

# Analyzing the impact of anti-corruption reforms on wealth and power distribution in Roman Iberia: a historical and statistical perspective

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## ABSTRACT

Using historical analysis and statistical data, this study examines the impact of anti-corruption reforms on the distribution of wealth and power in Iberian Rome. Corruption in the Roman Republic posed serious challenges to just governance, and this led to reform initiatives to restore public trust and reduce the influence of corruption. This research examines the historical context of corruption and emphasizes its negative effects on wealth distribution and social equality.

Important reforms implemented in the early imperial period, especially under Augustus, aimed to address these issues and temporarily improve economic conditions, especially in urban centers such as Taraco and Córdoba. However, the effectiveness of these reforms varied considerably across regions, with rural areas typically benefiting less due to the influence of elite interests. Statistical analyzes show that there is a complex relationship between anti-corruption measures and wealth concentration, such that despite initial successes, many regions have returned to pre-reform levels of inequality over time.

The findings emphasize the need for continued political commitment and systemic change to ensure the sustainability of anti-corruption initiatives. By examining the Roman experience, this study provides valuable insights for contemporary anti-corruption efforts and emphasizes the importance of paying attention to power dynamics and strengthening social participation to promote equity and long-term transparency in governance.

## **1. Introduction**

The examination of the impact of anti-corruption reforms on wealth and power distribution in Roman Iberia, through both historical context and statistical analysis, offers a deeper understanding of how these reforms influenced social inequality and wealth redistribution. Corruption in the Roman Republic was perceived as one of the greatest threats to the stability and virtue of the state, prompting prominent figures like Cicero to advocate for reforms aimed at curbing corrupt practices (Friedrich, 2017). The Roman administration, particularly in the provinces, faced persistent challenges in wealth distribution, often favoring a small elite class, which exacerbated economic and social inequality (Scheidel, 2019).

Anti-corruption reforms in Roman Iberia, introduced under leaders such as Augustus, sought to restore public trust, reduce corruption among officials, and create more equitable systems of governance. These reforms targeted practices such as tax farming, bribery, and the exploitation of public offices, which had allowed the wealthy elite to consolidate power and resources at the expense of the broader population (Hopkins, 1980). Statistical evidence, derived from land ownership records, tax receipts, and public spending data, reveals that while these reforms did lead to some redistribution of wealth and improvements in economic conditions for the lower classes, their long-term effectiveness was often limited by the resilience of elite interests and the uneven enforcement of policies (Kroeze et al., 2018; Keay, 2001).

This study aims to analyze both the immediate and enduring impacts of anti-corruption reforms on wealth distribution in Roman Iberia, employing a combination of historical and statistical methods. By examining case studies from regions such as Baetica and Tarraco, it seeks to explore how these reforms affected economic conditions and contributed to shifts in power dynamics between the elite and the general population. Ultimately, while anti-corruption measures brought about short-term improvements, the persistence of systemic inequality highlights the limitations of such reforms in addressing the deep-rooted issues of wealth concentration and corruption within the Roman Empire (Scheidel, 2019; Mouritsen, 2017).

Aiming to investigate the impact of anti-corruption reforms on the distribution of wealth and power in Iberian Rome, this study provides a deeper insight into how these reforms affect social inequality and redistribution of wealth by using historical context and statistical analysis. Corruption in the Roman Republic was recognized as one of the greatest threats to the stability and virtue of the state, prompting figures such as Cicero to support reforms to curb corruption (Friedrich, 2017). The Roman state, especially in the provinces, faced constant challenges in the distribution of wealth, which was usually done in favor of a small class of elites, which led to the exacerbation of economic and social inequality (Scheidel, 2019).

Anti-corruption reforms in Iberia, led by figures such as Augustus, aimed to restore public confidence, reduce corruption among officials, and create more just systems of government. These reforms addressed practices such as unfair taxation, bribery, and exploitation of government jobs that allowed wealthy elites to consolidate their power and resources at the expense of the general population (Hopkins, 1980). Statistical evidence from land ownership records, tax receipts, and public expenditure data shows that although these reforms led to a redistribution of wealth and improved economic conditions for the lower classes, their long-term effects were often limited by elite influence and uneven policy implementation (Kroeze et al. al., 2018; Keay, 2001).

This study uses a combination of historical and statistical methods to analyze the immediate and lasting effects of anti-corruption reforms on the distribution of wealth in Iberian Rome. Examining case studies from regions such as Batika and Tarakou, it explores the impact of these reforms on

economic conditions and changes in power dynamics between elites and the general population. Finally, while anti-corruption measures brought short-term improvements, the persistence of systemic inequality clearly demonstrates the limitations of these reforms in confronting the fundamental issues of corruption and wealth concentration in the Roman Empire (Scheidel, 2019; Mouritsen, 2017).

## **1. Historical context of corruption**

Corruption in the Roman era was considered a serious threat to the republic, forcing figures such as Cicero to defend reforms (Friedrich, 2017). The Roman state faced challenges in the distribution of wealth, which often favored the elite, which exacerbated inequality (Scheidel, 2019).

### **1.1- The historical context of corruption in Iberian Rome**

Corruption in Roman Iberia, as in other parts of the Roman Empire, was deeply rooted in the political and economic systems. The Roman administrative structure was heavily dependent on local elites to manage the affairs of the provinces, and this dependence provided an opportunity for abuse of power and wealth extraction. These local elites, often landowners or merchants, played key roles in tax collection, law enforcement, and public administration, often using their positions to enrich themselves at the expense of the wider population (Hopkins, 1980).

During the Roman Republic and Early Empire, political corruption was seen as a serious problem not only in Rome, but throughout the provinces. As Roman power expanded into Iberia, the integration of local Iberian elites into Roman political and economic systems created new avenues for corruption. These elites usually tried to secure administrative positions by paying bribes, knowing that these roles offered significant opportunities for personal gain. This situation led Cicero and other Roman reformers to speak of the erosion of *\* virtus \**, or civic virtue, as public service became increasingly associated with private enrichment (Cicero, *\*De Officiis\**, 44 BC).

### **1.2- Taxation and Economic Corruption**

One of the most common forms of corruption in Roman Iberia was tax collection. The Roman government depended on a system of *\*publicani\** (tax farmers) who were responsible for collecting taxes from the provincial population. These tax collectors were often private contractors who bid for the right to collect taxes in certain areas. While the *\*publicani\** were required to deposit a certain amount into the Roman treasury, they were allowed to collect additional sums for themselves. This system, although efficient in terms of raising income, was rife with abuses, as tax farmers usually imposed heavy taxes on the local population and exploited their authority to maximize personal profit (Brunt, 1990).

The local elite in Iberia, who often collaborated with the *\*publicani\**, benefited from this situation. They usually underreported their estate wealth or bribed tax collectors to reduce their tax burden, thereby placing the financial burden on poorer citizens and small landowners. This situation helped to increase economic inequality and social unrest in the province. In response to these problems, anti-corruption reforms aimed at regulating tax collection and reducing the influence of tax farmers were implemented, but the implementation of these reforms was often inconsistent and many of the wealthiest families managed to avoid accountability (Kroeze et al., 2018).

### **1.3- Political Patronage and Clientelism**

Corruption in Roman Iberia was not limited to economic exploitation, but also spread through patronage and clientelism in the political system. Roman elites, both in Rome and in the provinces, had networks of patrons who depended on their legal support, financial support, and political interests. Instead, customers were expected to offer their loyalty, vote, and support in both public and private contexts. This system of patron and client relations was an integral part of the Roman political culture, and at the same time, it provided a suitable ground for corruption.

Provincial governors and other officials, when appointed to Iberia, often sought to build their client networks among local elites in order to gain political support and social influence. In many cases, these relationships involved corrupt practices such as the awarding of lucrative public contracts or legal immunity in exchange for bribes or political favors. As a result, the legal and political system in Roman Iberia became deeply intertwined with vested interests, making challenging reforms difficult to implement (Richardson, 1996).

#### **1.4- Elite Resistance to Anti-Corruption Efforts**

Efforts to combat corruption in Iberian Rome were significantly complicated by entrenched elite resistance. As the Roman government tried to implement reforms such as the \*Lex Calpurnia\* (149 BC) and other laws aimed at dealing with corrupt officials, elites often found new ways to undermine these efforts. Legal reforms that sought to punish corrupt governors or tax collectors were usually influenced by the social and political influence of the wealthy. Corruption trials, such as those under the \*Lex Julia de repetundis\*, were often held in favor of the accused, especially when the accused were from powerful families with strong connections to the senate or the imperial court (Lavan, 2021).

Furthermore, the informal nature of political power in Rome allowed elites to operate outside formal legal structures. Bribes, favors, and informal agreements were widespread, allowing the wealthy to continue their corrupt practices even as legal reforms were implemented. This tension between the formal rules of the Roman state and the informal power of elites was one of the defining characteristics of corruption in Roman Iberia and played an important role in limiting the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures (Hopkins, 1980).

In Roman Iberia, corruption was deeply rooted in both the political and economic systems, with local elites playing a central role in exploiting their positions for personal gain. Efforts to combat corruption, though sometimes effective, were often undermined by the entrenched interests of the wealthy and the informal networks of patronage and patronage that defined Roman political life. The historical background of corruption in Roman Iberia clearly shows the challenges of implementing anti-corruption reforms in societies where power is concentrated in the hands of a few and legal and political systems are intertwined with personal interests.

#### **2- Anti-Corruption Reforms and Their Effects**

Anti-corruption measures aimed at restoring public trust and improving governance have potentially led to a more equitable redistribution of power and wealth (Kroeze et al., 2018). Historical data suggests that effective reforms can reduce wealth concentration, as seen in comparative studies of wealth inequality (Scheidel, 2019).

##### **2.1- Anti-corruption reforms and their effects**

The anti-corruption reforms in Roman Iberia were part of a wider effort in the Roman Empire to deal with systemic abuses that threatened the stability and integrity of Roman rule. These reforms focused mainly on corruption among government officials, provincial governors, and tax collectors, and aimed to restore public trust and limit the exploitation of provincial people. However, the effects of these reforms were often uneven and temporary, varying depending on the

political will of the central authority and local conditions.

## **2.2- Legal reforms and Lex Repetundarum**

One of the first and most important anti-corruption laws in Roman history was the Lex Calpurnia de repetundis (149 BC), which aimed to prevent the abuse of power by provincial governors. The law made it possible to prosecute officials found guilty of extortion and corruption, and established a legal process that would allow aggrieved individuals, particularly in the provinces, to recover property or wealth illegally taken from them. was, take it back. In the context of Roman Iberia, this law was especially important considering the history of exploitation of this region by Roman authorities and local elites (Brunt, 1990).

Further strengthening these efforts, the Lex Julia de repetundis (59 BC), passed under Julius Caesar, reinforced the earlier law by imposing harsher penalties on corrupt officials and expanding the range of crimes that could be prosecuted. These reforms focused not only on financial misconduct, but also on other forms of administrative abuse, including unfair judgments and manipulation of public contracts. In theory, these laws should have provided greater protection to the provinces against exploitation, and there is evidence of Iberian authorities being prosecuted under these laws (Lavan, 2021).

## **2.3- Impact on provincial governance**

In practice, anti-corruption reforms in Roman Iberia had mixed results. On the one hand, these laws reflected Rome's determination to improve governance and ensure a more equitable distribution of wealth and power. Some governors, especially in the early period of the empire, made real efforts to implement reforms and reduce corruption. For example, governors under Augustus were usually carefully selected for their administrative competence, and there is evidence that corruption prosecutions increased during this period, with several important cases brought to trial (Eck, 2000).

The reforms also encouraged provincial officials to be more cautious in their dealings, aware of the possible consequences of being convicted of corruption. This led to improved monitoring of tax collection and a reduction in the more blatant forms of extortion that were prevalent in earlier periods. The legal framework created by the Lex repetundarum has acted as a deterrent in some cases, making officials worried about the possible consequences of prosecution and loss of wealth and social status (Lavan, 2021).

## **2.4- Restrictions and subversion of elites**

However, the overall effectiveness of these reforms was limited by several factors. First, while the laws had a clear purpose, their implementation was often fraught with contradictions. Provincial elites, especially in outlying areas such as Iberia, were usually able to escape punishment by taking advantage of their connections with powerful people in Rome. Many corrupt officials belonged to influential families who could avoid convictions by pressure on the legal system or use bribes to secure favorable outcomes in court (Richardson, 1996).

Moreover, anti-corruption reforms were often undermined by the very people responsible for implementing them. Provincial governors who had the authority to investigate corruption themselves were usually involved in corruption and used their position to secure personal wealth. Even where corrupt officials were convicted, they sometimes received only light sentences, which reduced the deterrent effect of reform. This lack of consistent enforcement undermined the credibility of anti-corruption efforts and allowed elites to continue their exploitation of the provincial population (Kroeze et al., 2018).

### **2.5- Economic and social effects**

Despite these challenges, anti-corruption reforms had significant effects on the distribution of wealth and power in Roman Iberia. Historical and archaeological evidence shows that during periods when reforms were seriously implemented, redistribution of wealth took place temporarily, as corrupt officials were stripped of their ill-gotten gains and the proceeds were returned to the people or victims. For example, records from the early imperial period show that some public projects in Iberia, such as the construction of roads and aqueducts, were financed using funds returned from corrupt officials (Keay, 2001).

In addition, the reforms helped reduce social tensions in some Roman Iberian urban centers by curbing more severe forms of corruption. Popular discontent with the exploiting elite was an important source of unrest, and when the reforms were implemented, they had a stabilizing effect and improved relations between the Roman authorities and the local population. In some cases, this even led to further integration of the Iberian elite into the Roman political system as reformist officials sought to create more equitable partnerships with local leaders (Hopkins, 1980).

### **2.6- Reforms and the imperial system**

During the Roman Empire, the concentration of power in the hands of the emperor allowed for more direct oversight of provincial government and, in theory, strengthened the enforcement of anti-corruption measures. Augustus especially emphasized moral reforms and the correct administration of justice and sought to revive the virtues of the republic. In Iberia, this approach led to a more systematic system of governance and greater accountability for provincial officials (Eck, 2000).

However, as the imperial system evolved, the concentration of power in the hands of the emperor and his appointed officials also created new opportunities for corruption. While some emperors, such as Augustus and Vespasian, made concerted efforts to reduce corruption, others paid less attention to provincial government and allowed abuses to re-emerge. Therefore, the success of anti-corruption reforms depended heavily on the individual personalities and preferences of each emperor and provincial governor, and the ability of local elites to resist reforms remained a constant challenge (Mouritsen, 2017).

### **2.7- Anti-corruption reforms in Roman Rome**

In the long run, anti-corruption reforms in Roman Iberia, although they brought temporary improvements, failed to produce lasting changes in entrenched systems of wealth and power. The persistence of elite interests and the inconsistent and inconsistent performance of corrupt officials meant that corruption remained a defining feature of Roman provincial government. Although a significant amount of wealth was redistributed and public confidence was partially restored at various times, these effects often reversed after reforms slowed down (Scheidt, 2019).

However, the Roman Iberian experience offers important lessons in understanding the dynamics of corruption and reform. While legal frameworks and reforms are necessary to combat corruption, their success depends on sustained political will, effective implementation, and the ability to overcome elite resistance. Without these elements, even well-intentioned reforms are likely to fail and result in only temporary or superficial changes.

### **3- Statistical Analysis of Reforms**

The distributional impact of reforms is critical to understanding their effectiveness, particularly in addressing the needs of vulnerable populations (Cauduel & Paternostro, 2006). Evidence from different historical contexts shows that successful anti-corruption policies can lead to improved economic conditions for the lower classes, thereby changing wealth dynamics (Kroeze et al., 2018).

A statistical analysis of anti-corruption reforms in Roman Iberia provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of these measures and their wider impact on wealth distribution and social equality. Although detailed economic data from this period are limited, historical records, archaeological findings, and comparative studies provide a basis for understanding the quantitative effects of these reforms on the concentration of elite wealth and the economic conditions of the lower classes.

#### **3.1- Measurement of wealth distribution**

One of the primary indicators for analyzing the impact of anti-corruption reforms is the distribution of wealth among different social strata. In Roman Iberia, as in many other parts of the Roman Empire, wealth was heavily concentrated in the hands of a small elite class of landowners, merchants, and provincial officials. Before the implementation of reforms, this concentration of wealth was aggravated by corrupt practices such as unfair taxation, bribery and abuse of government offices (Scheidel, 2019).

By examining records of land ownership, property transactions, and public spending, historians have been able to estimate changes in the concentration of wealth over time. During periods when anti-corruption reforms were implemented more vigorously, such as the reign of Augustus and later periods of reformism, the proportion of wealth among the elite declined slightly. For example, archaeological evidence shows that a more equitable distribution of property was seen in certain urban centers such as Taraco and Córdoba, where public projects and reforms aimed at reducing the influence of corrupt officials had a significant impact (Keay, 2001).

While the decline in wealth concentration was small, the data suggest that the middle class, particularly urban merchants and smaller landowners, saw modest increases in prosperity during these periods of reform. This was probably due to reduced exploitation by tax collectors and a more equitable use of Roman law, which provided some protection from the predatory practices of local elites (Kroeze et al., 2018).

#### **3.2- Tax data and economic redistribution**

Tax records from Iberian Rome, although incomplete, provide another way to analyze the effects of anti-corruption reforms. The Roman tax system was notorious for its complexity, and taxes collected on land, income, and goods were often administered through middlemen known as

publicani (tax farmers). The role of these tax farmers was crucial in the economic exploitation of the provinces, as they usually taxed the population and kept the excess revenue for themselves, leading to widespread inequality (Hopkins, 1980).

Reforms that sought to regulate tax farming and improve the transparency of the tax process led to a measurable reduction in the overall tax burden on the lower classes. Statistical analysis of recovered tax receipts and inscriptions show that during the reformist periods, the proportion of income collected as taxes has decreased in some areas. For example, inscriptions from Baetica and Lusitania show that local communities were able to retain a greater share of their agricultural produce and income after the reforms were implemented, suggesting a direct economic benefit from anti-corruption measures. Richardson, 1996).

However, these developments were not uniform throughout Iberia. In more isolated and rural areas, where elite landowners enjoyed greater autonomy, the reforms had less impact. These areas continued to see high levels of wealth concentration and economic inequality, as local elites were able to circumvent reforms or bribe officials to avoid oversight. This disparity in outcomes highlights regional variation in the effectiveness of anti-corruption reforms, with urban centers benefiting more from these changes (Mouritsen, 2017).

### **3.3- Impact on public spending and infrastructure**

Another statistical measure of the impact of anti-corruption reforms is the increase in public spending for infrastructure and civil projects. During periods of reform, especially in the early imperial period, there was a significant increase in investment in public works such as roads, aqueducts, and temples. This increase in public spending can be partially attributed to the redistribution of wealth from corrupt officials to the public sphere.

For example, under Augustus, a significant portion of the funds recovered from corrupt provincial governors and tax farmers were channeled into large-scale public projects. In Roman Iberia, cities such as Amrita Augusta and Tarraco saw improvements in infrastructure, with the construction of public baths, amphitheatres, and other urban amenities that directly benefited the people. Archaeological evidence from these cities suggests that these projects were funded in part through the wealth confiscated from corrupt officials, suggesting that anti-corruption reforms had a tangible economic impact on the quality of life of ordinary citizens (Keay, 2001).

In terms of statistical analysis, inscriptions and endowments found on public buildings provide a record of the sums spent on these projects and allow historians to estimate the level of public investment. During periods of reform, public spending increased by as much as 20 percent in some areas, reflecting the direct financial benefits of anti-corruption measures (Hopkins, 1980).

### **3.4- Long-term effects on wealth concentration**

Despite these short-term improvements, statistical analyzes show that the long-term effects of anti-corruption reforms have been limited. Over time, the concentration of wealth gradually returned



to pre-reform levels as elites adapted to the new regulations and found ways around them. This is evident from land ownership data, which show that by the middle of the second century AD, the richest one percent of the population controlled roughly the same proportion of land and resources as they did before the reforms (Scheidel, 2019).

The continued concentration of elite wealth can be attributed to a variety of factors, including the lack of consistent enforcement, the flexibility of corrupt practices, and the continued power of local elites to influence political and legal systems. While the reforms briefly redistributed some wealth and improved economic conditions for the lower classes, these changes were not sustainable without continued monitoring and reform efforts. Statistical data from the period after the initial wave of reforms show that these gains were gradually reversed as elite families reasserted their control over land and resources (Mouritsen, 2017).

### **3.5- Statistical views of wealth redistribution**

Statistically, the reforms in Iberia led to measurable changes in the distribution of wealth, although these changes were limited in scope and duration. An examination of land ownership records, tax records, and archaeological evidence on housing and burials indicates a modest decrease in wealth concentration during periods of reform. Specifically, the data suggest that during the reign of Emperor Augustus, there was a slight decline in the wealth of the top one percent of landowners and a small increase in the prosperity of the middle classes, especially in urban areas (Scheidel, 2019).

However, these changes were often short-lived. Without consistent enforcement, wealth and power gradually became concentrated in the hands of the elite, especially with the emergence of new economic opportunities such as mining and trade in Iberia. Statistical data, when compared with historical records, reveal the limitations of reforms in achieving long-term redistribution and reinforce the need for continued monitoring and broader systemic change (Mouritsen, 2017).

### **3.6- Conclusion from statistical analysis**

Statistical analysis of anti-corruption reforms in Roman Iberia reveals a complex and diverse legacy. While reforms had measurable effects on wealth distribution, public spending, and economic equality, these gains were generally temporary and limited in scope. The data show the challenges of implementing sustainable anti-corruption measures in a system dominated by powerful elites; An elite whose ability to adapt and resist reform often undermined the efforts of the Roman state.

In the short term, the reforms succeeded in reducing some forms of corruption, particularly in urban areas and the tax system, leading to a slight improvement in wealth distribution and public investment. However, without sustained political will and rigorous implementation, these reforms were insufficient to bring about long-term change. Statistical evidence shows that although anti-corruption measures can have positive effects, they must be part of a broader and more sustained effort to address the underlying structures of wealth and power that enable corruption to flourish. In addition, the impact of anti-corruption reforms on power structures in Roman Iberia is significant. Power in Roman society was closely related to wealth, and the elite used both to

consolidate their rule. Reforms aimed at curbing corruption often threaten these entrenched interests, which may lead to overt and covert resistance to change (Lavan, 2021). By combining historical narratives and statistical analyses, we can better understand the complex dynamics of corruption, reform, and distribution of power in Roman Iberia.

#### **4- Regional changes in the impact of reforms**

The impact of anti-corruption reforms in Iberian Rome also varied in different regions. Iberia was a diverse province with distinct economic, social and political landscapes that extended from the urban centers of Taraco and Córdoba to rural areas. In urban environments, where economic activities were highly regulated and closely related to Roman administrative structures, anti-corruption reforms had a more immediate and pronounced impact. Government officials, especially those overseeing taxation and trade, were likely to come under greater scrutiny, leading to changes in local power dynamics (Richardson, 1996).

But in rural areas, the scope of these reforms was more limited. Wealthy landowners, who wielded great influence over economic resources and political appointments, often operated with a degree of autonomy from the Roman authorities. As a result, reforms aimed at curbing corruption were less effective in these areas, allowing local elites to maintain their grip on power. This regional disparity in the effectiveness of reforms is reflected in archaeological and epigraphic evidence, which shows greater disparity in wealth in rural areas until the Imperial period (Keay, 2001).

#### **5- The role of governors and Roman law**

The success of anti-corruption reforms in Roman Iberia depended significantly on the role of provincial governors and the implementation of Roman laws. Appointed by the senate or the emperor, provincial governors had considerable authority to implement reforms, but their commitment to anti-corruption measures varied. Some governors, such as the famous Gnaeus Julius Agricola in Britain, were known for their integrity and efforts to improve provincial administration. But others were accused of abusing their position for personal gain and undermining the reforms they were tasked with implementing (Tacitus, AD 98).

The effectiveness of Roman laws also played an important role in curbing corruption. Laws such as *Lex Julia de repetundis*, which punished offending officials, provided the legal framework for reform. But enforcement of these laws was often patchy, especially in distant provinces like Iberia, where local elites could exert pressure on the legal system. The ability of wealthier citizens to manipulate legal outcomes to their advantage remained a significant obstacle to the success of anti-corruption efforts (Lavan, 2021).

#### **6- Conclusions and Implications for Modern Anti-Corruption Strategies**

The Iberia case offers valuable lessons for contemporary anti-corruption efforts. While reforms can play an important role in reducing corruption and redistributing wealth and power, their effectiveness is often limited by entrenched elite resistance, regional disparities, and inconsistent implementation. Historical evidence and statistical analysis from Iberia show that although anti-corruption measures can lead to temporary improvements in justice, maintaining these gains requires substantial legal and institutional reforms. However, it comes with stronger mechanisms for responding. For modern policymakers, the Roman experience highlights the importance of context in designing anti-corruption strategies. Reforms should be tailored to the specific political, economic and social conditions of each region and should be accompanied by consistent implementation and legal support to prevent backsliding. In addition, addressing the structural

causes of corruption, such as the concentration of wealth and political power, is necessary to achieve lasting change.

### **Conclusion**

An analysis of anti-corruption reforms in Roman Iberia reveals a complex interplay between governance, economic distribution, and social equality. These reforms were implemented with the goal of reducing corruption and fostering a more just society, but their effectiveness varied significantly across regions and over time. Historical evidence suggests that reforms, especially in the early imperial period under the leadership of figures such as Augustus, led to temporary improvements in the distribution of wealth and public investment. Aimed at reducing the concentration of power and resources in the hands of a limited elite, these measures responded to some of the systemic inequalities that plagued the Roman state (Scheidel, 2019; Kroeze et al., 2018).

Statistical analyzes show that areas such as Tarako and Batika benefited significantly from these reforms, including increased public spending on infrastructure and a slight improvement in the economic conditions of the lower classes (Keay, 2001; Hopkins, 1980). However, long-term effects were often undermined by the flexibility of elite interests and the lack of sustained implementation of anti-corruption policies. As local elites adapted to circumvent the new regulations, wealth concentration gradually returned to pre-reform levels, suggesting that without sustained political will and systemic change, even well-intentioned reforms may not achieve the desired results (Mouritsen, 2017).

Furthermore, the findings highlight the need to integrate broader systemic changes alongside anti-corruption measures to create lasting improvements in wealth distribution. The historical persistence of corruption in Roman Iberia serves as a reminder of the challenges ahead in promoting just governance and demonstrates that reforms alone cannot eliminate entrenched power dynamics (Friedrich, 2017). Finally, this study emphasizes the importance of understanding the historical and contextual factors that influence the success of anti-corruption initiatives and provides valuable lessons for contemporary efforts to promote economic equity and transparency.

### **Discussion**

Exploring anti-corruption reforms in Roman Iberia provides a multifaceted understanding of the impact of governance mechanisms on wealth distribution and social equality. These reforms came about as a response to the pervasive culture of corruption that threatened the integrity of the Roman state. Corruption, characterized by practices such as bribery, tax farming, and abuse of public office, was not merely an administrative issue, but a fundamental obstacle to civic virtue and just governance. Prominent figures such as Cicero emphasized the urgency of reform and argued that corruption undermined the fundamental principles of the republic (Friedrich, 2017).

The historical context shows that the Roman government struggled to maintain a fair distribution of wealth, which mainly benefited the elite. Scheidel (2019) notes that this concentration of wealth exacerbated inequality and hindered social mobility, creating a socio-economic divide that reverberated across the empire. Anti-corruption reforms led by figures like Augustus were a vital step in addressing these systemic issues. These reforms were implemented with the aim of restoring public trust, increasing transparency in administrative processes, and reducing the disproportionate influence of corrupt officials on economic and social resources (Kroeze et al.,

2018).

The effectiveness of these reforms varied considerably in different regions of Iberia. Urban centers such as Taraco and Corduba benefited from these reforms due to their appropriate administrative structure and active participation of local communities in governance. Historical records and archaeological findings indicate that these cities saw improvements in infrastructure and public services as resources recovered from corrupt officials were reinvested in civic projects (Keay, 2001). For example, public baths, roads, and aqueducts not only increased the quality of life for residents, but also facilitated economic activity by promoting trade and mobility.

In contrast, rural areas generally received limited benefits from reforms. Local elites wielded great power and often circumvented anti-corruption measures through bribery or political influence. This inequality is highlighted in the implementation of reforms and the challenges of systemic change in areas where elite interests remain dominant (Mouritsen, 2017). The persistence of corruption in these areas shows that although reforms can have positive results, their long-term sustainability requires strong mechanisms for accountability and monitoring.

Statistical analysis of wealth distribution also emphasizes the different results of anti-corruption reforms. While some studies show that the reforms have led to a slight reduction in the concentration of wealth among elites, this change is often temporary, and economic data from the early post-reform period show a gradual return to pre-reform levels of inequality (Scheidel, 2019). The flexibility of elite interests, combined with a lack of sustained political commitment to reform, usually leads to the return of corrupt practices and the perpetuation of wealth disparity.

The findings of this study are consistent with contemporary debates about anti-corruption initiatives. These findings emphasize the importance of not only implementing reforms, but also ensuring their sustainability through ongoing engagement and systemic change. Historical evidence suggests that successful anti-corruption efforts must address underlying power dynamics and encompass broader socio-political contexts. This approach is very important in reducing the risk of returning to corrupt practices, as the Roman experience shows.

Moreover, the relationship between economic conditions and public confidence cannot be ignored. Reforms that will improve the conditions of Aq They lead to gains for the lower classes, likely to foster a sense of civic participation and trust in government. Historical data show that effective anti-corruption policies can provide better economic conditions for marginalized groups and change the dynamics of wealth distribution (Coudouel & Paternostro, 2006). This interaction highlights the need for policy makers to consider the socio-economic consequences of their initiatives and actively involve communities in the reform process.

Finally, the discussion of anti-corruption reforms in Roman Iberia reveals important lessons about governance, wealth distribution, and social equality. While these reforms achieved initial successes, the historical context underscores the challenges of sustaining change against entrenched interests. The Roman Iberian experience shows that anti-corruption initiatives must be part of a broader strategy aimed at systemic transformation, ensuring that reforms not only address immediate issues, but also contribute to long-term equity and justice in society.

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