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

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.[1] 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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[1] Corruption is not a priority in Belgian policy, either in the Belgian Coalition Agreement (December 2011) or in the

National Security Plan of the Belgian Police 2012-2015 (available from: www.polfedfedpol.be/pub/

pdf/NVP2012-2015.pdf). This leads to a lack of resources in the fight against corruption and a serious

understaffing of the CORC (European Commission 2014).

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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.

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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

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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

2012 using a paper-and-pencil method.

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,

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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

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[2] Directorate-General Statistics and Economic Information, http://statbel.fgov.be/, consulted on 27/11/2013.

[3] Directorate-General Statistics and Economic Information, http://statbel.fgov.be/, consulted on 27/11/2013.

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

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[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)[5]. 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

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[5] 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 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

groups.[6] 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.[7] 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 ($\chi^2 = 36.21$; 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 ($\chi^2 = 92.86$; 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 ($\chi^2 = 42.04$; 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) ($\chi^2 = 34.49$; df = 10; N = 903; p < 0.001), or if he asks for the discount afterwards (No 24) ($\chi^2 = 78.91$; 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) ($\chi^2 = 35.72$; df = 10; N = 904; p < 0.001). A manager working for a private company asks for football tickets (No 4) ($\chi^2 = 59.80$; df = 10; N = 902; p < 0.001), or receives business-class football tickets (No 3) ($\chi^2 = 26.11$; 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 ($\chi^2 = 47.01$; 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 ($\chi^2 = 51.54$; 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) (χ^2 = 54.64; 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) (χ^2 = 22.36; 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) (χ^2 = 38.35; df = 10; N = 906; p < 0.001), or

one who completes the tax return in return for payment (No 26) (χ^2 = 31.42; 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) (χ^2 =

23.79; 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 (χ^2 = 34.89; 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 (χ^2 = 24.26; 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) (χ^2 = 27.36; 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 (χ^2 =

23.94; df = 10; N = 873; p < 0.05).

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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 (χ^2 = 51.06; 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 (χ^2 = 38,44; 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 (χ^2 = 50.76; 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 (χ^2 = 35.09; 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) (χ^2 = 57.59; df = 10; N = 907; p < 0.001) or for his sister (No

28) (χ^2 = 20.49; 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) (χ^2 = 32.03; 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 (χ^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

(χ^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 (χ^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) (χ^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 (χ^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 (χ^2 = 36.53; df = 10; N =

16

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 (χ^2 = 19.24; 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) (χ^2 = 9.94; 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) (χ^2 = 7.75; df = 2; N =

351; p < 0.05), and the same is true when this company is located in another city (No

39) (χ^2 = 12.08; df = 2; N = 351; p < 0.01) or in Germany (No 40) (χ^2 = 9.19; 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) (χ^2 = 9.95; 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) (χ^2 = 10.53; df = 2; N = 350; p < 0.01). If

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the official completes the tax return, in return for payment, this is judged in a fairly

equal way (No 47) (χ^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) (χ^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) (χ^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) (χ^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 (χ^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) (χ^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) (χ^2 = 9.46; df = 2; N = 347; p

< 0.01)

Local police officers judged these types of behaviour to be more corrupt than did

CORC officers. Local police officers were also most severe in judging the situation of a

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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

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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.

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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

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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.

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Table 1: Classification of occupational statuses N (%)

Group 1: Non-active group (232; 38,6%)	Group 2: Low-esteem job (91; 14,6.%)	Group 3: Middle-esteem job (114; 18,6%)	Group 4: High-esteem job (39; 6,3%)
Unemployed 14 (2,4%)	Public official, level C/D 14 (2,3%)	Public official, level B 5 (0,7%)	Public official, level A 16 (2,7%)
Pension 174 (28,8%)	Unskilled worker 12 (2,1%)	Skilled worker 49 (8,1%)	Clerk, direction level 14 (2,2%)
Incapacitated 13 (2,2%)	Low-level clerk 47 (7,2%)	Clerk 57 (9,3%)	Management/Board 6 (0,9%)
Homemakers 31 (5,2%)	Small independent 18 (3,0%)	Contractor, medium to large independent 3 (0,5%)	'Professional' 3 (0,5%)

Appendix Cross tables

Appendix: occupational status and perceptions of corruption

No		Student	Low occupational status – unemployed	Low occupational status employed	Middle occupational status	High occupational status	Police
**John 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…**
1	…to ask companies that want to do maintenance work for the government to give him business class football tickets?***						
	not corrupt	12,9 (8)	11,7 (35)	12,3 (9)	10,5 (9)	0 (0)	2,3 (8)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	19,4 (12)	15,1 (45)	17,8 (13)	10,5 (9)	6,2 (2)	2,9 (26)
	corrupt	67,7 (42)	73,2 (219)	69,9 (51)	79,1 (68)	93,8 (30)	90,3 (317)
2	… to receive business class football tickets from companies that want to do maintenance work for the government?***						
	not corrupt	24,2 (15)	19,7 (59)	24,7 (18)	18,6 (16)	6,2 (2)	11,4 (40)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	29,0 (29)	22,7 (68)	17,8 (13)	30,2 (26)	37,5 (12)	17,7 (62)
	corrupt	46,8 (29)	57,7 (173)	57,5 (42)	51,2 (44)	56,2 (18)	70,9 (249)
**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…**
3	…receive business class football tickets from companies that want to do maintenance work for the company he works at?*						
	not corrupt	46,8 (29)	39,1 (117)	35,6 (26)	38,4 (33)	31,2 (10)	27,6 (97)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	30,6 (19)	27,1 (81)	27,4 (20)	32,6 (28)	43,8 (14)	27,6 (97)
	corrupt	22,6 (14)	33,8 (101)	37,0 (27)	29,1 (25)	25,0 (8)	44,7 (157)
4	…ask companies that want to do maintenance work for the company he works at to give him business class football tickets?***						
	not corrupt	29,0 (18)	20,7 (62)	16,4 (12)	16,3 (14)	6,2 (2)	5,4 (19)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	11,3 (7)	21,4 (64)	26,0 (19)	20,9 (18)	21,9 (7)	15,7 (55)
	corrupt	59,7 (37)	57,9 (173)	57,5 (42)	62,8 (54)	71,9 (23)	78,9 (276)
**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…**
5	…gives Bart a holiday to make sure he will improve the production process so it would result in a higher airbag productivity?***						
	not corrupt	22,6 (14)	19,6 (59)	13,7 (10)	11,5 (10)	6,2 (2)	10,3 (36)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	21,0 (13)	19,6 (59)	13,7 (10)	21,8 (19)	9,4 (3)	12,6 (44)
	corrupt	56,5 (35)	60,8 (183)	72,6 (53)	66,7 (58)	84,4 (27)	77,1 (269)
6	…rewards Bart with a holiday after Bart has improved the production process resulting in a higher airbag productivity?***						
	not corrupt	80,6 (50)	55,8 (169)	57,5 (42)	51,7 (45)	46,9 (15)	45,6 (160)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	12,9 (8)	15,2 (46)	17,8 (13)	18,4 (16)	31,2 (10)	21,1 (74)
	corrupt	6,5 (4)	29,0 (88)	24,7 (18)	29,9 (26)	21,9 (7)	33,3 (117)
**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…**
7	…Emma postpones the collection of the VAT debt?***						
	not corrupt	17,7 (11)	11,6 (35)	9,6 (7)	8,0 (7)	15,6 (5)	6,3 (22)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	30,6 (19)	15,2 (46)	20,5 (15)	16,1 (14)	0 (0)	12,8 (45)
	corrupt	51,6 (32)	73,3 (222)	69,9 (51)	75,9 (66)	84,4 (27)	80,9 (284)
8	…Emma advises the restaurant owner to go bankrupt so he does not have to settle his debts?***						
	not corrupt	12,9 (8)	7,3 (22)	11,0 (8)	8,0 (7)	6,2 (2)	4,0 (14)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	27,4 (17)	6,0 (18)	17,8 (13)	16,1 (14)	18,8 (6)	6,8 (24)
	corrupt	59,7 (37)	86,7 (261)	71,2 (52)	75,9 (66)	75,0 (24)	89,2 (313)
9	…Emma does not everything it takes to collect the VAT debt, so less VAT is paid?*						
	not corrupt	8,1 (5)	7,0 (21)	6,8 (5)	5,7 (5)	9,4 (3)	2,6 (9)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	21,0 (13)	9,0 (27)	9,6 (7)	12,6 (11)	6,2 (2)	7,7 (27)
	corrupt	71,0 (44)	84,1 (253)	83,6 (61)	81,6 (71)	84,4 (27)	89,7 (315)
**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…**
10	…the mayor is invited to the Brussels establishment of the building company?*						
	not corrupt	85,2 (52)	57,9 (173)	53,4 (39)	60,0 (51)	62,5 (20)	60,4 (212)

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	neither corrupt/not corrupt	9,8 (6)	21,4 (64)	23,3 (17)	18,8 (16)	28,1 (9)	21,7 (76)
	corrupt	4,9 (3)	20,7 (62)	23,3 (17)	21,2 (18)	9,4 (3)	17,9 (63)
11	*…that the mayor visits the head office in Italy, at the expenses of the building company?****						
	not corrupt	25,8 (16)	19,9 (60)	13,7 (10)	18,6 (16)	15,5 (5)	10,8 (38)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	21,0 (13)	14,9 (45)	21,9 (16)	23,3 (20)	15,6 (5)	12,0 (42)
	corrupt	53,2 (33)	65,2 (197)	64,4 (47)	58,1 (50)	68,8 (22)	77,2 (271)
12	*…that the mayor visits the head office in Italy and combines that with a number of cultural visits, all at the expenses of the building company?***						
	not corrupt	6,5 (4)	7,2 (22)	6,8 (5)	9,3 (8)	6,2 (2)	4,0 (14)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	14,5 (9)	6,9 (21)	4,1 (3)	8,1 (7)	12,5 (4)	3,7 (13)
	corrupt	79,0 (49)	85,9 (261)	89,0 (65)	82,6 (71)	81,2 (26)	92,3 (324)

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	72,1 (44)	50,2 (152)	56,9 (41)	41,4 (36)	75,0 (24)	55,0 (193)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	23,0 (3)	23,4 (71)	23,6 (17)	40,2 (35)	6,2 (2)	27,1 (95)
	corrupt	4,9 (3)	26,4 (80)	19,4 (14)	18,4 (16)	18,8 (6)	17,9 (63)
14	*…the political party he is a member of in order to get more assignments that way?****						
	not corrupt	60,7 (37)	35,4 (107)	51,4 (37)	37,9 (33)	59,4 (19)	44,2 (155)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	26,2 (16)	22,5 (68)	22,2 (16)	34,5 (30)	15,6 (5)	25,9 (91)
	corrupt	13,1 (8)	42,1 (127)	26,4 (19)	27,6 (24)	25,0 (8)	29,9 (105)
15	*…a minster friend to get more assignments?****						
	not corrupt	31,1 (19)	20,7 (63)	33,3 (24)	21,8 (19)	37,5 (12)	27,6 (97)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	27,9 (17)	16,8 (51)	33,3 (24)	27,6 (24)	18,8 (6)	23,1 (81)
	corrupt	41,0 (25)	62,5 (190)	33,3 (24)	50,6 (44)	43,8 (14)	49,3 (173)

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

16	*…gives his contacts to his daughter who works for a real estate agency. Doing so, she can acquire more real estate contracts.***						
	not corrupt	51,6 (32)	26,8 (81)	30,1 (22)	30,2 (26)	34,4 (11)	35,1 (122)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	29,0 (18)	24,2 (73)	31,5 (23)	24,4 (21)	15,6 (5)	26,4 (92)
	corrupt	19,4 (12)	49,0 (148)	38,4 (28)	45,3 (39)	50,0 (16)	38,5 (134)
17	*…sells his contacts to fellow entrepreneurs for 10.000 euro. Doing so these entrepreneurs can acquire real estate contracts.**						
	not corrupt	1,6 (1)	3,6 (11)	4,1 (3)	2,3 (2)	0,0 (0)	2,6 (9)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	9,7 (6)	1,3 (3,6)	5,5 (4)	8,1 (7)	9,4 (3)	3,4 (12)
	corrupt	88,7 (55)	95,0 (288)	90,4 (66)	89,5 (77)	90,6 (29)	94,0 (327)

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	80,3 (49)	85,2 (260)	69,9 (51)	77,0 (67)	81,2 (26)	74,9 (262)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	14,8 (9)	9,5 (29)	17,8 (13)	19,5 (17)	12,5 (4)	17,1 (60)
	corrupt	4,9 (3)	5,2 (16)	12,3 (9)	3,4 (3)	6,2 (2)	8,0 (28)
19	*…of a golf course in his municipality?**						
	not corrupt	45,0 (27)	54,4 (166)	49,3 (36)	55,2 (48)	56,2 (18)	65,1 (228)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	25,0 (18)	21,0 (64)	21,9 (16)	20,7 (18)	28,1 (9)	20,0 (70)
	corrupt	30,0 (18)	24,6 (75)	28,8 (21)	24,1 (21)	15,6 (5)	14,9 (52)

A doctor's association organises 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	56,5 (35)	39,5 (118)	36,1 (26)	28,7 (25)	31,2 (10)	31,1 (109)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	21,0 (13)	24,1 (72)	26,4 (19)	29,9 (26)	31,2 (10)	22,5 (79)
	corrupt	22,6 (14)	36,5 (109)	37,5 (27)	41,4 (36)	37,5 (12)	46,4 (163)
21	*…to organise this informative day on Mallorca, at the expenses of the company?**						
	not corrupt	12,9 (8)	12,7 (38)	17,8 (13)	9,3 (8)	12,5 (4)	10,0 (35)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	29,0 (18)	12,7 (38)	13,7 (10)	20,9 (18)	12,5 (4)	13,2 (46)
	corrupt	58,1 (36)	74,7 (224)	68,5 (50)	69,8 (60)	75,0 (24)	76,8 (268)

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	43,5 (27)	57,1 (172)	46,6 (34)	50,6 (43)	31,2 (10)	36,0 (126)

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	neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	14,5 (9) 41,9 (26)	16,3 (49) 26,6 (80)	17,8 (13) 35,6 (26)	24,7 (21) 24,7 (21)	34,4 (11) 34,4 (11)	20,6 (72) 43,4 (152)
23	*Do you think it is corrupt that an alderman, before he purchases computers for the city, asks for a discount for the purchase of a computer for his daughter?****						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	25,8 (16) 19,4 (12) 54,8 (34)	28,7 (87) 16,5 (50) 54,8 (166)	23,6 (17) 11,1 (8) 65,3 (47)	29,4 (25) 17,6 (15) 52,9 (45)	31,2 (10) 15,6 (5) 53,1 (17)	14,3 (50) 12,3 (43) 73,4 (256)
24	*…after he purchased computers for the city, asks the chain store to get a discount for the purchase of a computer for his daughter?****						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	25,8 (16) 27,4 (17) 46,8 (29)	34,4 (103) 15,7 (47) 49,8 (149)	24,7 (18) 21,9 (16) 53,4 (39)	30,6 (26) 15,3 (13) 54,1 (46)	15,6 (5) 15,6 (5) 68,8 (22)	10,3 (36) 12,6 (44) 77,1 (269)
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…							
25	*…provides against payment advice to friends in order to submit the best possible tax return in his district?****						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	45,2 (28) 22,6 (14) 32,3 (20)	26,7 (81) 26,7 (81) 46,5 (141)	23,3 (17) 26,0 (19) 50,7 (37)	37,2 (32) 31,4 (27) 31,4 (27)	40,6 (13) 9,4 (3) 50,0 (16)	23,4 (82) 19,1 (67) 57,4 (201)
26	*…completes the tax return against payment in order to submit the best possible return in his district?***						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	21,0 (13) 25,8 (16) 53,2 (33)	23,4 (71) 22,4 (68) 54,3 (165)	22,2 (16) 13,9 (10) 63,9 (46)	36,8 (32) 26,4 (23) 36,8 (32)	37,5 (12) 12,5 (4) 50,0 (16)	18,9 (66) 16,9 (59) 64,3 (225)
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…							
27	*…John rents a luxurious flat at a valuable price, the flat being owned by a real estate agent who executes large building assignments for the city?****						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	27,4 (17) 21,0 (13) 51,6 (32)	15,5 (47) 26,0 (79) 58,6 (178)	9,6 (7) 19,2 (14) 71,2 (52)	13,8 (12) 23,0 (20) 63,2 (55)	3,1 (1) 15,6 (5) 81,2 (26)	6,0 (21) 13,8 (48) 80,2 (280)
28	*…John's sister rents a luxurious flat at a valuable price, owned by a real estate agent who executes large building assignments for the city?**						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	8,1 (5) 30,6 (19) 61,3 (38)	7,6 (23) 14,2 (43) 78,1 (236)	6,8 (5) 8,2 (6) 84,9 (62)	12,6 (11) 14,9 (13) 72,4 (63)	6,2 (2) 12,5 (4) 81,2 (26)	9,4 (33) 12,3 (43) 78,3 (275)
Environmental inspector Tom states that a supermarket has opened its doors without environmental licence. Do you think it is corrupt that…							
29	*…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.**						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	0,0 (0) 6,5 (4) 93,5 (58)	3,3 (11) 6,3 (19) 90,0 (270)	4,1 (3) 2,7 (2) 93,2 (68)	1,2 (1) 3,5 (3) 95,3 (82)	3,1 (1) 3,1 (1) 93,8 (30)	0,9 (3) 1,1 (4) 98,0 (342)
A customs officials checks a cargo of sports shoes that is declared with an international transport. He has doubts whether or not the cargo of shoes 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…							
30	*…the customs official takes more shoes than required for the verification, being aware of the fact that the export company silently agrees because if not, it fears the export documents won't arrive in time?****						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	0,0 (0) 11,3 (7) 88,7 (55)	6,2 (19) 7,9 (24) 85,9 (262)	4,1 (3) 4,1 (3) 91,8 (67)	4,6 (4) 9,2 (8) 86,2 (75)	0,0 (0) 3,1 (1) 96,9 (31)	1,4 (5) 1,4 (5) 97,1 (340)
31	*… the customs official simply takes more shoes than required for the verification?****						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	3,2 (2) 24,2 (45) 72,6 (45)	9,2 (28) 13,8 (42) 77,0 (235)	4,1 (3) 9,6 (7) 86,3 (63)	11,5 (10) 14,9 (13) 73,6 (64)	3,1 (1) 9,4 (3) 87,5 (28)	7,4 (26) 2,6 (9) 90,0 (316)
32	*…the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary in order to receive the export documents much quicker?****						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	1,6 (1) 4,8 (3) 93,5 (58)	7,5 (23) 8,5 (26) 83,9 (256)	5,5 (4) 4,1 (3) 90,4 (66)	2,4 (2) 11,8 (10) 85,9 (73)	0,0 (0) 6,2 (2) 93,8 (30)	1,1 (4) 1,4 (5) 97,4 (341)
33	*… 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?****						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	1,6 (1) 6,5 (4) 91,9 (57)	6,6 (20) 11,5 (35) 81,9 (249)	4,1 (3) 6,8 (5) 89,0 (65)	5,8 (5) 11,6 (10) 82,6 (71)	0,0 (0) 6,2 (2) 93,8 (30)	1,1 (4) 1,4 (4) 97,4 (342)

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	A contractor regularly executes large assignments for a city. Do you think it is corrupt that…					
34	…*this contractor deposits 1,000 euro on the personal bank account of the alderman of public works to sponsor his election brochure?*					
	not corrupt	0,0 (0)	5,9 (18)	5,5 (4)	4,6 (4)	0,0 (0)	2,0 (7)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	14,8 (9)	6,6 (20)	5,5 (4)	6,9 (6)	3,1 (1)	1,4 (5)
	corrupt	85,2 (52)	87,5 (265)	89,0 (65)	88,5 (77)	96,9 (31)	96,6 (339)
35	…*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?****					
	not corrupt	11,3 (7)	13,2 (40)	11,1 (8)	11,5 (10)	3,1 (1)	6,8 (24)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	24,2 (15)	15,8 (48)	12,5 (9)	14,9 (13)	25,0 (8)	7,1 (25)
	corrupt	64,5 (40)	71,0 (215)	76,4 (55)	73,6 (64)	71,9 (23)	86,0 (302)
36	… *this contractor sponsors the election brochures of the alderman of public works and pays the invoice amounting to 1,000 euro?****					
	not corrupt	21,0 (13)	21,1 (64)	17,8 (13)	12,6 (11)	0,0 (0)	4,6 (16)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	32,3 (20)	13,2 (40)	6,8 (5)	20,7 (18)	25,8 (8)	8,5 (30)
	corrupt	46,8 (29)	65,8 (200)	75,3 (55)	66,7 (58)	74,2 (23)	86,9 (305)

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

police

No		LPs	CORC	FJP
	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…			
37	…*the mayor is invited to the Brussels establishment of the building company?***			
	not corrupt	86,4 (108)	62,5 (20)	82,5 (160)
	corrupt	13,6 (17)	37,5 (12)	17,5 (34)
	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…			
38	…*that a local company purchases entrance tickets for the mayor's ball for a total amount of 1,000 euro?**			
	not corrupt	82,4 (103)	62,5 (20)	83,0 (161)
	corrupt	17,6 (22)	37,5 (12)	17,0 (33)
39	…*that a company located in another city purchase entrance tickets for the mayor's ball for a total amount of 1,000 euro?***			
	not corrupt	80,8 (101)	53,1 (17)	79,4 (154)
	corrupt	19,2 (24)	46,9 (15)	20,6 (40)
40	…*that a company in Germany purchases entrance tickets for the mayor's ball for a total amount of 1,000 euro?***			
	not corrupt	73,6 (92)	46,9 (15)	71,6 (139)
	corrupt	26,4 (33)	53,1 (17)	28,4 (55)
	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…			
41	…*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?***			
	not corrupt	4,1 (5)	6,2 (2)	0,0 (0)
	corrupt	95,9 (118)	93,8 (30)	100,0 (192)
	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…			
42	…*rewards Bart with a holiday after Bart has improved the production process resulting in a higher airbag productivity?**			
	not corrupt	73,6 (92)	50,0 (16)	64,9 (126)
	corrupt	26,4 (33)	50,0 (16)	35,1 (68)
	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…			
43	…*receive business class football tickets from companies that want to do maintenance work for the company he works at?**			
	not corrupt	55,2 (69)	34,4 (11)	58,8 (114)
	corrupt	44,8 (56)	65,6 (21)	41,2 (80)
	An MP has very good contacts in the real estate market. Do you think it is corrupt that this MP…			
44	…*gives his contacts to his daughter who works for a real estate agency. Doing so, she can acquire more real estate contracts.**			
	not corrupt	51,2 (64)	62,5 (20)	68,1 (130)
	corrupt	48,8 (61)	37,5 (12)	31,9 (61)
	A lawyer tries to get as many public contracts as possible. Therefore he makes a survey of the			

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		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…		
45		*…that the lawyer sends his survey to his wife who is a minister, to get more assignments?***		
	not corrupt	32,0 (40)	12,5 (4)	40,2 (78)
	corrupt	68,0 (85)	87,5 (28)	59,8 (116)
		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…		
46		*…provides against payment advice to friends in order to submit the best possible tax return in his district?***		
	not corrupt	44,4 (55)	15,6 (5)	45,9 (89)
	corrupt	55,6 (69)	84,4 (27)	54,1 (105)
47		*…completes the tax return against payment in order to submit the best possible return in his district?***		
	not corrupt	37,9 (47)	9,4 (3)	38,7 (75)
	corrupt	62,1 (77)	90,6 (29)	61,3 (119)
		A customs officials checks a cargo of sports shoes that is declared with an international transport. He has doubts whether or not the cargo of shoes 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…		
48		*…the customs official simply takes more shoes than required for the verification?***		
	not corrupt	12,5 (8)	25,0 (8)	9,8 (19)
	corrupt	93,6 (117)	75,0 (24)	90,2 (175)
		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…		
49		*…that the mayor discusses a file to accelerate the construction of an industrial site in his municipality?**		
	not corrupt	84,0 (105)	96,9 (31)	92,7 (179)
	corrupt	16,0 (20)	3,1 (1)	7,3 (14)
50		*…that the mayor discusses a file to accelerate the construction of a golf course in his municipality?**		
	not corrupt	78,4 (98)	96,9 (31)	87,6 (169)
	corrupt	21,6 (27)	3,1 (1)	12,4 (24)

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