

Max Weber Lecture

20 October 2010 at 17.00, EUI, Villa La Fonte

“Against Accountability”

Jane Mansbridge

Although relatively corrupt regimes require citizen monitoring and accountability enforced by the threat of sanction, this kind of relationship between citizens and their agents is inefficient and normatively unsatisfying. In relatively uncorrupt regimes, citizens do not need to depend so heavily on this “sanction model,” with its sanction-based accountability. Instead they can have a relationship with their representatives based on a “selection model” in which they select representatives who act “gyroscopically” from their own internal motivations and are replaced when the alignment between constituents and their representatives erodes. The more corrupt the regime, the more the relationship must be founded on sanction-based accountability. The less corrupt the regime, the more the citizens can afford representative relationships based primarily on a well-warranted sense of common purpose. The appropriate size of the selection “core” and sanction “periphery” depends in large part on the degree of corruption in the regime.