

Brazil's corruption crisis: What next for an economy and political class undermined by systemic bribery?

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After two years of deep recession, Brazil's economy appears set this year for no more than modest recovery -- if that.

While this in part relates to international uncertainties, most of the economic doldrums are domestically driven -- a 'perfect storm' of high unemployment, a heavy household debt burden, an unsustainable fiscal deficit and the impact of the Petrobras/Odebrecht corruption scandal on political and economic sentiment.

Following the ouster of impeached President Dilma Rousseff last year, the fallout from the 'Operation Car Wash' corruption scandal has affected high-ranking politicians from across most political parties. Few are left unscathed. Many are party colleagues of President Michel Temer, whose dismal approval ratings raise questions over his ability to push unpopular fiscal and pension reforms through a divided Congress.

Governability questions will not end with the next presidential elections in 2018. On past form, the type of broad-based corruption uncovered by Operation Car Wash -- followed more recently by 'Operation Weak Flesh', a bribery scandal surrounding payments to allow the sale of contaminated meat -- may be the only apparent way of getting legislation through a Congress in which no government can realistically enjoy a majority.

If this is so, can the next government do things differently?

Join three of Oxford Analytica's expert advisors on Brazil and Latin American affairs on Tuesday, April 11 to discuss the prospects and challenges now facing the region's largest economy.

Chair

Paul Maidment, Director of Analysis and Managing Editor, Oxford Analytica

Paul Maidment joined Oxford Analytica in December 2014 as the Director of Analysis and Managing Editor of the Oxford Analytica Daily Brief.

He is an award-winning journalist who founded the New York-based digital editorial consultancy Bystander Media in 2010. A pioneer in combining digital and print journalism, he was previously Editor of Forbes.com and Executive Editor of Forbes, transforming a magazine website into the leading online destination for business, finance and up-scale lifestyle. Before joining Forbes in 2001, Paul was the founding Editor of the Financial Times' award-winning web site FT.com and Assistant Editor of the newspaper. His early career as an editor and foreign correspondent encompassed The Economist, the Asian Wall Street Journal and the BBC in the U.K. the U.S. and Asia — a depth of journalistic experience and breadth of media that gives him a unique perspective on the changes transforming publishing and the world economy. Paul was inducted into the Digital Hall of Fame in New York in 2010.

Panellists

Mahrukh Doctor, Senior Lecturer in Political Economy, University of Hull

Senior Lecturer in Political Economy at the University of Hull; She has held visiting academic posts at the Johns Hopkins University SAIS-Europe in Italy and the University of Sao Paulo and the Fluminense Federal University in Brazil; research interests include political economy of Brazil and regionalism in Latin America; previous positions include Lecturer, University of Reading; Research fellow, Centre for Brazilian Studies, University of Oxford; economist at the World Bank.

Timothy J. Power, Director of the Brazilian Studies Programme; Associate Professor in Brazilian Studies, University of Oxford

Timothy is a comparative political scientist with a deep commitment to interdisciplinary area studies. As an undergraduate at the University of Massachusetts in the early 1980s, he studied both Latin American literature and political science. He then completed an MA in interdisciplinary Latin American Studies at the University of Florida in 1986. He completed his PhD in political science at the University of Notre Dame in 1993, working mainly with the Kellogg Institute for International Studies, a centre that bears many similarities to SIAS. He then taught at Louisiana State University and Florida International University before arriving in Oxford in 2005. From 2008 to 2012 he directed the Latin American Centre, and he continues to direct the Brazilian Studies Programme within the LAC.

His research concerns democratization and political institutions (parties, legislatures, and elections) in modern Latin America, especially Brazil. With regard to Brazilian politics, he has written on the democratic transition in the 1980s, on the role of the political right in the 1990s, on the politics of constitutional design, and on recent ideological convergence in the Cardoso and Lula years. More recently he has been working on the consequences of “coalitional presidentialism” in Brazil, and within SIAS he is collaborating on a cross-regional ESRC-funded project on this topic with Paul Chaisty (REES) and Nic Cheeseman (Africa). In 2015, the three of them are busy writing up the results of this project (www.area-studies.ox.ac.uk/presidentialism).

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Laurence Whitehead, Senior Research Fellow, University of Oxford

A Senior Research Fellow of Nuffield College, during 2005/6 he served as Acting Warden there. In 2011/2 he served as Senior Proctor of the University. His most recent book (edited with Jacqueline Behrend) is "Illiberal Practices: Territorial Variance in Large Federal Democracies" Johns Hopkins UP, June 2016. Author of Latin America: A New Interpretation, and Democratization: Theory and Experience. Recently edited publications include The Obama Administration and the Americas: Shifting the Balance (with Lowenthal and Piccone); Democratization in America: A Comparative–Historical Analysis (with King, Lieberman, and Ritter), and Citizen Security in Latin America (with Bergman). Editor of 'Studies in Democratization' and President of the Conseil Scientifique of the Institut des Ameriques in Paris, and on the steering committee of the Red Eurolatinoamericana de Gobernabilidad para el Desarrollo.