Perceptions of corruption in Flanders: surveying citizens and police. A study on the influence of occupational differential association on perceptions of corruption

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Perceptions of corruption in Flanders: surveying citizens and police. A study on the influence of occupational differential association on perceptions of corruption

This study is specifically designed to illustrate the differences between occupational status groups in the perception of corruption. Perceptions of corruption are studied in the present article using a theoretical framework based on Sutherland’s differential association theory. A questionnaire was sent to 2,256 Flemish citizens and 350 police officers. The core of the questionnaire was a set of 15 items describing potentially corrupt situations. The results indicate that the process of occupational differential association tends to influence people’s perceptions of corruption. This study provides empirical support for an organisational explanation of how normative conflict in society translates into specific corruption resistance within different occupational status groups.

Introduction

Social networks are places where perceptions of corruption are created. A pan-European study in eight countries on the cultural construction of crime revealed that different groups share different perceptions of corruption (Tänzler et al. 2012). The meaning of corruption varies in our society between distinct groups. The police and the judicial services apply an institutionalised legal framework to guide their perceptions of corruption. The media reflects a much broader concept, and applies the term corruption to define all kinds of public situations that are the result of bad governance. Johnston (1986) and Redlawsk and McCann (2005) offered a pertinent explanation for class-based differences in the judgement of corrupt situations, using an interest-based argument. Lower and middle ranked groups might disapprove benefits and privileges from the government that ‘are seen by higher status groups as merely the fruits of merit and expertise’ (Johnston 1986: 387). Jackson and Smith (1996) considered the different
ways in which politicians and citizens perceive acts of ‘political’ corruption. Politicians
were more tolerant of corruption than citizens. In a previous paper, we analysed
variations in the perception of corruption in the Belgian region of Flanders (XX 2013).
The main finding was that perceptions coincide with the relevant opportunities,
networks and skills to which people have access because of their occupational status.

The present article will further investigate perceptions of corruption, using a
theoretical framework based on Sutherland’s differential association theory. This theory
consists of three interrelated concepts: normative conflict, differential association and
differential social organisation (Sutherland 1967; Sutherland et al. 1992). The concept
of differential association assumes that individuals learn the skills and definitions of
deviance within intimate groups. The influence of the process of differential association
has been analysed in a previous paper (XX 2013). The theoretical perspective that
differential association is interrelated with the ‘process of differential social
organisation’ is addressed in the present article. This concept of differential social
organisation refers to the extent to which a group is organised in favour of or against
crime (Sutherland et al. 1992: 104-105). The present article, therefore, includes the
perceptions of a group organised to suppress corruption (police officers from the
Central Office for the Repression of Corruption (CORC), the Flemish districts of the
federal judicial police (FJP) and local police forces (LPs).

There is, as well as this theoretical interest, social relevance to our research. A
minimalistic view of democratic policing refers to the principle that the police have to
act to enforce the law (Aitchison and Blaustein 2013). The criminal law, however, is
supposed to evolve in relation to changing economic and societal conditions. The
present study indicates possible gaps between societal perceptions of corruption and the
forms of corruption prohibited by the law. A contemporary example for Belgium is the

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practice of dual mandates, in which politicians and public officials simultaneously hold more than one position – such as a federal politicians who also acts as the (unremunerated) chairman of a private company. Although this is not an offence today, a dual mandate evokes a sense of injustice, and a significant group of people call it corrupt. Secondly, police resources are less available to investigate corruption when corruption is not acknowledged as a priority. Consequently, it is possible that some forms of corruption are under-investigated even though they are perceived as corrupt by some groups in society. Thirdly, corruption is a hidden crime so that the parties involved are almost the only source for reports on potential cases. From this perspective, it is important to understand the degree of social disapproval of potentially corrupt behaviour, and whether some groups in society are more tolerant of particular forms of corruption. We can assume that tolerant groups will not react against corrupt behaviour.

This article is structured as follows. The first section addresses the theoretical concepts of differential association and differential social organisation in relation to the study of perceptions of corruption. Our research design and methodology is reported on in relation to this theoretical framework, and our principal findings are discussed in the final section.

Differential association and the concept of corruption

Sutherland’s differential association theory is based upon the assumption that deviance occurs when people define a certain human situation as an appropriate

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occasion for violating social norms or criminal laws. Sutherland stated that modern
industrial society is segmented into groups that are in conflict over the definition of
appropriate behaviour. Besides this normative conflict, the differential association
theory uses two other concepts – differential association process and differential social
organisation – to explain differences in deviance between individuals and groups
(Sutherland et al. 1992; Matsueda 2006).

Perceptions of corruption and the process of differential association

According to Sutherland, ‘learning’ of deviant behaviour includes two elements:
skills and definitions (Sutherland et al. 1992). Skills means the requisite skills and
techniques needed to commit a crime. Depending on their access to ‘resources’ and
networks, people explore different opportunities and apply different skills. These
‘opportunities’, Sutherland argues, will result in different learning structures (Cloward
1959). Petty influence, for instance, is an example often referred to as an instrument
used by the ‘under-privileged’ to achieve their goals (de Sousa 2008). Della Porta and
Mény (1997) considered a different form of corruption, generally referred to as ‘grand
corruption’, or the notion of corruption as an exchange between the elites of the political
or administrative spheres and those of the economic and social markets. Respondents
who do not have access to particular opportunities and/or have not learned to apply
accepted and proper skills will be less tolerant of such behaviour. The second element,
definitions, refers to the favourable and unfavourable definitions of crime – the motives,
verbalisations and rationalisations that make crime more justified or acceptable
(Sutherland et al. 1992). Groups that are assimilated and socialised within a tolerant
environment, therefore, have a wide range of alternative definitions of corruption.
Whenever a corrupt practice is accepted as a way of doing business, it will probably not
be defined as corrupt. Jacobsson (2012), for example, ascertained that people suspected
of white-collar criminality refer to their prevailing business culture and use other labels for bribery. Zaloznaya (2012) observed that students, parents and professors learned favourable definitions of corruption once they entered the Ukrainian university system. This learning of criminality, which takes place via communication and experience within networks, influences the choice by members of the network of one definition over other potential definitions, rather than influencing members’ instrumental considerations and moral beliefs about corruption. In other words, criminals acquire definitions that legitimise certain forms of deviant behaviour.

Perceptions of corruption and differential social organisation

A second and less frequently cited concept of Sutherland’s theory is the concept of differential social organisation. This concept provides an organisational explanation of how normative conflict in society translates into specific group rates of crime (Matsueda 2006). According to Sutherland’s theoretical model, two distinct organisations exist: those organised against crime and those organised in favour of crime. Sutherland hypothesised that the relative strength of these two kinds of organisation could explain the crime rate of groups (Sutherland et al. 1992). The concept of differential social organisation implies that people will be exposed to various competing definitions of corruption and will learn different skills depending on their particular group membership. Since we are studying the process of differential social organisation, we introduce to our study a group organised to perform the function of suppressing criminality. Police officers are supposed to disapprove of deviant behaviour and to be exposed to negative definitions of crime. Accordingly, police officers – as members of a group organised against corruption – can be supposed to be less tolerant when making judgements about corrupt situations.
An interesting question remains, however, relating to the extent to which the process of differential social organisation is ‘offence specific’ or ‘offence general’ (Jackson et al. 1986; Matsueda 1988). To state this differently, are the police (as a group organised against criminality) less tolerant of corruption than they are of other crimes? Or do specific units encounter specific processes of differential organisation? This question is studied by including police respondents with a different specialisation in our sample. A distinction has been made between CORC police officers, FJP officers and LPs. The core task of the CORC is to investigate complex and serious cases of corruption and related offences like misappropriation of public funds or conflicts of interest. In order to conduct its complex investigations, this office recruits specialists with a very high level of expertise. After the CORC, the 27 districts of the federal judicial police are concerned with criminal behaviour that threatens the democratic nature of the state, such as organised crime, corruption, trafficking in human beings, fiscal fraud and terrorism. The local judicial police are in many cases concerned with local crimes and crimes with individual victims such as theft or acts of violence (Ponsaers et al. 2010). In line with the principles of the process of differential social organisation we would expect that CORC officers will be less tolerant of corruption than other officers because they are more intensively exposed to negative definitions of corruption.

The theoretical framework outlined above informs the general theoretical basis of this article. Tolerance towards corruption is learned through interactions within networks of like-minded individuals – what Sutherland referred to as differential association. Because of the interrelation between differential association and differential social organisation (Sutherland et al. 1992: 90), groups organised against corruption
will present an abundance of favourable corruption definitions. This hypothesis is
translated into the following research questions:

RQ1: Are police officers less tolerant of corruption than other occupational
status groups?

RQ2: Do specialised anti-corruption officers have different perceptions of
corruption from other investigative officers?

Methodology and research design

The first phase of the study consisted of a population survey. The field work was
conducted by a professional firm specializing in population surveys. During the second
phase, different police departments were surveyed between February and December

A simple random sampling was used for the population survey. In the sampling,
the directory of the Belgian Institute for Postal Services and Telecommunication
(B.I.P.T) was used. A limitation should be mentioned here, however, since the B.I.P.T.
only records households with a landline and/or a mobile phone number. A minority of
1% of Flemish citizens, mainly elderly and less educated people, do not make use of
either a mobile or a landline telephone (Pickery 2010). Before sending out the
questionnaires, the respondents were contacted by telephone. These telephone calls
created a threshold-lowering effect by producing some ‘goodwill’ in the people who
were contacted (Fox et al. 1988). In order to ensure that the sample was representative,
the contacts took place outside office hours (between 4pm and 8pm). 2,256
questionnaires were sent out in three waves in the period from February to May 2011. A
total of 607 valid surveys was obtained, a 26.9% response rate. Elderly people were
slightly overrepresented in the response group, while poorly educated people were
underrepresented. The response sample consisted of 18.9% less well-educated people,
38% people with a medium level of education and 42.8% of well-educated persons whereas the percentages in Belgium are, respectively, 37.43%, 25.31% and 37.27%.\(^2\)

Another key variable for this study is employment. The response sample, with 1.6% unemployed respondents, 37.3% inactive people and 61.1% employed people, is similar to the 2012 official employment statistics: 5.09%, 33.06% and 61.85%.\(^3\) The sample was weighted using three variables, gender, age and county, although those with a medium and high level of education were slightly overrepresented.

To test the influence of differential social organisation, we included a comprehensive sample of police officers in our study. Federal (CORC and FJP) as well as local police officers took part in the present study to reflect the Belgian integrated police service that has a federal level and a local level. 34 of the 57 police investigators working at the CORC in February 2012 filled in a questionnaire. In the period between September and December 2012, all 14 Flemish FJP districts were contacted. 190 questionnaires from 13 FJP districts were received. During the last phase, we invited 27 local police forces (LPs) to participate in the research. Local police forces are categorized into five groups based on the urbanization of their area, and vary from a metropolitan police force to forces operating in rural areas. Stratified sampling was therefore used, with individual police forces being randomly selected within each stratum. 14 of these forces participated and 126 officers from a local police force filled in the questionnaire. The response rate by group ranged from 59.65% (N=34) for the CORC, 80% (N=190) for the FJP and 50% (N=126) for the LP.

The core of the questionnaire was a set of 15 items describing potentially corrupt situations. These situations were selected on the basis of a qualitative in-depth study of


Flemish newspapers. Within each situation we varied the salient characteristics (payoff, undue advantage, donor of the payoff, public or private role), resulting in 56 different hypothetically corrupt situations (see, for more information, XX 2010). The respondents were asked to score the extent to which they judged the situations to be corrupt, using a five-point Likert scale (from 1 very corrupt to 5 not corrupt). Afterwards, the individual scores were recoded as follows: 1–2 was recoded as corrupt, 3 as neither corrupt nor not corrupt and 4–5 as not corrupt.

In view of the fact that we were studying the influence of occupational differential social organisation on the perception of corruption, respondents were asked to provide information on their occupational status. A distinction was made between actively employed and non-actively employed respondents. Non-active respondents are pensioners (including early retirees), the unemployed, those drawing disability benefits (including both those who are ill and the disabled), students and homemakers. Occupational active respondents are categorised as public servants, those working in the private sector and the self-employed. Finally, one question measured the status of the occupation. Public officials were divided according to the official Belgian civil service scale, from the highest level (A) to the lowest level (D). Private sector workers were divided between unskilled workers, skilled workers, lower clerks, middle clerks, senior clerks and management. Self-employed persons were divided into small independents (for example grocery, shoemaker), farmers/fishermen, contractors, wholesalers and, finally, professionals (e.g., lawyers, accountants and doctors). The rank ordering of the respondents’ occupational status is presented in Table 1.4 Group 1 represents Flemish

4 Due to their very tolerant attitudes, students have been treated as a separate group in our sample.
citizens with the lowest occupational status, whereas Group 4 represents citizens with the highest occupational status.

Insert Table 1 here

Results and discussion
A previous analysis concluded that members of different occupational status groups have different perceptions of corruption (XX 2013) and, therefore, it is not considered meaningful to compare police officers’ perceptions with those of the general public. Instead, the present article focuses on the differences between the occupational status groups in the way they perceive corruption. Police officers are here treated as a separate occupational status group.

We observed in 36 scenarios (22 describing potential forms of petty corruption and 14 referring to grand corruption) a statistical difference between the distinct occupational status groups and the police. The most important differences in the perception of corruption between the occupational status groups and the police are summarized below.

1. Low occupational status groups are more tolerant of petty corruption. This is the case for 19 of the 22 scenarios describing petty corruption (situations 1-7, 22, 24-26 and 29-36). Situations 8, 9 and 23 are exceptions to this trend.

2. High occupational status groups are more tolerant of grand corruption. This is the case for 9 of the 14 scenarios describing situations of grand corruption (situations 10-16 and 18-19). Exceptions are situations 20, 21, 27 and 28. Situation 17 is perceived

Each situation is followed by a reference number that corresponds with the order of appearance in the cross table.
as corrupt by almost all respondents, and the differences between the occupational
status groups are therefore small.

3. Police officers are the least tolerant group. 25 out of the 36 scenarios are
perceived as more corrupt by police officers (situations 2-4, 6, 8-9, 11-12, 17, 20-27 and
29-36).

4. Police officers tend to be more tolerant of grand corruption. 7 situations of grand
corruption are judged to be more corrupt by low occupational status groups than by
police respondents (situations 10, 13-16, 18-19 and 28). This trend is not observed for
petty corruption.

5. Police officers are, however, divided in their perception of corruption.
Specialised anti-corruption officers are less tolerant of corruption. 14 of the 56 scenarios
are perceived to be more corrupt by the CORC officers than by the other police officers
(situations 37-40 and 42-47).

6. CORC officers tend to be more selective in their perceptions of corruption. Four of
the 14 situations are judged to be less corrupt by the CORC officers (situations 41, 48-
50). A possible explanation for this observation is that the actions that are described are
not corrupt from a criminal law perspective.

In what follows we will discuss the results mentioned above in more detail. The
first part will analyse the difference between the police and the different occupational
status groups. The second part will address the extent to which police officers are
divided in their perception of corruption.

**Differential social organisation: police versus occupational status groups**

41 of the 56 (73.21%) situations in the questionnaire were scored significantly
differently by police officers and respondents from the different occupational status
Police officers are generally more severe in judging potentially corrupt situations; this is in line with the theoretical expectations arising from Sutherland’s concept of differential social organisation. Further, the results show that respondents with a low occupational status are more tolerant of petty corruption, whereas a higher occupational status seems to result in tolerance of grand corruption. In addition, the introduction of the concept of differential social organisation accentuates the following as an issue to be considered: respondents with a high occupational status and police officers tend to share more perceptions of corruption. Those with a lower occupational status seem to show more differentiation from the police in how they perceive corruption. This gap seems to accord with the division between petty and grand corruption.

The influence of differential social organisation

The process of differential social organisation tends to make police officers the least tolerant of corruption. Respondents in this category perceive more situations to be corrupt. The first group of scenarios might be characterized as forms of grand corruption. This is the case for the scenario (No 11) in which a mayor is invited to a building company’s head office in Italy at the company’s expense in order to convince him to award a building contract ($\chi^2 = 30.36; df = 10; N = 906; p = 0.001$), or that in which the mayor takes part in cultural visits in Italy (No 12) ($\chi^2 = 20.29; df = 10; N = 908; p < 0.05$). In another situation (No 35), a contractor who regularly executes large contracts for the city deposits 1,000 euros in the bank account of a political party in

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6 Five situations were omitted from the Chi-square analysis because too many cells had an expected count of less than 5.

7 See the Appendix for the cross table with individual scores on the items.
order to sponsor the election brochures of an alderman ($\chi^2 = 36.21; \text{df} = 10; N = 907; p < 0.001$). The same is true for the situation (No 36) in which that contractor pays an invoice amounting to 1,000 euros for the election brochures of an alderman ($\chi^2 = 92.86; \text{df} = 10; N = 908; p < 0.001$).

A different form of the misuse of a public position is the scenario (No 22) in which an alderman, after purchasing computers for the city, gets a discount from the dealer for a computer for his daughter, without having to request that discount ($\chi^2 = 42.04; \text{df} = 10; N = 903; p < 0.001$). The difference between police respondents and the other status groups is even higher if the alderman asks for a discount and this leads to the purchase of computers for the city (No 23) ($\chi^2 = 34.49; \text{df} = 10; N = 903; p < 0.001$), or if he asks for the discount afterwards (No 24) ($\chi^2 = 78.91; \text{df} = 10; N = 900; p < 0.001$).

The following situations contain different forms of petty corruption which are perceived as more corrupt by police. A public official receives tickets for a football match from a company (No 2) ($\chi^2 = 35.72; \text{df} = 10; N = 904; p < 0.001$). A manager working for a private company asks for football tickets (No 4) ($\chi^2 = 59.80; \text{df} = 10; N = 902; p < 0.001$), or receives business-class football tickets (No 3) ($\chi^2 = 26.11; \text{df} = 10; N = 903; p < 0.01$).

Also, the situation (No 32) in which an export company proposes that a customs official takes more shoes than necessary for the verification of the transport so that the company might receive export documents more quickly ($\chi^2 = 47.01; \text{df} = 10; N = 907; p < 0.001$), and that (No 33) in which a company proposes to take more shoes because of fear that their export documents will be delayed ($\chi^2 = 51.54; \text{df} = 10; N = 907; p < 0.001$), are judged to be more corrupt by police officers. The same result is observed for a VAT collector who advises a restaurant owner to file for bankruptcy so that he does
not have to settle his debts (No 8) ($\chi^2 = 54.64; \text{df} = 10; N = 906; p < 0.001$), and for a VAT collector who does not do everything it takes to collect a VAT debt of 500,000 euros, so less VAT is paid (No 9) ($\chi^2 = 22.36; \text{df} = 10; N = 906; p < 0.05$). A tax official who provides, in return for payment, advice to friends so that they can submit the best possible tax return in his district (No 25) ($\chi^2 = 38.35; \text{df} = 10; N = 906; p < 0.001$), or one who completes the tax return in return for payment (No 26) ($\chi^2 = 31.42; \text{df} = 10; N = 907; p < 0.01$) are judged in a comparable way. The same goes for an environmental inspector receives a discount on his private purchases after he just gives a warning to a supermarket that has opened its doors without an environmental licence (No 29) ($\chi^2 = 23.79; \text{df} = 10; N = 902; p < 0.01$).

Police officers are also more harsh in judging situations which are perceived as less corrupt, such as the case (No 6) of an airbag supplier who rewards a factory employee with a holiday after an improvement to the production process results in increased productivity ($\chi^2 = 34.89; \text{df} = 10; N = 908; p < 0.001$), or the case (No 20) of a pharmaceutical company which, when launching a new medicine, offers a doctors’ association a free information session and dinner ($\chi^2 = 24.26; \text{df} = 10; N = 903; p < 0.01$).

Surprisingly, the police respondents were the most tolerant group in judging two situations describing a potential situation of grand corruption. This was the case for a Member of Parliament (MP) who provides his contact list to his daughter without charge. She works for a real estate company and benefits from these contacts by securing more real estate contracts (No 16) ($\chi^2 = 27.36; \text{df} = 10; N = 869; p < 0.01$). A similar result is observed for the situation (No 19) of a mayor who visits the offices of a political associate to discuss a case to accelerate the construction of a golf course ($\chi^2 = 23.94; \text{df} = 10; N = 873; p < 0.05$).
Petty corruption perceived to be more corrupt by high occupational status respondents and police

Respondents with a low occupational status are more tolerant of forms of petty crime. This was the shown in the response to the case (No 1) of a public servant who asks for business-class football tickets from companies who want to receive service contracts ($\chi^2 = 51.06; \text{df} = 10; N = 903; p < 0.001$). The situation (No 30) in which a customs official takes more shoes than are required for verification, while being aware that the export company will quietly agree out of fear that its export documents will be delayed ($\chi^2 = 38.44; \text{df} = 10; N = 909; p < 0.001$), and the situation (No 31) in which a customs official simply takes more shoes than are required to verify the transport licence results ($\chi^2 = 50.76; \text{df} = 10; N = 910; p < 0.001$), are judged to be more corrupt by those of high occupational status and the police respondents. A similar judgement is made for the situation (No 7) describing a VAT collector who postpones the collection of a 500,000 euro VAT debt ($\chi^2 = 35.09; \text{df} = 10; N = 908; p < 0.001$). Finally, those in low occupational status groups are less convinced that a consultant at an administrative office responsible for the follow-up of building permits who is able to rent a luxurious flat for himself (No 27) ($\chi^2 = 57.59; \text{df} = 10; N = 907; p < 0.001$) or for his sister (No 28) ($\chi^2 = 20.49; \text{df} = 10; N = 907; p < 0.05$) at a reduced price is corrupt. Low occupational status respondents are also more tolerant of a supplier of airbags donating a holiday to the person responsible for the maintenance of a production line who intends to improve the production process and thereby ensure a higher rate of productivity (No 5) ($\chi^2 = 32.03; \text{df} = 10; N = 904; p < 0.001$).
Grand corruption perceived to be more corrupt by low occupational status groups

Members of the lower status groups, on the other hand, are more likely to judge behaviour that originates from collusion between political and economic networks to be corrupt. Higher occupational status groups tend to be more tolerant of these forms of corruption.

The situation (No 13) in which a lawyer solicits secretaries at ministerial offices for securing more cases is judged to be corrupt by more members of the low status and unemployed groups than by police officers or members of the high status group ($\chi^2 = 36.80; df = 10; N = 906; p < 0.001$). An even more pronounced difference is observed in the case (No 14) where the lawyer’s overview is sent to the office of his political party ($\chi^2 = 36.11; df = 10; N = 905; p < 0.001$). Even the situation (No 15) in which the lawyer is described as being a friend of the minister is judged to be more corrupt by members of lower occupational status groups ($\chi^2 = 31.93; df = 10; N = 907; p < 0.001$).

Police officers and low occupational status respondents are more severe in their judgement in the following two situations. A mayor is invited to the Brussels office of a construction company to convince him to award a building contract to the company (No 10) ($\chi^2 = 21.66; df = 10; N = 901; p < 0.05$). Low occupational status respondents are, together with police officers, almost unanimous that an MP selling his contacts to entrepreneurs for 10,000 euros so that they could secure real estate contracts (No 17) is corrupt ($\chi^2 = 20.09; df = 10; N = 904; p < 0.05$). Respondents with a higher occupational status were more tolerant in this case.

Finally, there are two exceptions within this group of situations. The first is the case (No 34) of a contractor who deposits 1,000 euros in the personal bank account of the alderman of public works to sponsor his election brochure ($\chi^2 = 36.53; df = 10; N =$
907; p < 0.001), and the second (No 21) that of a pharmaceutical company that offers a
doctors’ association a free information session on the island of Mallorca ($\chi^2 = 19.24; \text{df} = 10; N = 902; p < 0.05$). Both are situations that might be characterised as grand
corruption, and both are judged to be more corrupt by police officers and members of
high occupational status groups.

**Perceptions of specialised anti-corruption officers compared with those of other
police officers**

The variation is higher between the different occupational status groups and the
police. Nevertheless, it appears that the difference between the distinct police groups is
substantial.

The results clearly show that CORC officers are harsher in judging potentially
corrupt situations than local police officers and officers from the federal judicial police.
This is the case in the situation of the mayor who is invited to the Brussels offices of a
construction company in order to convince him to award the company a building
contract (No 37) ($\chi^2 = 9.94; \text{df} = 2; N = 351; p < 0.01$). Local police officers and FJP
officers are also less convinced that a local company purchasing entrance tickets for the
mayor’s ball for a total amount of 1,000 euros is corrupt (No 38) ($\chi^2 = 7.75; \text{df} = 2; N =
351; p < 0.05$), and the same is true when this company is located in another city (No
39) ($\chi^2 = 12.08; \text{df} = 2; N = 351; p < 0.01$) or in Germany (No 40) ($\chi^2 = 9.19; \text{df} = 2; N =
351; p = 0.01$). The difference between the police groups is the highest for the case in
which a lawyer uses the political network of his wife, who is a minister, to get more
cases (No 45) ($\chi^2 = 9.95; \text{df} = 2; N = 351; p < 0.01$), and for the case in which a tax
official provides, in return for payment, advice to friends so that they can submit the
best possible tax return in his district (No 46) ($\chi^2 = 10.53; \text{df} = 2; N = 350; p < 0.01$). If
the official completes the tax return, in return for payment, this is judged in a fairly
equal way (No 47) ($\chi^2 = 10.66; df = 2; N = 350; p < 0.01$).

The following situations describing potential situations of private corruption are
judged more severely by CORC respondents: an airbag supplier rewards a factory
employee with a holiday after the employee improves the production process and causes
increased productivity (No 42) ($\chi^2 = 6.96; df = 2; N = 351; p < 0.05$); and a manager
receives business-class football tickets from companies looking to secure contracts for
maintenance work from the manager’s company (No 43) ($\chi^2 = 6.61; df = 2; N = 351; p
< 0.05$).

CORC officers are more severe but are also more selective in judging potentially
corrupt situations. The following four situations stand out in this respect, because non-
specialised police officers perceive them as more corrupt than do CORC officers. A
customs official who takes more shoes than are required to verify the transport licence
is perceived to be more corrupt by judicial police officers and local police (No 48) ($\chi^2 =
9.83; df = 4; N = 351; p < 0.01$). A mayor who visits the offices of a political associate
to discuss a case to accelerate the construction of an industrial site (No 49) is generally
not judged to be very corrupt, but considerably more judicial officers than CORC
officers view this behaviour as corrupt ($\chi^2 = 8.29; df = 2; N = 350; p < 0.05$). A similar
outcome is observed in the case where the mayor discusses the creation of a golf course
(No 50) ($\chi^2 = 8.87; df = 2; N = 350; p < 0.05$). The situation of the consultant at an
administrative office responsible for the follow-up of building permits who lives for
free in a luxurious flat is judged in a similar way (No 41) ($\chi^2 = 9.46; df = 2; N = 347; p
< 0.01$).

Local police officers judged these types of behaviour to be more corrupt than did
corruption.
MP who provides his contacts to his daughter free of charge (No 44) ($\chi^2 = 9.09; df = 2; N = 348; p < 0.05$).

**Discussion**

Our study on perceptions of corruption yields several findings. Although the data used in this article are drawn from a random sample of Flemish Belgian citizens – a sample that is presumably not disproportionately involved in corrupt behaviour – and police respondents, we observed significant differences in the respondents’ judgements on scenarios that described potentially corrupt situations. Depending on their occupational status, people tend to incorporate different verbalisations and rationalisations for corruption. Members of the low occupational status group feel that petty corruption is more justified. One of these cases is a public official asking for football tickets (No 1). This act is perceived as corrupt by 93.8% of respondents with a high occupational status, which is much more than the 69.9% of the members of the low occupational status group. A similar ratio is observed for the case of avoiding a VAT debt (No 7) or getting a holiday for ensuring that the production process is improved (No 5). Respondents with a high occupational status are more accepting of grand forms of corruption. A majority of 62.5% of the lowest occupational status group calls a lawyer who for personal reasons abuses the privilege of his friend being a minister corrupt (No 15). Respondents with a high occupational status are considerably more tolerant: a minority of 43.8% calls this situation corrupt.

In essence, the scenario-based questionnaire which is used in the present study measures varying public definitions of corruption. Our account is that someone who does not perceive behaviour as corrupt will not define as such. These definitions play an important role in the initiation of deviant behaviour (Matsueda 2006: 5). There are a large number of studies describing how these verbalisations, as part of a neutralisation
technique, precede and enable deviant behaviour (Sykes and Matza 1957; Coleman 1987; Bandura et al. 1996; Anand et al. 2005; Topalli 2005). Other papers have explored the idea that moral disengagement mechanisms facilitate non-compliance and pave the way to corruption (Moore 2008; Huisman and Vande Walle 2010; Vande Walle and Dormaels 2010). Moral disengagement should be understood as people’s ability to ‘rationalise’ deviant behaviour in such a way that it appears to be less harmful (Bandura et al. 1996: 365). Tavits’ (2010) finding that public officials and citizens are more likely to engage in corruption when they do not define corruption as ‘wrong’ becomes very meaningful in the light of the present research. It is likely that the observed tolerance of potentially corrupt situations corresponds to the position that corruption is not morally reprehensible. People ignore corrupt behaviour or do not perceive a situation to be corrupt. This might possibly explain why corruption has a tendency to persist. A study conducted by Ernst and Young (2012) indicated that the tolerance of corruption is increasing in Belgium. No less than 34% of the Belgian respondents were willing to pay a bribe to help their business survive. This figure is very different from the western European average of 11%.

Another concern relates to the outcome that all occupational status groups turn out to be tolerant of situations which correspond to their practice. Employee deviance is more constrained by informal social controls present in primary work-group relationships than by the more formal reactions to deviance of those in positions of authority within the formal organisation (Werner 1983; Kamp and Brooks 2005; Moore 2008). Corruption stands out as a crime in which all parties have an interest in concealing the facts. When corruption becomes the social norm within a occupational network, it will be less probable that whistle-blowers will expose corrupt behaviour.
A thought-provoking outcome is that respondents who belong to the high status group share perceptions that are more comparable to the police respondents. Although this is speculative, we believe that respondents within these groups have more personal characteristics, such as education or living conditions, in common than they do with members of the other groups. These individual factors affect the differential association process indirectly by affecting the probability of learning the definitions that are either favourable or unfavourable to corruption. Additionally, there might be a more critical social explanation. Elites are more likely to translate their interests into legislative processes. This regulatory framework, governed by policy priorities, creates a fundamental normative context within which the process of differential social organisation of police officers operates.

Other studies have reported that the higher a person’s social status, the more he or she will approach corruption from a ‘legalistic’ point of view (Jackson and Smith 1996; Redlawsk and McCann 2005). Our data suggest, however, that this relationship between the law and perceptions of corruption is not so clear cut. If police officers were only directed by a legal framework, we might expect that potentially corrupt situations are judged by all police officers in a similar way. However, police officers judged the situations in different ways – specialised anti-corruption officers are more severe but also tend to be more selective in judging situations. The selectiveness became apparent in the judgement on a mayor visiting a minister and political associate to discuss a construction case (No 49). Only 3.1% of the CORC officers perceived this situation to be corrupt, compared to 21.6% of local police officers. Another example is the situation of a customs official who takes more shoes than are necessary to carry out a check. Over 90% of the police respondents perceived this as corrupt, but only 75% of the CORC officers did. A tax official providing advice on how to pay less tax can find less
understanding. 90.6% of the CORC officers judged this to be corrupt; this is significantly more than the 62.1% of the local police or 61.3% of the federal judicial police officers. Our data tend to indicate that there is a gap between the penal law concept of corruption and what is actually perceived as corrupt within society. In itself, it is not new to state that the definition given in penal law is not an adequate way to delimit corruption. This judicial bias has, however, important consequences for the suppression of corruption. According to Turk (1969), police organisations are very influential in the initial stages of the registration of offences. Repressive state interventions are generally confined to those activities that fall within the criminal law definition of corruption. Further research might explore the extent to which police officers’ perceptions of corruption correspond to state interventions. Depending on the service which receives a complaint – the local police, the judicial police or the COCR – the reaction might vary significantly.

Our data empirically suggest that a vast number of the activities referred to as corrupt probably fall outside the penal law definition. Yet these situations are perceived as corrupt by citizens and provoke a sense of injustice. This observation was made, for example, regarding the situation in which a mayor visits the office of a political associate to discuss the construction of a golf course (No 19). The case (No 14) of a lawyer who solicits the support of a minister friend in securing more cases is perceived as more corrupt by members of low status groups than by the police. A key question is the extent to which these situations will provoke a governmental reaction. Police and judicial authorities do not perceive them to be corrupt and are confined to the limits of law. The absence of an institutional reaction by might feed a suspicion that the government and law enforcement agencies are selective in tackling corruption.
Future research might also go into the question of whether the varying perception between police and occupational status group results in the over-policing of petty corruption and the under-policing of grand corruption. Our data confirmed that police respondents share more perceptions with high occupational status groups. In the interests of public trust, it might be rewarding to place corruption on a continuum so that the relationship between ‘illegal’ and ‘unethical’ can be explored. This will result in genuine insights and encourage a debate about where state intervention should start and the extent to which more informal approaches to preventing corruption might be productive.

Conclusion

Differential occupational association tends to influence people’s perceptions of corruption. The present article shows that the processes of differential association and social organisation are interrelated. Although this study does not offer proof nor explain how the mechanism of differential association works on an individual level, it is able to contribute to our understanding of how normative conflict in society on the meaning of corruption translates into specific groups being more tolerant of distinct forms of corruption. The present study is innovative in the sense that it analyses the perceptions of citizens and police officers in direct comparison. Respondents with a low occupational status tend to be more tolerant in considering situations of petty corruption, while those of high occupational status have more affinity with grand forms of corruption. This provides, therefore, empirical support for an organisational explanation of how normative conflict in society translates into specific corruption resistance within distinct groups.

In addition to that, high occupational status respondents and police officers have more perceptions of corruption in common. More concretely, it seems that these groups
are more tolerant of forms of grand corruption but harsher in judging forms of petty corruption. This observation raises the following interesting question: are forms of petty corruption more noticed by police than the corruption of elites? Finally, we observed surprisingly great differences between specialised anti-corruption police officers and police officers from other departments. This suggests that the process of differential social organisation is to some extent crime-specific.

References

XX, 2010. reference is anonymized in view of the review process.

XX, 2013. reference is anonymized in view of the review process.


Table 1: Classification of occupational statuses N (%)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group 1: Non-active group (232; 38.6%)</th>
<th>Group 2: Low-esteem job (91; 14.6%)</th>
<th>Group 3: Middle-esteem job (114; 18.6%)</th>
<th>Group 4: High-esteem job (39; 6.3%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unemployed 14 (2.4%)</td>
<td>Public official, level C/D 14 (2.3%)</td>
<td>Public official, level B 5 (0.7%)</td>
<td>Public official, level A 16 (2.7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pension 174 (28.8%)</td>
<td>Unskilled worker 12 (2.1%)</td>
<td>Skilled worker 49 (8.1%)</td>
<td>Clerk, direction level 14 (2.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incapacitated 13 (2.2%)</td>
<td>Low-level clerk 47 (7.2%)</td>
<td>Clerk 57 (9.3%)</td>
<td>Management/Board 6 (0.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homemakers 31 (5.2%)</td>
<td>Small independent 18 (3.0%)</td>
<td>Contractor, medium to large independent 3 (0.5%)</td>
<td>‘Professional’ 3 (0.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix Cross tables

Appendix: occupational status and perceptions of corruption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Job: is responsible for the maintenance and renovation of the office buildings. Imagine John being a governmental official. Do you think it is corrupt for John to...</th>
<th>Student Low</th>
<th>Low occupational status – unemployed</th>
<th>Low occupational status employed</th>
<th>Middle occupational status</th>
<th>High occupational status</th>
<th>Police</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1. ... to receive business class football tickets from companies that want to do maintenance work for the government?***</td>
<td>12.9 (6)</td>
<td>11.7 (35)</td>
<td>12.3 (9)</td>
<td>10.5 (9)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>2.3 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not corrupt</td>
<td>19.4 (12)</td>
<td>15.1 (45)</td>
<td>17.8 (13)</td>
<td>10.5 (9)</td>
<td>6.2 (2)</td>
<td>2.9 (26)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>neither corrupt/not</td>
<td>67.7 (42)</td>
<td>73.2 (219)</td>
<td>69.9 (51)</td>
<td>79.1 (68)</td>
<td>93.8 (30)</td>
<td>90.3 (317)</td>
</tr>
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<td>corrupt</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2. ... to receive business class football tickets from companies that want to do maintenance work for the government?***</td>
<td>24.2 (15)</td>
<td>19.7 (59)</td>
<td>24.7 (18)</td>
<td>18.6 (16)</td>
<td>6.2 (2)</td>
<td>11.4 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not corrupt</td>
<td>29.0 (29)</td>
<td>22.7 (68)</td>
<td>17.8 (13)</td>
<td>30.2 (26)</td>
<td>37.5 (12)</td>
<td>17.7 (62)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>neither corrupt/not</td>
<td>46.8 (29)</td>
<td>57.7 (173)</td>
<td>57.5 (42)</td>
<td>51.2 (44)</td>
<td>56.2 (18)</td>
<td>70.9 (249)</td>
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<td>corrupt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>John is responsible for the maintenance and renovation of the office buildings. Imagine John being a manager at company X. Do you think it is corrupt for John to...</td>
<td>46.8 (29)</td>
<td>39.4 (117)</td>
<td>35.6 (26)</td>
<td>38.4 (33)</td>
<td>31.2 (10)</td>
<td>27.6 (97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>neither corrupt/not</td>
<td>30.6 (19)</td>
<td>27.1 (81)</td>
<td>27.4 (20)</td>
<td>32.6 (28)</td>
<td>43.8 (14)</td>
<td>27.6 (97)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>corrupt</td>
<td>22.6 (14)</td>
<td>33.8 (104)</td>
<td>37.0 (27)</td>
<td>29.1 (25)</td>
<td>25.0 (8)</td>
<td>44.7 (157)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>4. ... to receive business class football tickets from companies that want to do maintenance work for the company he works at?***</td>
<td>29.0 (18)</td>
<td>20.7 (62)</td>
<td>16.4 (12)</td>
<td>16.3 (14)</td>
<td>6.2 (2)</td>
<td>5.4 (19)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not corrupt</td>
<td>11.3 (7)</td>
<td>21.4 (64)</td>
<td>26.0 (19)</td>
<td>20.9 (18)</td>
<td>21.9 (7)</td>
<td>15.7 (55)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>59.7 (37)</td>
<td>57.9 (173)</td>
<td>57.5 (42)</td>
<td>62.8 (54)</td>
<td>71.9 (23)</td>
<td>78.9 (276)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bart is an engineer and is responsible for the maintenance of a production line in a car factory. Do you think it is corrupt that a supplier of airbags...</td>
<td>22.6 (14)</td>
<td>19.6 (59)</td>
<td>13.7 (10)</td>
<td>11.5 (10)</td>
<td>6.2 (2)</td>
<td>10.3 (36)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>neither corrupt/not</td>
<td>21.0 (13)</td>
<td>19.6 (59)</td>
<td>13.7 (10)</td>
<td>21.8 (19)</td>
<td>9.4 (3)</td>
<td>12.6 (44)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>corrupt</td>
<td>56.5 (35)</td>
<td>60.8 (183)</td>
<td>72.6 (53)</td>
<td>66.7 (58)</td>
<td>84.4 (27)</td>
<td>77.1 (269)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>6. ... to receive business class football tickets from companies that want to do maintenance work for the company he works at?***</td>
<td>80.6 (50)</td>
<td>55.8 (169)</td>
<td>57.5 (42)</td>
<td>51.7 (45)</td>
<td>46.9 (15)</td>
<td>45.6 (160)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not corrupt</td>
<td>12.9 (8)</td>
<td>15.2 (46)</td>
<td>17.8 (13)</td>
<td>18.4 (16)</td>
<td>31.2 (10)</td>
<td>21.1 (74)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>neither corrupt/not</td>
<td>6.5 (4)</td>
<td>29.0 (88)</td>
<td>24.7 (18)</td>
<td>29.9 (26)</td>
<td>21.9 (7)</td>
<td>33.3 (117)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>corrupt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>A restaurant has a VAT debt of 500,000 euro. VAT collector Emma is a loyal customer at the restaurant. Do you think it is corrupt that...</td>
<td>17.7 (11)</td>
<td>11.0 (35)</td>
<td>9.6 (7)</td>
<td>8.0 (7)</td>
<td>15.6 (5)</td>
<td>6.3 (22)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not corrupt</td>
<td>30.6 (19)</td>
<td>15.2 (46)</td>
<td>20.5 (15)</td>
<td>16.1 (14)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>12.8 (45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>neither corrupt/not</td>
<td>51.6 (32)</td>
<td>73.3 (222)</td>
<td>69.9 (51)</td>
<td>75.9 (66)</td>
<td>84.4 (27)</td>
<td>80.9 (284)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>8. ... to receive business class football tickets from companies that want to do maintenance work for the company he works at?***</td>
<td>12.9 (8)</td>
<td>7.3 (22)</td>
<td>11.0 (8)</td>
<td>8.0 (7)</td>
<td>6.2 (2)</td>
<td>4.0 (14)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>not corrupt</td>
<td>27.4 (17)</td>
<td>6.0 (18)</td>
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<td>16.1 (14)</td>
<td>18.8 (6)</td>
<td>6.8 (24)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>59.7 (37)</td>
<td>86.7 (261)</td>
<td>71.2 (52)</td>
<td>75.9 (66)</td>
<td>75.0 (24)</td>
<td>89.2 (313)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>9. ... to receive business class football tickets from companies that want to do maintenance work for the company he works at?***</td>
<td>21.0 (13)</td>
<td>9.0 (27)</td>
<td>9.6 (7)</td>
<td>12.6 (11)</td>
<td>6.2 (2)</td>
<td>7.7 (27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not corrupt</td>
<td>71.0 (44)</td>
<td>84.1 (253)</td>
<td>83.6 (61)</td>
<td>81.6 (71)</td>
<td>84.4 (27)</td>
<td>89.7 (315)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>10. ... to receive business class football tickets from companies that want to do maintenance work for the company he works at?***</td>
<td>85.2 (52)</td>
<td>57.9 (173)</td>
<td>53.4 (39)</td>
<td>60.0 (51)</td>
<td>62.5 (20)</td>
<td>60.4 (212)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

URL: http://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/gpas
A lawyer tries to get as many public contracts as possible. Therefore he makes a survey of the assignments he already got and the assignments he would like to get and sends it to some of his contacts. Do you think it is corrupt that the lawyer sends this survey to...

13  ...the secretariats of minister offices to apply for support to get more assignments?***

not corrupt
or not corrupt
or corrupt
corrupt
not corrupt
or corrupt
or corrupt

A mayor visits the ministry office of a political associate to promote the finalization of a building file. Do you think it is corrupt that the mayor discusses a file to accelerate the construction...

18  ...of a home for elderly his municipality?**

not corrupt
or not corrupt
or corrupt
or corrupt
not corrupt
or corrupt
or corrupt

A doctor’s association organizes an informative day on the application of a new medicine. Do you think it is corrupt that the pharmaceutical company producing this medicine offers the doctors’ association...

20  ...a Brussels meeting area for free and pays the invoice of the dinner?***

not corrupt
or not corrupt
or corrupt
or corrupt
not corrupt
or corrupt
or corrupt

An alderman purchases computers for his city service at a chain store. Do you think it is corrupt that the alderman, ...

22  ...after he purchased computers for the city, gets a discount from the chain store for the purchase of a computer for his
daughter, without him asking?***

not corrupt
or corrupt
or corrupt
or corrupt
not corrupt
or corrupt
or corrupt
A tax official works on an audit office and treats the tax returns of his district. Do you think it is corrupt that the official...

A tax official works on an audit office and treats the tax returns of his district. Do you think it is corrupt that the official...

John works as a consultant at an office of administration and is responsible for the follow-up of building files executed on behalf of the city. Do you think it is corrupt that...

Environmental inspector Tom states that a supermarket has opened its doors without environmental licence. Do you think it is corrupt that...

A customs official checks a cargo of sports shoes that is declared with an international transport. He has doubts whether or not the export company corresponds to the export licence. Therefore he takes samples out of the cargo to execute a material verification of the shoes. Do you think it is corrupt that...

...the owner of the supermarket suggests Tom to give him a discount on his personal purchases? In exchange for that, Tom is only to give a warning...

...the customs official simply takes more shoes than required for the verification;***

...the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

...the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary in order to receive the export documents much quicker;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

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... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

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... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

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... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

... the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary because if not, it fears the export documents won’t arrive in time;***

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A contract regularly executes large assignments for a city. Do you think it is corrupt that…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>A contractor regularly executes large assignments for a city. Do you think it is corrupt that…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>this contractor deposits 1,000 euro on the personal bank account of the alderman of public works to sponsor his election brochure?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not corrupt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>this contractor deposits 1,000 euro on the bank account of the political party to which the alderman of public works belongs, to sponsor the election brochures?***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not corrupt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>this contractor sponsors the election brochures of the alderman of public works and pays the invoice amounting to 1,000 euro?***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not corrupt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Chi-square: (*) Differences between membership status-group is significant on the level: p< 0.05*= p<0.01**=p<0.001***

Table 3: differences in the perception of corruption within the professional status group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>A building company is one of the candidates to renovate police offices. The company can earn 500,000 with this assignment and tries to convince the mayor to award the contract to the company. Do you think it is corrupt that…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>the mayor is invited to the Brussels establishment of the building company?***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>Every year, the mayor’s ball is organized. Entrance tickets for the dinner and the ball cost 50 euro. Do you think it is corrupt…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>that a company located in another city purchase entrance tickets for the mayor’s ball for a total amount of 1,000 euro?***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>that a company in Germany purchases entrance tickets for the mayor’s ball for a total amount of 1,000 euro?***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

John works as a consultant at an office of administration and is responsible for the follow-up of building files executed on behalf of the city. Do you think it is corrupt that…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>John works as a consultant at an office of administration and is responsible for the follow-up of building files executed on behalf of the city. Do you think it is corrupt that…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>John lives in a luxurious flat for free, the flat being owned by a real estate agent who executes large building assignments for the city?**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>Bart is an engineer and is responsible for the maintenance of a production line in a car factory. Do you think it is corrupt that…</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>John is responsible for the maintenance and renovation of the office buildings. Imagine John being a manager at company X. Do you think it is corrupt for John to…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An MP has very good contacts in the real estate market. Do you think it is corrupt that this MP…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>An MP has very good contacts in the real estate market. Do you think it is corrupt that this MP…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>gives his contacts to his daughter who works for a real estate agency. Doing so, she can acquire more real estate contracts. *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A lawyer tries to get as many public contracts as possible. Therefore he makes a survey of the
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Corrupt</th>
<th>Not Corrupt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you think it is corrupt that the lawyer sends this survey to...</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45  ...that the lawyer sends his survey to his wife who is a minister, to get more assignments?***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not corrupt</td>
<td>68.0 (85)</td>
<td>32.0 (40)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corrupt</td>
<td>87.5 (28)</td>
<td>12.5 (4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46  ...provides payment advice to friends in order to submit the best possible tax return in his district?***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not corrupt</td>
<td>62.1 (77)</td>
<td>37.9 (47)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corrupt</td>
<td>90.6 (29)</td>
<td>9.4 (3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47  ...completes the tax return against payment in order to submit the best possible return in his district?***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not corrupt</td>
<td>61.3 (119)</td>
<td>38.7 (75)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corrupt</td>
<td>54.1 (105)</td>
<td>45.9 (89)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48  ...the customs official simply takes more shoes than required for the verification?***</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not corrupt</td>
<td>93.6 (117)</td>
<td>12.5 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corrupt</td>
<td>75.0 (24)</td>
<td>25.0 (8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49  ...that the mayor discusses a file to accelerate the construction of an industrial site in his municipality?**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not corrupt</td>
<td>92.7 (179)</td>
<td>84.0 (105)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corrupt</td>
<td>3.1 (1)</td>
<td>96.9 (31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50  ...that the mayor discusses a file to accelerate the construction of a golf course in his municipality?**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>not corrupt</td>
<td>12.4 (24)</td>
<td>78.4 (98)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>corrupt</td>
<td>3.1 (1)</td>
<td>96.9 (31)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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