

**RE-MAPPING THE AMERICAS: GLOBALISATION, REGIONALISATION  
AND THE FTAA  
CONFERENCE PAPER ABSTRACT**

*GLOBALISATION, DEMOCRATIZATION AND THE CORRUPTION PANDEMIC IN  
CENTRAL AMERICA*

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**Objectives:**

The democratization and free trade waves sweeping the Latin American continent have had a third in their wake—one of tsunami-like proportions—which has inundated the region. It is the corruption eruption. Almost every day in newspapers throughout the region, readers are inundated with stories of official misdeeds. In Nicaragua, former President Arnoldo Aleman and a host of his officials are in prison for crimes of corruption. Similarly, in Guatemala, former President Alfonso Portillo has fled to exile in Mexico as the current regime investigates his administration's raid on the public coffers. Recently, in Ecuador, mass protests against corruption and misdeeds led to the ousting of President Gutierrez.

This analysis attempts to explain the corruption endemic by linking it to the spread of free trade and democratization. It will argue that the nature of the region's democratization with its emphasis on competition, liberalization and privatization have set in motion processes which have given rise to mismanagement, exploitation and outright corruption by those in positions of political power.

The issues being explored in this analysis, while they have relevance for several of the themes of the conference, prove a more apt fit with the overarching theme of "Governance and Multilateralism".

**Results**

It is expected that the results will show not only the processes which have facilitated the spread of corruption, but also they will demonstrate the impact of corruption on the various levels of society, and on the state itself.

**Conclusion:**

It is hoped that this research will shed light not only on the processes that have the tendency to give rise to corruption, but also on the actions which can be taken, (by governments, civil society, international organizations and others) to counter, eliminate or even avoid these ills.