Economic Gangsters: Corruption, Violence, and the Poverty of Nations. RAYMOND FISMAN AND EDWARD MIGUEL. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2008, Pp. 240. $24.95.

Economic Gangsters provides a vivid glimpse into the underworld of the political corruption, corporate greed, and superfluous poverty exhibited across the globe. Raymond Fisman and Edward Miguel impart a thought-provoking story that marks a call for social cognizance from an audience of economists, society, and nations. The authors paint a series of dramatic world events from an epic and deeply-rooted economic tale; successfully relating incidents which exemplify findings of statistical research behind the global mayhem.

The evolution of the term *gangster* is analyzed from its traditional origins exemplified by the notorious Al Capone and similar historical figures who forcefully impose their objectives through indisputably corrupt mechanisms on vulnerable individuals. Modern-day versions of the menacing gangster allude to figures who shield corrupt practices with seemingly harmless ventures based on a foundation of the most unscrupulous nature. The attentive practices of vigilant economics allow one to permeate the membrane of various smokescreens devised by economic gangsters to shield their unethical schemes. Once such gangsters are brought to light, the authors discuss measures and tactics that governments and individuals may implement to avoid falling victim of such complex systems of corruption.

Each scene begins with a problem, from perceivably simple to the most complex in nature; subsequently, the ramifications of each issue are examined and a continued metastasis is expected if left unresolved. One could not envision the long-term economic ramifications of a political figure merely catching a cold. The result of witness accounts of medical equipment entering the palace grounds of Indonesia's leader, Suharto, launched the political rumor mill running at high speed, weaving tales of an ailing leader and imminent economic desolation. Such a report of stock market fever can account for a number of situations as a direct consequence of rumors and the actions of political figures around global markets.

In another episode, the propensity of acquiring a simple parking ticket provided a measurement gauge of the ethical undertones of certain United Nations ambassadors. Countries with representatives who logged the greatest number of parking tickets revealed a higher level of political corruption. The correlation exhibited an enhanced probability for one to blur ethical boundaries ranging from the smallest, irrelevant incident to events of the highest magnitude. The nations of Egypt and Kuwait held the top slots for parking violations, while Sweden and Turkey displayed the least of any nation over the duration of the study. Although such simple events may seem irrelevant at first glance, the goal is to provoke cognizance amongst member nations and increase awareness of the ramifications of their everyday actions. An economic gangster exudes little in the form of consciousness of actions, self-awareness, and consideration for the well-being of others.

The authors examine aftermath of the ravages of war by examining two contrasting paths. The first is a path of destruction, devastating poverty, sheer economic ruin, squanderous leaders, and no relief in sight. The country of Rwanda exemplifies such an impoverished and devastated nation under the draconian rule of corrupt political figures. The second occurs with the guidance of leaders who possess an ambitious and achievable vision to move a nation in a positive direction: conscious leaders vigilantly sowing the seeds of a full economic recovery. Vietnam boasts a flourishing economy, a productive population, and demonstrates an epicenter of culture and sophistication in the region. Although Vietnam is prosperous in many respects, the authors cite a national war museum as one of the few echoes to serve as a humbling reminder of the memory of war.

A review of weather data and economic statistics from a multitude of impoverished nations around the world revealed a relationship between the amount of rainfall and the likelihood of civil war. Somalia and Chad exhibited a greater degree of political unrest and violence against the populace in periods of drought. Along the same lines of thought and statistical research, times of famine and misery for a nation increased the propensity for witch-killings in Tanzania. In times of uncertainty and unfathomable hardship, women labeled as *witches* for one reason or another bore the brunt of restless villagers and tribesman seeking justification for their unexplainable hardships. All the while, corrupt dictators hoard millions in aid relief as their citizens suffer at the hands of archaic superstitions and ravenousness warlords.

Economic gangsters furthermore appear in the form of seasoned smugglers who dodge tariffs by transforming imported items as less valuable commodities. The authors examine open import and export records to reveal an incessant trail of corruption. Greed often fuels the fictitious transactions of exporters plotting to remain ahead of competitors by instigating new methods of averting the trade laws of unsuspecting governments. Lai Changxing provides a quintessential example of one who rises to power thanks to layers of corruption and the blatant bribery of officials to secure favorable trade routes. Budding economic gangsters may note the trail of poor documentation which failed to substantiate business transactions and ultimately led to Lai's demise as a trafficker.

In order to remedy the dilemmas explored by the authors, a proactive leadership approach is essential. The unique practices of Columbian mayor, Dr. Antanas Mockus, impart a revolutionary model from which global leaders may prompt economic and social reform amidst historically patterns of corruption. In this instance, his approach of introducing mimes as enforcers of traffic laws drew on the conscious of citizens to recognize instances of poor judgment. Rather than simply accept the elevated levels of crime in troubled districts, the mayor ignited a sense of pride and ownership into his citizens. Such examples of economic recovery and positive behavior generate optimism in times of global uncertainty.

Fisman and Miguel leave the audience to ponder the fate of projects tainted by the existence of economic gangsters. Such overt corruption tends to sabotage the most well-intended business ventures and economic development plans; ultimately, guiding unwary nations and its people down an ominous path. The authors credit the foresight of cognizant and sincere world leaders, politicians, and economists as a remedy to the web of chaos resulting when the trend of such corruption is left unbridled. Thus, the onus is placed on the reader and informed members of society to ignite conversation and increase comprehension of the source of corruption, poverty, and violence amongst our global communities. Acknowledging and addressing the phenomenon of economic gangsters is the first step in an encouraging direction and a genuine promise for future generations.

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Rules for the Global Economy. HORST SIEBERT. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2009. Pp. xiv, 272. $49.50.

The author adopts an approach to the emergence of rules for a world