutors in each U.S. Attorney jurisdiction nationwide. We used summary data from the period 2001 to 2010. These data cover convictions in the areas of election crime (e.g., fraud, bribery, ballot access, voter integrity and conflict of interest). The three U.S. Attorney jurisdictions in Illinois saw 482 convictions over this period, while the two Indiana jurisdictions had 140. Adjusting these numbers per 100,000 population (at 2005 midpoint of decade), Illinois had 3.77 convictions per 100,000 population, ranking it 32 out of the 50 states; Indiana had 2.24 per 100,000 with a ranking of 17.

#### TABLE I ABOUT HERE

##### Perceptions

Studies on cross-national differences in corruption often rely on expert surveys of the business community and its perceptions of corruption levels. Boylan and Long (2003) adapt this approach to the states using a survey responses that measured the perceptions of statehouse reporters. Insufficient returns from Massachusetts, New Hampshire and New Jersey left these states out of the rankings. Their findings point out that federal indictments and convictions for public corruption may vary by the level of effort that U.S. attorneys place on investigating such incidents and this may compromise the indictment and conviction statistics as a true indicator of public corruption in the states. Their 1999 survey instrument contained eight questions, with the first asking about news coverage of corruption and the second asking about "how high a priority corruption investigation is for federal prosecutors" in their state (425). The remaining six questions zeroed in on specific types of corruption such as the extent of

fraudulent expense reports by public officials, private sector favors due to campaign contributions; and estimates as to the percentage of public officials engaged in corrupt activities. Their analysis added one additional objective measure: the number of stories published on public corruption in the last three months. The responses allowed for a rank-ordering of the states with number 1 being the “least corrupt.” The state rankings provided by Boylan and Long, along with other research that ranks states, are provided in Table I. Indiana ranks 27<sup>th</sup> with Illinois at number 45 among the 47 states receiving scores. As a result, reporters who closely follow government and politics in each of these two states, for the period surveyed, attribute more corruption to Illinois than Indiana.

### Legal Frameworks

Two recent studies look to the quality of ethics legislation and regulation to determine state rankings on integrity. In a report released by the Corporate Crime Reporter, a state ranking of political corruption by the Better Government Association of Chicago (BGA) was reported. The BGA ranking relies on “the relative strength of laws that protect against corruption and promote integrity in the operations of state government” (8). The laws that were evaluated included freedom of information, whistleblower protection, campaign finance, open meetings laws, and conflict of interest disclosure (9). The researchers believe these laws contribute to ethical practices by encouraging transparency, accountability and limits on government abuse. The BGA ranking is reported in Table I, with Illinois 41 and Indiana 34, indicating that Indiana had stronger laws promoting integrity in state government than Illinois.

The researchers for the Corporate Crime Reporter devised their own state ranking, using the Department of Justice report on convictions for public corruption. They calculated the “corruption rate,” as being “...the total number of public corruption convictions from 1993 to 2002 per 100,000 residents” (5). In this ranking, Illinois was clearly found to be one of the most corrupt states, ranking number 5,

with Mississippi, North Dakota, Louisiana and Alaska being the top 4. Indiana ranked 34<sup>th</sup>, just behind Kansas and ahead of Michigan. In comparing the ranking by the Corporate Crime Reporter to the BGA ranking, the Crime Reporter researcher concluded "...that there is apparently little correlation between strong laws and integrity—if a public official wants to violate his or her trust, the laws don't stand in the way" (9). The example of Kentucky is cited, which ranked third best in the BGA study based on laws, but 43<sup>rd</sup> in the convictions study (9-10). Table I does not include the Corporate Crime Reporter rankings because of the older time period used in calculating the convictions.

A recent study by the Center for Public Integrity uses a methodology similar to that employed in the BGA study and the Center's rankings are included in Table I, labeled as "State Integrity." The rankings are a product of evaluating the legal environment in each state, using a scale of 14 items: public access to information, executive accountability, judicial accountability, state civil service management, internal auditing, state pension fund management, state insurance commission management, political fundraising, legislative accountability, state budgeting, procurement, lobbying disclosure, ethics enforcement, and redistricting. The Center for Public Integrity study ranks Illinois 11<sup>th</sup> in public integrity with a letter grade of C while Indiana comes in 23<sup>rd</sup> with a grade of C-. There is substantial overlap between the Public Integrity and BGA studies in the areas of public access to information, fundraising, ethics enforcement, and conflict of interests; although each study differs in the ways points are assigned to the various aspects of the legal dimensions of each category. The Public Integrity study attributes the relatively high standing of Illinois to reforms made in the wake of earlier scandals in the areas of campaign finance, state procurement, and budgeting.

Our tour of these various rankings indicates that Illinois is perceived by professional statehouse observers as being more corrupt than Indiana and the number of federal convictions relative to population bears this out. When it comes to the legal landscape, the protections against corruption in

Indiana are seen by the Center for Public Integrity as more lax and less friendly to public watchdogs than those of Illinois while the BGA study finds the reverse to be the case. This finding may be driven by the stronger laws passed in recent years in Illinois in the wake of some of its more visible political prosecutions, but subsequent to the BGA study.

Nevertheless, in examining these laws, we find Indiana's statutes to be far more extensive than those in Illinois. The Indiana laws bring more possible charges under the criminal code than do Illinois' laws. The most serious criminal charge, bribery, carries a larger fine but a shorter sentence in Illinois than in Indiana. Overall, Indiana's statutes specify several more violations than do the Illinois statutes. Appendix A provides a summary of the laws in the two states, taken from the National Conference of State Legislatures.

### Problems of Measurement

The various quantitative research models have clearly expanded our understanding of the factors associated with public corruption by identifying many of key traits that are associated with levels of public corruption. Yet, none of the measures we have examined is unproblematic on its own. In the case of conviction data, four problems complicate its use as an indicator. First, and most fundamentally, corrupt public officials do not wish to be discovered and convictions may not accurately capture the extent of such behavior if the ability to evade detection differs across states. Second, the choice of the actual conviction data used can create complications. Because anti-corruption campaigns have lumpy results, criminal convictions for public corruption can vary greatly from year to year and while this suggests averaging the figures over a number of years, that approach risks creating endogeneity problems within the data. Third, this requires choosing a time interval over which to measure and Goel and Nelson (2011) find that alternating between five-year and thirty year averages leads to different

conclusions about the factors that cause corruption. Fourth, as Boylan and Long (2003) contend, these measures capture not only activity but the level of effort in detection and prosecution.

As for the institutional approach, neither the BGA nor Center for Public Integrity (CPI) studies measure actual acts of corruption. Potentially, they could be measures of the level of effort undertaken to stop corruption. However, as North (1990) argues, patterns of corruption can persist well beyond the introduction of new formal institutions designed to combat such behavior. Moreover, the mere presence of laws need not mean that active enforcement is undertaken by government officials. Alt and Lessen's research (2008) shows that the partisan political context plays an important role in determining the extent to which such efforts are made.

Kim Quayle Hill considers anti-corruption laws as an independent variable explaining the incidence of public corruption (2003). Using four different measures that are collapsed into two dimensions of anti-corruption statutes, the author tested different models and found that "neither of the two measures of anticorruption laws is a significant predictor of levels of corruption." In fact, it was transparency and public scrutiny of governing procedures that "arise out of democracy and party competition that are more important for reducing corruption than are regulatory initiatives...." (626). In short, it appears that a longer list of anti-corruption state statutes do not significantly lead to a lower level of public corruption. Perhaps this finding is best illustrated by the answer a former Indiana U.S. Attorney provided when asked, "What do these officials say when the FBI informs them they are under arrest for public corruption?" His response: "They say one of two things. Either, 'You finally caught me,' or, 'I haven't done anything wrong'" (author interview with former U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Indiana).

The perceptions-based measure provided by Boylan and Long faces three common criticisms. First, the problem of subjectivity potentially makes the comparison of survey results for reporters across

many different states somewhat difficult. Second, there may be great variation in the extent to which media outlets are unbiased and devote resources to the coverage of corruption issues; the findings of Puglisi and Snyder (2010) discussed above underscore this point. Third, the Boylan and Long data suffered from low response rates and missing data; also, it only captures perceptions based on one year when such reactions might be strongly conditioned by idiosyncratic, high-profile events.

With the difficulties involved in measuring an activity that its practitioners work very hard to conceal, the question arises to what extent these imperfect approaches even capture the same behavior. In Table II we present a matrix of the correlations between the measures, using the raw index data for each approach. The table highlights the difficulties in measuring corruption; none of the putative measures is highly correlated with the others.

#### TABLE II ABOUT HERE

The institutional measures (the BGA Index and the CPI) are, in fact, negatively correlated with one measure of corruption, logged convictions per 100,000 of population. The institutional measures are based on the presence of anti-corruption laws and appear to be consistent with the interpretation that statutes are enacted in response to perceived corruption.

The choice of measurement is a non-trivial issue in empirical research on the determinants of corruption. Goel and Nelson (2011) show that using different measurements yields different results on determinants of corruption. They report that some findings are stable across these indicators (e.g., educational attainment, judicial employment, and Southern states), while other findings cited elsewhere in the literature were not robust (e.g., the effects of urbanization, population, prosperity, population size, media, government spending, and enforcement).

An alternative method to assess the measurement of corruption is to use confirmatory factor analysis to identify common factors for latent variables. In Figure I, we present a measurement model

for corruption with the four indicators: the 2008 BGA index, the 2011 CPI index, the Boylan and Long scores, and the number of federal corruption convictions per 100,000 residents from 2001-2010 (we follow Maxwell and Winters and log transform this number). The conviction data are obtained from annual reports to Congress by the Public Integrity Section of the Department of Justice.

#### FIGURE I ABOUT HERE

A generally accepted rule for factor loadings is that factors load highly with scores of .6 or higher but do not with scores of .4 or worse. As Figure I shows, with the loading for convictions set to one (at least one factor loading must be set to one to identify the model), the indicators do not appear to be valid for the latent construct. Rather, they appear to indicate that the BGA and the CPI data, in particular, are indicators of a separate concept altogether, one we will refer to as the “legal framework.” We propose to measure corruption, then, as a latent variable with the Boylan and Long scores and conviction data as its indicators.

#### Political Corruption and Social Capital

If political corruption is a type of dysfunction or civic malaise, then is civic health the opposite? If corruption signifies civic breakdown, are the elements that contribute to civic health the cure?

Social capital, the reciprocity and trust that bind social relations, has been identified as an important component of well-functioning societies and a key component of civic health. Robert Putnam (2000) and others have presented reams of data tying trust to social goods including “democracy, education, prosperity, safety, health, and even happiness” (Warren 2004; 1). A number of transnational studies have tied social capital to lower levels of corruption. These studies “...find that in societies where the level of generalized trust and civic engagement is high, people are more willing to deal with people who are different from them, encouraging cooperation toward those outside one’s narrow social network. As a result, trusting societies are more likely to have efficient governments, higher levels of

economic development, and, thus, less corruption” (Harris, 2). (See also Bjornskov, 2004; La Porta *et al.*, 1997, Ulsaner, 2001; 2004; Zak and Knack, 2001). Social capital constitutes a crucial component of civic health and contributes to positive aspects of civic engagement like volunteering and voting.

Social capital is generated through activities like exchanging favors with neighbors, eating dinner with family, holding political discussions with family and friends, and joining community organizations. Putnam and others have posited that the greater the incidence of these activities, the higher the level of social trust and the more likely one is to engage in activities like voting and volunteering that signal civic health. It should be noted, however, that social capital also has been associated with dysfunctional activities. This occurs when individuals bond exclusively with others deemed similar to themselves and display hostile attitudes toward others not included within one’s own group. Thus, social capital can also contribute to “social bads” including terrorism, organized crime, clientelism, certain economic inefficiencies, rigid communities...ethnic rivalries and unjust distribution of resources” (Warren, 1). In short, inclusive social capital contributes to civic health and efficiency; exclusive social capital contributes to social dysfunctions such as corruption.

Ulsaner (forthcoming) finds that generalized levels of trust are correlated with lower levels of perceived corruption but rejects the idea that civic engagement has much of a direct impact on quality of government. In fact, political participation may increase polarization. Instead, he finds that “It is *trust in other people* that matters for good government, not membership in civic groups or other participation (with one exception [making a political speech])—and not *trust in government*. So it is essential that we separate out the component parts of social capital” (9-10, emphasis in original). Knack (2002) examined several components of social capital and found only a weak relationship with government effectiveness. Nevertheless, Ulsaner relies heavily on the Boylan and Long reputational model as his measure of

corruption and Knack measures only a few select aspects of civic engagement. These approaches hardly exhaust the ways in accounting for either civic health or corruption.

Social capital is a difficult concept to capture; indicators measuring the concept range from Robert Putnam's observation of groups like bowling leagues to Alt and Lessen's use of the percentage of a state's population with Scandinavian heritage. As with corruption, we contend that this exactly the sort of concept that should be captured with a measurement model. We employed data collected by the National Conference on Citizenship (NCoC) from a variety of national surveys and census data presumed to measure civic health. Sources include the GSS, NES, DDB Life Style Survey, and the CPS. The most recent year for which the data have been collected and arrayed by results for each state is 2009. (For a full list of sources utilized by the NCoC, see their reports at [www.ncoc.net](http://www.ncoc.net)). As indicators we include measures of activities commonly recognized as indicative of social capital. From surveys, the measures include the percentage of respondents in each state who report engaging in the following behaviors: voter turnout, volunteering, belonging to at least one group, exchanging favors with neighbors, discussing politics with friends and family, and participation in non-electoral political activities.

#### FIGURE II ABOUT HERE

In Figure II, we present the results of an estimation of the measurement model of social capital. Following the rule of thumb established above, the factor loadings suggest that four of the five indicators are capturing the same underlying concept. Of the five, only discussion of politics appears to underperform as an indicator of social capital.

## Modeling Social Capital and Corruption

To assess the relationship between latent variables such as social capital and corruption, we must employ a structural equation model (SEM). SEM allows us to simultaneously specify measurement models and the causal relationship between latent variables. This allows us to bridge the problems of measurement that previous research has identified when it comes to state-level corruption and social capital in particular. We can then specify structural relationships among the three latent variables (corruption, social capital, and legal framework) while also controlling for observed variables identified as robustly affecting state-level corruption. In addition to the latent variables of social capital and legal framework, we also control for the level of population, the percentage of residents with college degrees, the level of judicial employment, and whether the state is in the South. The sources and details of measurement for these variables are presented in Appendix B.

FIGURE III ABOUT HERE

The main findings of the SEM largely correspond to those of prior work. The parameters displayed in Figure III are standardized regression weights. The regular regression weights with corresponding p-values are presented in Table III. Judicial employment has a statistically significant and positive impact on corruption. This is consistent with the interpretation that the corruption variable measures the effort to detect and punish it, at least to some extent. In states where more judicial personnel are employed in such activities, more corruption is likely to be identified and punished.

TABLE III ABOUT HERE

Southern states, previously identified as more corrupt, are indeed positively associated with corruption though that effect is not statistically significant. Education, indicated by the percentage of state

residents who have college degrees, has a negative regression weight but that effect is not statistically significant. Consistent with Hill (2003), the legal framework appears to have no significant influence on the level of corruption.

While the contours of formal institutional structure of a state do not affect corruption, the informal institutions within the state appear to be very important. The impact of social capital on corruption is statistically significant and, as expected, negative. States with higher levels of social capital appear to have less corruption. This is consistent with the interpretation that social capital effectively checks corrupt activity.

While the findings of the SEM model are broadly in accord with prior work, one broad caveat bears mention. There are temporal issues in the data structure that may complicate the analysis. The Boylan and Long data were collected prior to 2003 while the corruption data are from the years 2001 to 2010. Meanwhile, the dates that the independent variables were collected range widely. While data constraints necessitate this, some of the information that may be gleaned from a panel analysis may be lost in this cross-sectional approach.

### Summary

What can we conclude about the differences between Illinois and Indiana? The literature on public corruption reveals the difficulties of measuring an activity whose participants assiduously avoid detection. Although assessments of the levels of corruption in the two states vary according the indicators used, the two indicators we adopt in our SEM suggest that Illinois has considerably more such activity than Indiana (roughly one standard deviation more convictions and half of a deviation higher than the Boylan and Long score; see Table IV). Often considered an important predictor, political

TABLE IV ABOUT HERE

culture cannot explain this difference as Illinois and Indiana are quite similar.

While our SEM suggests that legal framework is not an important predictor of corruption (and, indeed, the legal framework is stronger in Illinois according to both the BGA and CPI data), we do replicate prior findings that higher judicial employment is associated with more corruption. In line with this estimated effect, Illinois has higher judicial employment as a percentage of total government employment than Indiana by roughly a third of a standard deviation. What is not resolved, however, is the confusion over the many potential interpretations of such a finding including the following: state judiciaries are ripe for corruption, judicial employment is increased in response to corruption, and greater judicial employment leads to greater detection and revelation of corrupt activities.

Our examination of the impact of social capital on public corruption suggests an alternative rooted in informal institutions. In our measurement model of social capital, we utilize five common indicators of the concept: volunteerism, voter turnout, working with neighbors on community problems, discussions of politics, and group membership. Table IV shows standardized differences between Indiana and Illinois on these measures. On the two most important indicators of social capital (volunteerism and group memberships) identified by the SEM, Indiana scores substantially higher than Illinois. However, on the indicators that speak to overtly political activity (holding political discussions frequently and voting), Illinois outscores Indiana. On the final indicator (working with neighbors on community problems), the difference between the two states is negligible. To the extent then that generalized measures of interconnection and trust within the community are more important determinants of public corruption, this data helps explain the difference in outcomes between the two states.

Such a finding, while supported by the data, nonetheless must be treated with skepticism. Social capital is a difficult concept to measure and faces a number of detractors (Navarro, 2002; Durlauf, 1999;

Schuller *et al.*, 2000). Nevertheless, even those skeptical of the role of social capital like Ulsaner accept that generalized trust may impact the level of corruption. Our data indicate that the kinds of interpersonal engagement that Putnam (2000) believes build trust may indeed explain state-level variation in public corruption.

TABLE I

Corruption Ranking of States by Various Criteria with 1 = Least Corrupt

	<u>Boylan/Long</u>	<u>BGA</u>	<u>State Integrity</u>	<u>Convictions per 100,000</u>
AL	41	47	17	42
AK	7	23	32	46
AZ	22	20	30	23
AR	20	31	28	27
CA	33	5	4	12
CO	3	16	33	13
CT	36	13	2	22
DE	44	38	22	41
FL	43	18	18	33
GA	35	26	50	50
HI	29	4	13	30
ID	15	42	41	10
IL	45	41	11	32
IN	27	34	23	17
IA	4	43	7	11
KS	26	21	10	4
KY	37	3	19	45
LA	42	46	15	48
ME	6	24	46	21
MD	38	10	40	34
MA	NA	15	12	29
MI	16	32	44	20
MN	9	17	25	5

MS	39	33	6	43
MO	31	35	16	28
MT	17	45	31	44
NE	21	6	5	8
NV	14	30	42	7
NH	NA	36	35	2
NJ	NA	12	1	39
NM	47	48	39	18
NY	24	29	37	25
NC	23	22	21	15
ND	5	39	43	49
OH	40	14	34	36
OK	32	25	38	31
OR	8	19	14	1
PA	34	40	20	38
RI	46	2	9	16
SC	11	7	45	3
SD	1	50	49	47
TN	10	44	8	37
TX	19	9	27	24
UT	25	27	36	9
VT	2	49	26	19
VA	12	28	47	40
WA	28	11	3	6
WV	30	8	29	35
WI	13	1	24	14
WY	18	37	48	26

TABLE II

Table II. Correlation Matrix for Corruption Measures

	Boylan and Long	2001-2010 convictions per 100,000	BGA Index	Center for Public Integrity
Boylan and Long	1	.174	.220	.220
2001-2010 convictions per 100,000	.174	1	-.261*	-.120
BGA Index	.220	-.261*	1	.461***
Center for Public Integrity	.223	-.120	.461***	1

\*\*\* significant at .01 level, \*\* significant at .05 level, \* significant at .10 level

Figure I

Measurement Model of Corruption with Four Indicators

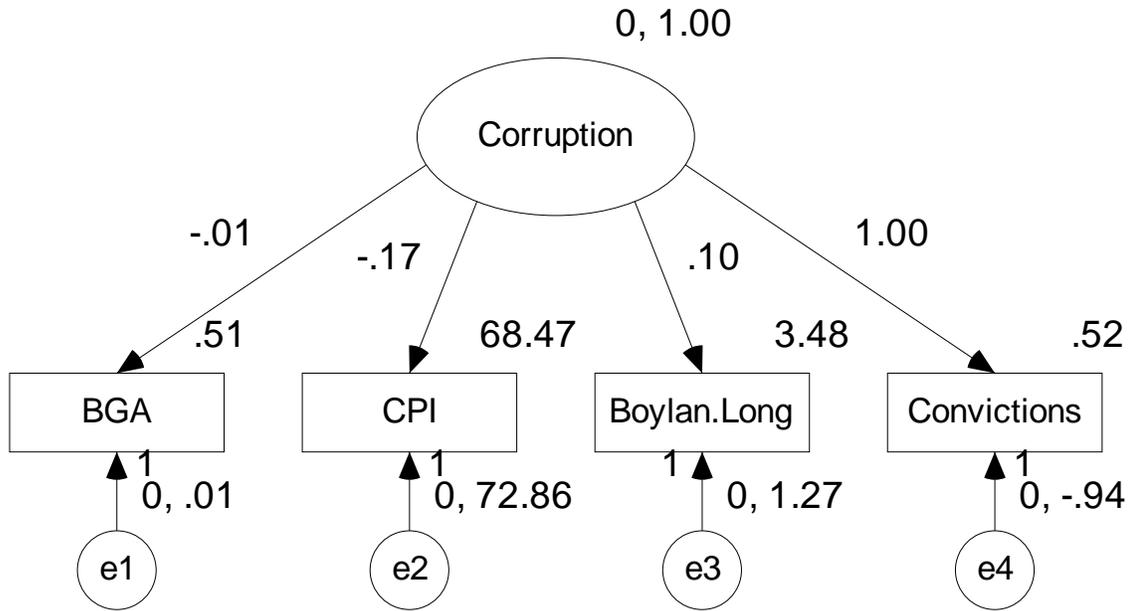


Figure II

Measurement Model of Social Capital with Five Indicators

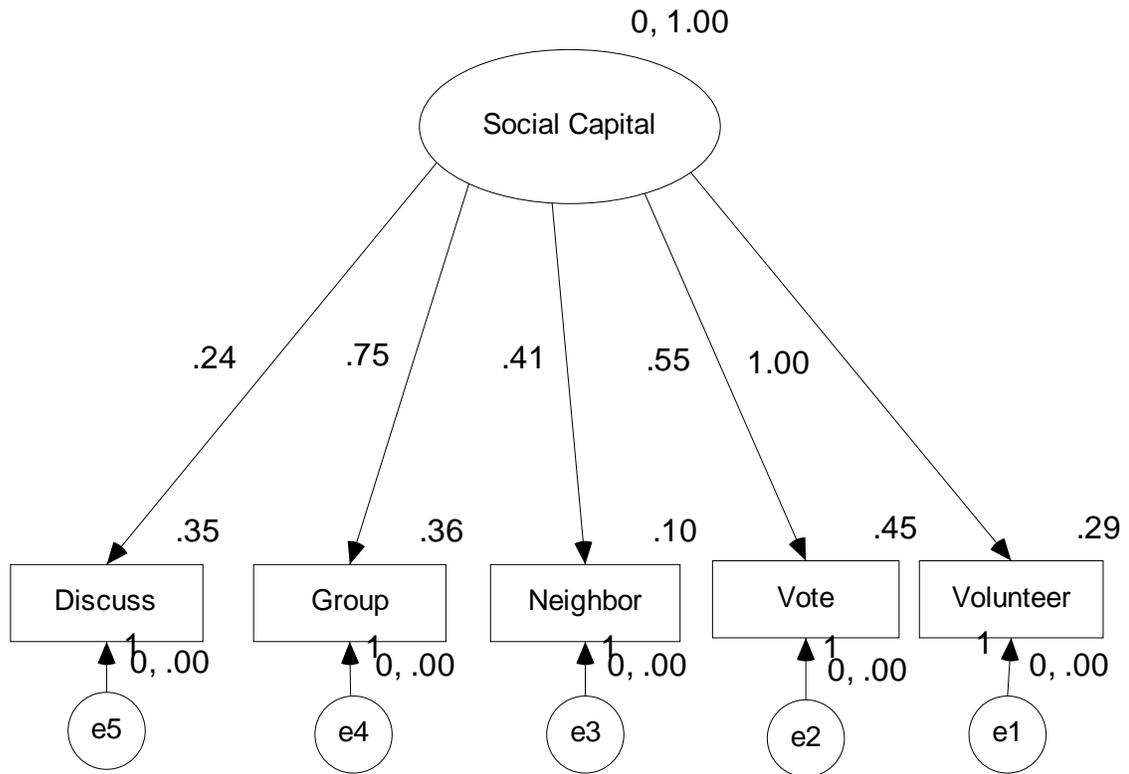


Figure III

Structural Equation Model of Corruption.

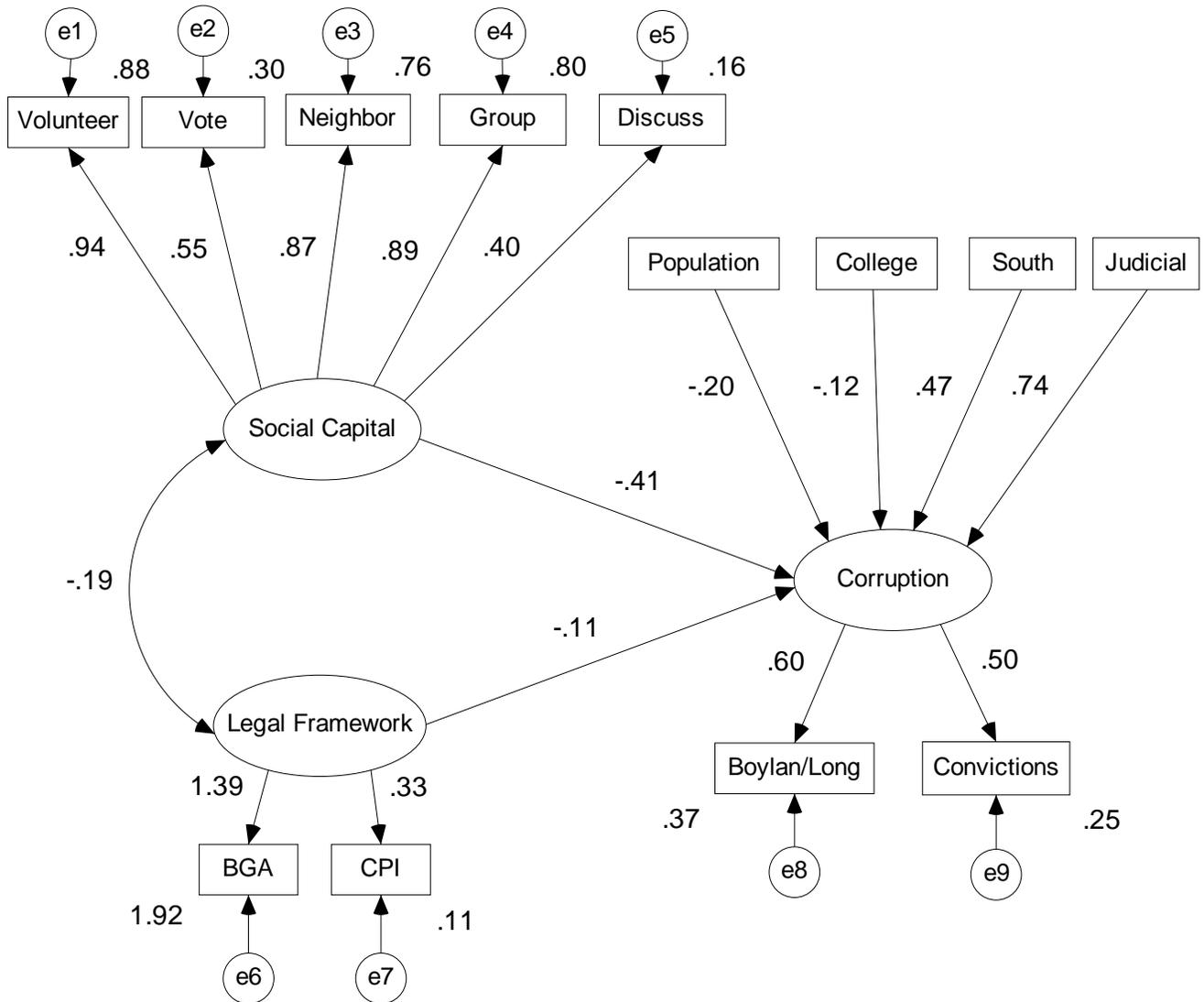


TABLE III

Estimated Regression Weights

DV	IV	Estimate	S.E.	P
Corruption	Social Capital	-.927	.416	.026
Corruption	Legal Framework	-.004	.005	.360
Corruption	Population	.000	.000	.198
Corruption	College	-.004	.005	.445
Corruption	South	.117	.044	.008
Corruption	Judicial Employment	12.815	3.640	***
CPI	Legal Framework	1.000		
BGA	Legal Framework	.040	.074	.593
Convictions	Corruption	1.000		
Boylan Long	Corruption	5.746	1.813	.002
Volunteer	Social Capital	1.000		
Neighbor	Social Capital	.466	.049	***
Vote	Social Capital	.625	.146	***
Group	Social Capital	.842	.082	***
Discuss	Social Capital	.271	.093	.004

\*\*\* p-value < .001

TABLE IV

Differences between Indiana and Illinois

Variable	Indiana	Illinois	Difference (IN-IL)	Standardized
Convictions	0.383	0.611	-0.228	-0.959
Boylan Long	4.000	4.670	-0.670	-0.589
Judicial Emp.	0.023	0.025	-0.002	-0.296
Volunteer	0.284	0.269	0.015	0.271
Vote	0.382	0.415	-0.033	-0.553
Neighbor	0.074	0.076	-0.002	-0.072
Group	0.400	0.357	0.043	0.877
Discuss	0.331	0.360	-0.029	-0.815

## APPENDIX A

### Legal Penalties for Public Corruption Violations: Illinois and Indiana

<b>Illinois</b>	-Bribery	CC 720 §645	<b>Class 3 felony</b> 2-5 years; Max \$25,000 or the amount of the offense, whichever is greater
	-Willful filing of false financial disclosure statement -Legislators engaging in lobbying -Legislators who participate in representation cases unlawfully -Engaging in prohibited political activities (state employees engaging in political activities during compensated time, state officials requiring them to do so) -Prohibited offer or promise (candidates and state officers promising jobs or other compensation in return for contributions) -Procurement; revolving door prohibition. -Fundraising in Sangamon County (during legislative session)	EC 5 §420/4A-107 EC 5 §420/2-101 EC 5 §420/2-104 EC 5 §420/5-15 EC 5 §420/5-30 EC 5 §420/5-45 EC 5 §420/5-40	<b>Class A misdemeanor</b> Max 1 year; \$2,500, or the amount specified in the offense, whichever is greater
	-Legislators who accept other compensation for their official duties	EC 5 §420/2-103	<b>Petty offense</b>
<b>Indiana</b>	-Bribery	CC §35-44-1-1	<b>Class C felony</b> 2-8 years; Max \$10,000
	-Conflict of interest is when a public servant knowingly or intentionally having a pecuniary interest in; or deriving a profit from a contract or purchase connected with an action by his governmental entity.	CC §35-44-1-3	<b>Class D felony</b> 6 months-3 years; Max \$10,000
	-Official misconduct includes receiving personal benefit because of privileged information, neglecting to pass on public records and property to successor, among other things	CC §35-44-1-2	<b>Class A misdemeanor</b> Max 1 year; \$5,000 fine
	-Profiteering from public service	CC §35-44-1-7	<b>Class A infraction</b>
	-Failure to file a statement in a timely manner or files a deficient statement	EC §4-2-6-8	Civil penalty at a rate of not more than \$10 for each day the statement remains delinquent or deficient, up to a maximum of \$1,000; if intentional, Class A infraction (also subject to penalties listed in §4-2-6-12)
	(See 4-2-6: Ethics and Conflicts of Interests)	EC §4-2-6-5.5	(EC §4-2-6-12) The

	<p>-A current state officer, employee, or special state appointee shall not knowingly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Accept other employment involving compensation of substantial value if the responsibilities of that employment are inherently incompatible with the responsibilities of public office or require the individual's recusal from matters so central or critical to the performance of the individual's office duties that the individual's ability to perform those duties would be materially impaired</li> <li>-Accept employment or engage in business or professional activity that would require the individual to disclose confidential information that was gained in the course of state employment</li> <li>-Use or attempt to use the individual's official position to secure unwarranted privileges or exemptions that are of substantial value and not properly available to similarly situated individuals outside state government</li> <li>-No state officer or employee, former state officer or employee, special state appointee, or former special state appointee shall accept any compensation from any employment, transaction, or investment which was entered into or made as a result of material information of a confidential nature</li> <li>-A state officer, employee, or special state employee may not receive compensation for the sale or lease of any property or service which substantially exceeds that which the state officer, employee, or special state appointee would charge in the ordinary course of business and from any person whom they know, or in the exercise of reasonable care and diligence should know, has a business relationship with the agency in which he or she holds a position</li> <li>-Post-employment restrictions</li> </ul>	<p>EC §4-2-6-6  EC §4-2-6-7  EC §4-2-6-11</p>	<p>Commission may take any of the following actions (in response to these violations):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Impose a civil penalty upon a responded not to exceed 3 times the value of any benefit received</li> <li>-Cancel a contract</li> <li>-Bar a person from entering into a contract</li> <li>-Order restitution or disgorgement</li> <li>-Reprimand, suspend, or terminate an employee or special state appointee</li> <li>-Reprimand or recommend impeachment of a state officer</li> <li>-Bar a person from future state employment or future state appointment</li> <li>-Revoke a license or permit</li> <li>-Bar a person from obtaining a license or permit</li> </ul>
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Note: The legal citations of CC and EC refer to the respective Criminal Code and Election Code of the two states.

Source: National Conference of State Legislatures: [www.ncsl.org](http://www.ncsl.org), accessed August 8, 2012.

APPENDIX B

Data Descriptions and Sources

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Source</i>
Population	Number of state residents (100,000s).	Maxwell and Winters (2005)
High School	% of state residents who are college graduates.	Maxwell and Winters (2005)
South	US Census regional definition.	US Census
Judicial Employment	Judicial employment as a percentage of total government employment.	<a href="http://www.census.gov/govs/apes/">http://www.census.gov/govs/apes/</a>
Social capital indicators		
Volunteer	% of survey respondents who volunteer, 2010.	<a href="http://civic.serve.gov/">http://civic.serve.gov/</a>
Vote	Voter turnout rates, 2010.	<a href="http://civic.serve.gov/">http://civic.serve.gov/</a>
Neighbor	% of survey respondents who work with neighbors to fix community problems, 2010.	<a href="http://civic.serve.gov/">http://civic.serve.gov/</a>
Group	% of survey respondents who participate in group, 2010.	<a href="http://civic.serve.gov/">http://civic.serve.gov/</a>
Legal framework indicators		
BGA	2008 BGA index on transparency, ethics, and accountability.	<a href="http://www.bettergov.org/">http://www.bettergov.org/</a>
CPI	2011 Center for Public Integrity corruption risk index.	<a href="http://www.stateintegrity.org/">http://www.stateintegrity.org/</a>
Corruption indicators		
Boylan/Long	Corruption score based on survey of statehouse reporters.	Boylan and Long (2003)
Convictions	Convictions for public corruption 2001-2010 per 100,000 residents (logged).	US DOJ annual reports

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