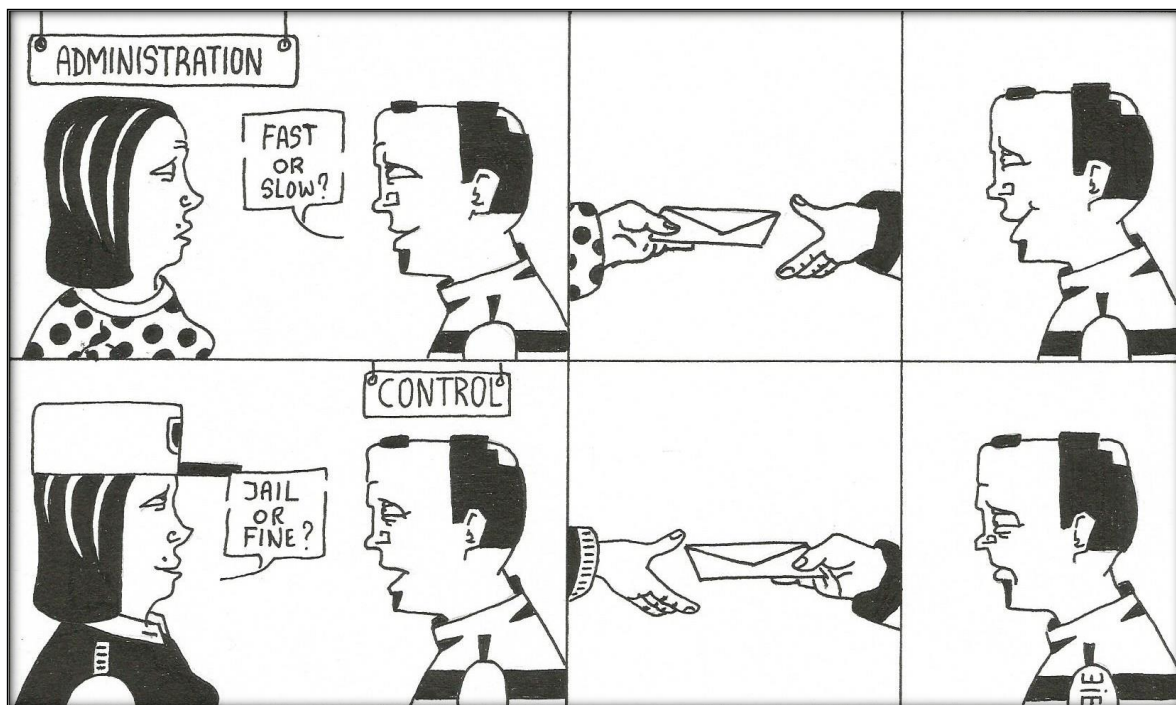




Perceptions of corruption in Flanders: surveying citizens and police.

A study of the influence of occupational differential association on perceptions of corruption



Doctoral dissertation to obtain the academic degree of Doctor (PhD) in Criminological Science at
Ghent University, Faculty of Law

by Arne Dormaels

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TABLE OF CONTENT

Table of content	3
Figures and Tables.....	8
Abstract.....	9
Acknowledgement.....	11
Chapter I: Introduction.....	13
Introduction.....	13
1. Social context and problem formulation.....	13
2. Social relevance.....	15
3. Theoretical relevance.....	16
4. Theoretical framework.....	18
4.1. <i>Differential association theory</i>	18
4.2. <i>Critiques on the differential association theory</i>	20
4.3. <i>The relevance of the differential association theory for studying perceptions of corruption</i>	21
5. General research questions and application of the differential association theory on perceptions of corruption	22
5.1. <i>Perceptions of corruption and the process of differential association</i>	22
5.2. <i>Perceptions of corruption and differential social organisation</i>	24
6. Research design.....	26
6.1. <i>Phase 1: literature study and questionnaire design</i>	28
6.1.1. Literature study	28
6.1.2. Construction & testing the quality of the scenario-based questionnaire	29
6.2. <i>Phase 2: quantitative survey</i>	31
6.2.1. Population survey	31
6.2.2. Police survey	33
6.3. <i>Phase 3: focus groups</i>	35

6.4. <i>Limitation of the research design</i>	37
7. Structure of the PhD thesis	37
Chapter II: Understanding public opinions of corruption: A search for the added value of studying perceptions of corruption	39
1. Introduction	39
2. Public opinion and corruption research	42
2.1. <i>Perceptions about corruption versus corruption perception</i>	42
2.2. <i>State-of-the-art corruption perception studies</i>	43
3. What difficulties do public opinion studies encounter?	49
3.1 <i>How to conceptualise corruption within public opinion studies</i>	49
3.2 <i>Does public opinion about corruption exist?</i>	51
4. The added value of public opinion studies	53
4.1. <i>Capturing the societal meaning of corruption</i>	54
4.2. <i>Corruption indices: what do they measure?</i>	55
4.3. <i>Institutional anti-corruption policies</i>	56
5. Conclusion	57
Chapter III: Corruption as a judgment label	59
1. Introduction	59
2. Understanding judgement of a situation as corrupt	62
2.1. <i>Historical overview of relevant research</i>	62
2.1.1. Situational characteristics	62
2.1.2. Personal related characteristics	64
2.2. <i>Concluding remarks</i>	65
3. A scenario-based questionnaire to understand judgements of corruption	66
3.1. <i>Analogy with previous research methods</i>	66
3.2. <i>Selection of the scenarios</i>	67
3.3. <i>Dimensions covering different characteristic to influence the judgement</i>	68
3.3.1. Public versus private actor	68

3.3.2. Favour	69
3.3.3. Relationship corruptor and corrupted.....	69
3.3.4. Larger/smaller and direct/indirect payoff	70
3.4. <i>Blueprint of the survey instrument</i>	71
3.5. <i>Format of the scenarios</i>	72
3.6. <i>Measuring the judgement</i>	73
3.7. <i>Used surveys and samples</i>	74
4. Conclusion	75
Chapter IV: The influence of differential association on perceptions of corruption	77
1. Understanding perceptions of corruption through differential association: An empirical analysis of survey data from the Belgian region Flanders.	77
1.1. Introduction	77
1.1.1. <i>Theoretical introduction</i>	78
1.1.2. <i>Differential association and perceptions of corruption</i>	80
1.1.3. <i>Methodology and research design</i>	82
1.2. Results and discussion	84
1.3. Conclusion.....	92
2. Perceptions of corruption in Flanders: surveying citizens and police. A study on the influence of occupational differential association on perceptions of corruption.....	94
2.1. Introduction	94
2.2. Differential association and the concept of corruption	96
2.2.1. <i>Perceptions of corruption and the process of differential association</i>	96
2.2.2. <i>Perceptions of corruption and differential social organisation</i>	97
2.3. Methodology and research design	98
2.4. Results and discussion	100
2.4.1. <i>Differential social organisation: police versus occupational status groups</i>	101
2.4.1.1. The influence of differential social organisation	105
2.4.1.2. Petty corruption perceived more corrupt by high occupational status respondents and police	107

2.4.1.3. Grand corruption perceived more corrupt by low occupational status groups	107
2.4.2. <i>Perceptions of specialised anti-corruption officers compared with other police officers</i>	108
2.5. Discussion	110
2.6. Conclusion.....	113
3. Does the process of differential association causes different perceptions of corruption? ...	114
3.1. Normative conflict	114
3.2. Differential association	115
3.3. Differential social organisation	117
3.4. Conclusion.....	118
Chapter V: concluding reflections.....	119
1. General summary	119
2. Theoretical reflections	121
2.1. The corruption continuum.....	121
2.2. The interaction between personal and situational characteristics	125
2.3. Further avenues to study the concept of differential organisation	127
2.3.1. <i>Cross cultural research on the influence of occupational differential association on</i> <i>perceptions of corruption</i>	127
2.3.2. <i>Corruptibility of persons</i>	129
3. Societal reflections	130
3.1. Contribution to <i>measure</i> corruption in society	131
3.1.1. <i>Accuracy of perception indices</i>	131
3.1.2. <i>Underestimation of the scale of corruption</i>	132
3.2. Linking perceptions of corruption to behaviour of police in the field	133
3.2.1. <i>Context, perceptions and decisions of officers in the field</i>	133
3.2.2. <i>Who's norms are enforced?</i>	135
References	137
Appendix 1: Scenario based questionnaire	155

Appendix 2: overview sample and response rate police	169
Appendix 3: rank ordering scenario's	170

FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 1: Research design	23
Figure 2: Structure of PhD thesis.....	33
Figure 3: Model to test influence differential association on the corruptibility of persons	123
Table 1: Classification of occupational statuses N (%).....	27
Table 2: Overview sample and response rate	28
Table 3: Characteristics potentially influencing judgement	66
Table 4: Classification of occupational statuses N (%).....	78
Table 5: Differences in the perception of corruption based on membership occupational status groups.....	82
Table 6: Classification of occupational statuses N (%).....	95
Table 7: Occupational status and perceptions of corruption	97
Table 8: Differences between police services in the perception of corruption.....	103
Table 9: Corruption continuum	117
Table 10: Cross-table corruption continuum and occupational status	119
Table 11: Components of a potentially corrupt act: situational and personal characteristics....	121

ABSTRACT

Our study on perceptions of corruption consist of a large scale population survey (2,256 citizens and 352 police officers). The results of this quantitative survey show that there exists a significant difference between occupational status groups as well as between police departments in the perception of corruption. Specialized anti-corruption officers are more severe but also more selective in judging the situations compared to other police services. Furthermore, high occupational status respondents and police officers have more perceptions of corruption in common than lower status groups. These findings were refined on the basis of qualitative focus groups with police respondents. It revealed that although the perceptions of corruption of police officers are relative stable over time, the societal context as well as individual elements determines the link between their perceptions and their behavior in the field.

The results empirically support the theoretical model introduced by Peters and Welch.¹ They suggested that any corrupt act is judged according to situational characteristics into following four dimensions: the public official involved, the favour provided by the public official, the payoff gained by the official and the donor of the payoff. However, our study results demonstrate that the use of situational characteristics alone cannot give us an explanation for variations in perceptions of corruption.

A direct comparison between different occupational status groups – which are potential subgroups where tolerance for corruption is learned – and the police organisation working against crime provide genuine empirical data. This contrasting analysis of perceptions of corruption within these groups empirically supports our thesis that the process of ‘differential occupational association’ influences people’s perceptions of corruption. This theoretical framework is based on the work of Sutherland.²

The core of this PhD thesis consists of four articles. The first article is dedicated to the question of the added value of studying perceptions of corruption.³ The construction of a scenario-based questionnaire and the lessons learned from previous perception studies is introduced in the second article.⁴ The

¹ Peters, J.G., & Welch, S. (1978). Political corruption in America: A search for definitions and a theory, or if political corruption is in the mainstream of American politics why is it not in the mainstream of American politics research? *The American Political Science Review*, Vol. 72(3), 974-984.

² Sutherland, E. H. (1939). *Principles of Criminology*, third edition. Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott.

³ Dormaels, A., & Easton, M. (2011). Understanding public opinions about corruption: A search for the added value of studying perceptions of corruption. In M. Cools, B. De Ruyver, M. Easton, L. Pauwels, P. Ponsaers, G. Vande Walle, T. Vanderbeken, F. Vander Laenen, G. Vermeulen, & G. Vynckier (eds.), *EU Criminal Justice, Financial & Economic Crime: new perspectives interest-based dispute resolution, Governance of Security Research Papers Series*, Volume 5 (205-226). Antwerpen-Apeldoorn: Maklu.

⁴ Dormaels, A. (2010). Corruption as a judgment label. In: M. Cools, B. De Ruyver, M. Easton, L. Pauwels, P. Ponsaers, G. Vande Walle, T. Vanderbeken, F. Vander Laenen, G. Vermeulen, & G. Vynckier (eds.), *New*

influence of the concept of differential association on the perception of corruption is analysed in the third article.⁵ The fourth article includes the concept of differential socialisations in our analysis and reflects on the influence of occupational differential association on perceptions of corruption.⁶

Empirical Data, Theories and Analyses on Safety, Societal Problems and Citizens' Perceptions. Governance of Security Research Papers Series, Volume 3 (221-238). Antwerpen-Apeldoorn: Maklu.

⁵ Dormaels, A. (in review). Understanding Perceptions of Corruption Through Differential Association: An Empirical Analysis of Survey Data from the Belgian Region Flanders', *Crime, Law and Social Change* (Submitted on March 18, 2013, received a minor revision report on November 16, 2013. Resubmitted on 4 December 2013).

⁶ Dormaels, A. (2014). Perceptions of corruption in Flanders: surveying citizens and police. A study on the influence of occupational differential association on perceptions of corruption, *Policing and Society*, Advance online publication: DOI:10.1080/10439463.2014.895351.

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CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Introduction

The writing of this introduction involved striking a balance between integrating the theoretical and methodological material without creating an excessive overlap between the chapters. This obstacle is largely due to the structure of the present PhD thesis which comprises four articles. Each individual article has been submitted to a journal independently from the overarching whole of this PhD study. Consequently, there exist some similarities between these articles in the reporting of the methodology and the reflecting on the theoretical framework. Nevertheless, we decided to introduce the reader to the composition of the theoretical framework as well as to the study design of our present study.

The social context and the problem formulation are introduced in the first part of this introduction. We identify the social and scientific relevance of our research, which will be presented in the second and third part of this introduction. The general research questions, the theoretical framework, which is inspired by the differential association theory (Sutherland, 1939), and the research design will be discussed in the fifth and sixth sections. The structure of the present PhD thesis is presented in the seventh and final part of this introduction.

1. Social context and problem formulation

Over the past decade, numerous corruption scandals have risen to the surface in Belgium. In the Wallonia Region, for example, corruption popped-up in various public construction companies in cities such as Mons, La Louvière, Marcinelle, Louvain-la-Neuve, Seraing. The city Charleroi has been confronted with corruption cases within the public housing company ‘La Carolorégienne’ (MacKay, 2010), the joint authority ICDI for waste and shoddy management (F.D., 2011), and within public procurement (STE., 2007). Also within the Flanders region police and justice authorities are targeting corrupt situations. A few examples of notorious cases are, the corruption within the public administration of Knokke (Franck, 2013a), corrupt officials in the maritime agency (Franck, 2013b) and the widespread corrupted files within the Federal Department of Public Building (Bové, 2014). A particular situation which has been reported openly in the Flemish newspapers, together with direct allegations of corruption, concerns a member of staff of an alderman of the city of Antwerp. A criminal investigation was instigated against this member of staff when it was revealed that he lived in a luxurious loft conversion for free. The fact that this loft was owned by a real estate agent running projects in the city was viewed differently by different parties. The anonymous quote of a business partner – ‘I cannot say a bad word about Mr. X. I think there is nothing wrong’ (Van Der Aa, 2009a) –

aply illustrates the ‘insiders’ perception. Local politicians and the real estate branch were tolerant in judging this potentially corrupt situation. Police and justice authorities abstained from making public comments in the newspapers, although the criminal investigation went forward with great strides. The opinions depicted in the newspapers clearly show a contrast in how situations are perceived. Journalists reported the corruption (Aerts, 2010; Bové, 2010, 2014; Dm., 2010; Lefelon, 2009; Van Der Aa, 2009c). In their opinion, the favour of a free loft provided by the real estate agent could only have resulted in undue advantages being rendered by the alderman’s member of staff. These news reports illustrate that perceptions about corruption shift along multiple dimensions in relation to the particular activity, the context of the observer and in relation to the situation being observed.

Regardless of the authenticity of the testimonies and statements formulated in the newspapers, the different interpretations of this ‘loft case’ raise a number of questions which give rise to our problem formulation. Do different groups perceive corruption differently? If so, how can we explain these differences between groups in their perceptions of corruption? These questions lead to the central topic of our research. Although these questions are straightforward, there is not a lot of research that explains inter-group variations in the perception of corruption. There exists no fundamental research in Belgium on perceptions of corruption. It is unclear how Belgian citizens perceive corruption and to what extent differences between groups emerge. Ethical perceptions and attitudes vary by country and across cultures (Moon & Franke, 2000); in other words, findings from foreign studies are, simply not generalizable to perceptions of corruption in Flanders. In this regard, the present study on perceptions of corruption fills a gap. Moreover, traditional studies on perceptions of corruption do not deal with why distinct groups perceive corruption differently.

The aim of the present study is to understand corruption in its broadest sense because the blurring of moral norms can be seen to cause social harm. In fact, organizations do not become corrupt overnight. Corruption finds its origin in unethical behaviour that via an intermediate stage of ‘corruptive influence’ ends in corruption (Moore, 2008; Vande Walle & Dormaels, 2010). De Ruyver, Vander Beken, Bullens and Siron (1999) defined ‘corruptive influence’ as corrupt behaviour in which not all the constituent elements of the crime of corruption are present.

Definitions of corruption vary depending on the perspective of the researcher and the objective of the study (Philp, 2006). Both criminal and non-criminal approaches emphasize that through ‘corruption’ decisions are influenced that normally would have a different outcome (De Ruyver et al. 1999, p. 4). This ‘perversion of power’ is a salient characteristic of corruption (Brasz, 1970) and distinguishes corruption as a phenomenon from other crimes such as fraud or embezzlement.

2. Social relevance

Perception studies revealed that the perception of acts as corrupt or not corrupt varies between groups. Politicians are, for example, more lenient in judging potential cases of political corruption compared to citizens (Bailey & Paras, 2006; Gorta & Forell, 1995; Jackson & Smith, 1996; León, Araña, & de León, 2013; Peters & Welch, 1978; Redlawsk & McCann, 2005). Moreover, not all corrupt situations are judged as equally immoral. Heidenheimer (1970) made a distinction between black, grey and white corruption. Black corruption are those acts that are perceived corrupt and also demand punishment. Behaviour which is perceived corrupt but not appreciated as severe enough to be punished is called white corruption. Grey corruption indicates that some expect to see an act punished, while others do not.

What these perception studies have in common is that they empirically show that social acceptance of corruption differs between social groups. De Graaf, Wagenaar and Hoenderboom (2010) draw attention to the added value of focusing on the perceptions of corruption. An understanding of public perceptions of corruption and, in particular, differences between groups are important for different reasons. Perceptions of corruption play a role in terms of engagement in corrupt behaviour, influencing reactions such as exposing corruption, and are believed to interrelate with social trust. In what follows we will discuss these effects.

Perceptions of what does and does not constitute corruption reflect social acceptance of certain forms of corruption. In the example of the 'loft case', insiders might not perceive it as corrupt because they have become tolerant towards this kind of behaviour. The findings of different studies clearly show that perceptions of corruption play an important role in the initiation of corrupt behaviour. Piquero, Tibbetts and Blankenship (2005) found empirical support that definitions in favour of corporate crime have an important role in the decision process to commit such crimes. Also, Bernardi, Witek and Melton (2009) found that an individual's perceptions regarding unethical actions are positively associated with their perceptions of bribing a police officer to avoid a speeding ticket.

Furthermore, perceptions also influence the willingness of people to react against corruption. Different studies found a clear link between someone's perceptions and the decision to do nothing when confronted with corrupt behaviour (Gorta & Forell, 1995; Miller, Grødeland & Koshechkina, 2001). Anyone who labels a situation as corrupt judges it against an 'established' conception of what is right and what is wrong according to the standards of one's own group with which one identifies (Newell, 2008). Next to this question of morality it is unclear whether people are able to recognise corrupt situations. Bowman and Gilligan (2007) found that people have difficulties in distinguishing between corrupt and non-corrupt situations. Perception studies will provide an understanding the extent to

which potential corrupt situations are not recognised as such by subgroups and identify these groups which are at risk.

Van de Walle (2008) found a significant relationship between corruption perceptions of citizens and low levels of trust. The direction of this relationship is, however, unclear. It is therefore uncertain whether high levels of perceived corruption result in lower levels of trust. Another possibility is that low levels of trust in government result in higher perceptions of corruption. Corruption perceptions, regularly used to estimate levels of corruption, would in that sense not reflect the level of corruption in society. The latter direction has important consequences regarding the widespread use of perception-based indices such as Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index for measuring the level of corruption in societies. Perception indices could, in that case, measure public trust rather than corruption. This raises questions about the validity of these instruments for measuring corruption. Additionally, these indices are based on the perceptions of a selected group of elites such as experts and businesspeople. It is, however, unclear to what extent their perceptions are generalizable to corruption as it is perceived by other groups in society. Perception studies have shown that there are many varieties of corrupt behaviour and even more situational or personal factors contributing to the perception of corruption (Caiden, 2001). These findings tend to suggest that perceptions are also influenced by socio-economic characteristics of people.

These findings claim an important social relevance for studying whether and how members of society perceive some acts as forms of corruption. These perceptions have a significant influence on a country's awareness of the problem.

3. Theoretical relevance

Despite the social interest outlined above there is scarce scientific attention for inter-group variations in the perception of corruption. A significant part of perception studies is inspired by the work by Peters and Welch (1978). They conducted a scenario-based questionnaire study amongst 978 senators in 24 US states and successfully unravelled the corruption judging process into four significant dimensions: the 'public official' involved, the actual 'favour' provided by the public official, the 'payoff' gained by the public official, and the 'donor' of the payoff. A politician receiving money (direct payoff) will be perceived more corrupt than someone accepting party funding for elections (indirect payoff). This model inspired researchers to apply public opinion studies in their search for a definition of corruption.

These studies have undoubtedly resulted in original and genuine insights into the influence of situational characteristics on people in their perceptions of corruption. Nevertheless these studies

involved an important limitation. It is difficult to discriminate corrupt from not corrupt situations on the basis of situational characteristics alone. Some situations with a lot of salient corrupt characteristics are perceived corrupt by a minority. Take, for example, the case of an alderman who (ab)uses his position to get a reduction for a laptop for his daughter and asks for a discount before he places an order for computers for his city. This situation was one of the scenarios which was used in our study about perceptions of corruption in Flanders. Despite the fact that this situation has a lot of salient corrupt characteristics that fit the model of Peters and Welch – public position, asking for a payoff himself, a direct payoff, the suggestion of rendering an undue advantage – only 56.9% of Flemish respondents judged this situation to be corrupt (Dormael, 2012).

It is clear that not only situational characteristics influence perceptions. Certain studies found a link between personal characteristics and the judging of a situation as corrupt. More concrete judgements of situations are probably influenced by independent variables such as demographic and socio-economic characteristics, trust in political or governmental organisations and gender. Some researchers tried to ascertain the influence of gender on perceptions of corruption. The results of these studies are, however, not clear-cut. Some studies found a clear relationship between gender and tolerance towards corruption (Sung, 2003, 2006; Swamy, Knack, Lee, & Azfar, 2001). Some studies did not find empirical proof for gender-based differences (Alatas, Cameron, Chaudhuri, Erkal, & Gangadharan, 2009; Aldrich & Kage 2003; Pharr, 1998). Other studies found a relationship between social status and the perception of corrupt behaviour. The results from Jackson and Smith (1996) as well as Redlawsk and McCann (2005) empirically show that the higher a person's social status, the more he will approach corruption from a legalistic point of view.

According to Bertrand and Mullainathan (2001), cultural norms and individual attitudes reflect variations in the perception of corruption. Tänzler, Maras and Giannakopoulos (2012) found that someone's social context plays an important role and influence in his or her perception of corruption. Phenomena such as nepotism, bribery, and corruption are 'neutrally described mechanisms for achieving solidarity within and between kinship groups' (Tänzler, 2007, p. 9). In other words, corruption is not simply objectively determined. It is constructed by subjective situational definitions that are culturally transmitted. During their interviews with representatives from police, justice, media and economic institutions it emerged that these groups constructed different perceptions of corruption.

We noticed that most of these studies limited the scope of their research. Despite the many shades of corruption – for example, public versus private, petty versus grand –most studies are limited to the sphere of politics or public administration. Private corruption, equally harmful for society, is studied to a lesser extent (Argandoña, 2003). Additionally, most studies are practically exclusively confined to politicians' or elites' perceptions of 'political' corruption. To what extent other groups in society are

more 'positive' towards different forms of corrupt behaviour is to a lesser extent subject of research. de Sousa (2008), Poeschl and Ribeiro (2012) and Jancsics (2013) are a few examples of studies focussing on petty corruption. Moreover, perceptions about what types of behaviour are judged as corrupt vary substantially within and between countries (Tänzler, Maras & Giannakopoulos, 2012).

Our study is motivated by the observation that there exists a gap in the occurrence of corruption, sometimes more or less legalised, and how this phenomenon is being researched. Variations between groups in their perceptions of corruption is the central theme of our study. In what follows, the research questions and theoretical framework are introduced.

4. Theoretical framework

The central focus of the present PhD study is the observation that groups seemingly conflict over what is perceived as corrupt. We draw on the differential association theory from Sutherland (1939) to study this research topic. In the next section we will introduce this theory.

4.1. Differential association theory

Sutherland was a sociologist at the Chicago School and introduced his differential association theory for the first time in 1939. His criminological work was strongly influenced by the early work of the Chicago School, focussing on social ecology and urban criminality such as gang and youth crimes (Merton, 1997). According to the theoretical perspective of the Chicago School deviance is the result of cultural transmission in social groups (Downes & Rock, 2007). Sutherland stated that the preference for crime is '*culturally transmitted as traditions over many years*' (Sutherland, Cressey & Luckenbill, 1992: 173). The differential association theory consists of a set of nine statements which represent three interrelated concepts: normative conflict, differential association and differential organisation.

Sutherland's theory is based upon the assumption that deviance occurs when people define a certain opportunity as an appropriate occasion for violating social norms or criminal laws. Sutherland (1939) stated that the modern industrial society is segmented into groups that conflict over the definition of appropriate behaviour.⁷ As interpreted by Matsueda (1988) some groups in society behave completely in concordance with the applicable laws. Other groups define law as a rule that should be followed, but not necessarily under all circumstances whereas a third kind of group is almost not confined by

⁷ Sutherland published different versions of his explanation of crime in four editions of his textbook *Principles of Criminology*. The concept of 'normative conflict' is not explicitly mentioned in the third and fourth edition. Sutherland remained, however, convinced that cultural conflicts are the underlying cause of crime in society (Bruinsma, 2014).

law. Criminal behaviour is initiated by this normative conflict between groups over definitions favourable toward crime versus definitions unfavourable toward crime.

The second concept is differential association. Offenders learn how to commit deviant behaviour through this process via frequent contact with or exposure to criminal behaviour in intimate groups. These groups are those with whom the individual associates with on a regular basis. Of these groups, a primary reference group is the family where someone's understanding of values and societal norms first begins. Other intimate groups may be friends, leisure clubs, occupational groups etc. This 'learning' of deviant behaviour includes two elements: skills and definitions (Akers, 1998; Burgess & Akers, 1966; Sutherland et al., 1992).

The first are the requisite skills and techniques for committing a crime. A burglar needs to learn how to use a crowbar or to by-pass the intrusion alarm. The second element, the learning of definitions, is seen as the key element in the process of differential association. Definitions are either favourable or unfavourable to crime: motives, verbalisations and rationalisations that make crime more justified or acceptable or vice versa. What is important is that *'these definitions are not merely ex-post facto rationalisations of crime, but rather operate to cause criminal behaviour'* (Matsueda, 2006: 5). There is a large volume of published studies describing how neutralisation techniques such as verbalisations precede deviant behaviour and make deviant behaviour possible (Anand, Ashforth, & Joshi, 2005; Coleman, 1987; Sykes & Matza, 1957; Topalli, 2005). Definitions in favour of crime 'rationalise' deviant behaviour in such a way that it appears to be less harmful (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara, & Pastorelli, 1996). More recently, several papers explored the idea that disengagement mechanisms morally facilitate non-compliance and pave the way to corruption (Huisman & Vande Walle, 2010; Moore, 2008; Vande Walle & Dormaels, 2010). The modality of these definitions may, however, vary in frequency, duration, priority and intensity (Sutherland et al., 1992).

The third concept of differential socialisation implies that people will be exposed to various competing definitions of corruption and learn different skills depending on their distinct group membership. According to Sutherland's theoretical model there exist two kinds of organisations: those organised against crime and those organised in favour of crime. Sutherland hypothesised that the relative strength of organisations in favour of crime versus organisations against crime could explain the crime rate of groups in society. Sutherland's concept implies that groups organised in favour of corruption will show more associations with definitions of corruption compared to groups organised against crime.

Before we apply these theoretical perspectives to our study about perceptions of corruption we address some critiques which are formulated regarding the differential association theory. These critiques are

from a theoretical perspective relevant because they give rise to the testing of the theory of differential association and its extension (Sutherland et al., 1992, p. 92).

4.2. Critiques on the differential association theory

Many writers have challenged Sutherland's theory. Cressey (1960) was able to counter most of these critiques as misinterpretations or literary errors. Empirical studies should focus – according to Cressey – on two important weaknesses of Sutherland's theory.

A first prevailing criticism is that the definitions 'favourable to' and 'unfavourable to' crime are not precisely defined and are extremely difficult to operationalise in meaningful quantitative terms (Short, 1957, p. 233). As a consequence thereof it is a challenge to empirically test the process of differential association (Matsueda, 1988, p. 296). Warr and Stafford (1991) found a weak relationship between adolescents' attitudes and the definitions of delinquent behaviour and delinquency. They found that deviant behaviour of peers has a much stronger effect on delinquent behaviour compared to attitudes and definitions. This finding is seemingly inconsistent with Sutherland's theory, which assumes that it is not required that criminals witness criminal behaviour in order to learn it. Sutherland stated that one learns criminal behaviour through social interaction and communication. McCarthy (1996) argued, in line with Sutherland's interpretation, that studies with an exclusive focus on deviant attitudes neglect the centrality of others' behaviour as a source of acquiring criminal skills.

This tutelage by peers is empirically confirmed by Bruinsma (1992) and McCarthy (1996). Both scholars underscored tutelage in criminal learning as an important element. The impact of the frequency of contacts with deviant 'behavior patterns' on the development of definitions and on the frequency of communication about relevant techniques is in that sense substantial in the learning of deviance (Reiss & Rhodes, 1964). Also, according to Sykes and Matza (1961) it is the culture of the peer group rather than the pattern of the criminal activity that instigates the learning of criminal behaviour. Groups that often exhibit criminal behaviour are characterised by a dominant criminal culture. Individuals are more frequently and more intensively exposed to favourable definitions and introduced to the skills to commit crime within such criminal subcultures.

A second group of critiques is that Sutherland did not specify in itself the learning process. For that reason, Burgess and Akers (1966) enlarged Sutherland's theory of differential association using the ideas of behavioural psychology. They discussed the integration of concepts of social learning in their article 'A Differential Association-Reinforcement Theory of Criminal Behavior'. Akers social learning theory (Akers, 1973) is organised around four major concepts: differential association, differential reinforcement/punishment, definitions and imitations (Akers, 1996).

Differential association is the process by which individuals are exposed to and learn different definitions favourable or unfavourable to crime. Differential reinforcement and punishment are, respectively, positive and negative ‘social’ reinforcers affecting the likelihood that an act will occur. Whether individuals will commit a crime depends on the *‘balance of past, present, and anticipated future rewards and punishments for their actions’* (Akers & Jensen, 2011, p. 40). Akers’ theory states that the learning of deviant behaviour is the result of direct and indirect social interactions in which the words and behaviour of others directly reinforce behaviour. This reinforcement is the result of social rewards – tangible and intangible, material and symbolic – valued in a society of subgroups. Take, for example, a corporate manager involved in corrupt deals in order to achieve his targeted business figures. A resulting financial bonus for this corrupt manager is an example of a tangible reinforcement. Increased respect from his colleagues is, in the same instance, an intangible reinforcement. Imitation is the modelling process of certain behaviour through the observation of salient models in primary groups. Peers can be crucial role models for the development of definitions in favour of crime.

4.3. The relevance of the differential association theory for studying perceptions of corruption

Even with the above formulated critiques, we observe a revival in the application of the differential association theory to investigate, for example, youth crime (Megens & Weerman, 2012), financial fraud (Bejarano, 2008) and corruption (Zaloznaya, 2012).

Because this theory explains crimes which are distinctive to particular subcultural groups we found this suitable to study the differences in perceptions of corruption for different reasons. Firstly, we clearly observe a normative conflict in society regarding what is perceived as corrupt. 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 politician 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.

A second motive relates to the concept of differential associations. A characteristic of corruption is that it has many shades. Some forms are more easy to recognise, e.g. a public servant asking for bribes in return for an undue advantage. Other forms are less clear, such as trading in influence⁸ or lobbying. While the first is a criminal offence, lobbying today is neither criminalised nor regulated in Belgium.

⁸ This refers to a person selling his/her influence over the decision-making process to benefit a third party (person or institution). The difference with bribery is that it is a trilateral relationship. An intermediary actor ‘asserts or confirms that he/she is able to exert an improper influence over the decision-making of any referred/named person’.

Both phenomena are, however, associated with corruption in society. Low-level public servants are in general more affiliated with bribe taking whereas elites and politicians are more associated with trading in influence (Jancsis, 2013). This discrepancy in the perception of corruption could be the result of a differential learning process. People learn definitions in favour of specific forms of corruption which result in a greater tolerance toward it. In this account we found a motive to inspire our theoretical framework on the differential association theory.

In the next part we introduce the general research questions which arise from our problem formulation. The theoretical perspectives of the differential association theory on the study of perceptions of corruption are discussed in the subsequent section.

5. General research questions and application of the differential association theory on perceptions of corruption

The central problem of our study addresses the differences between groups in the way they perceive corruption. In order to study and explain these differences we will address following research questions:

1. How do Flemish citizens perceive corruption?
 - a. Which differences occur in their perceptions of corruption?
 - b. What are the possible causes for these differences?
2. How do police officers perceive corruption?
 - a. Is there a difference between local police officers, federal judicial police officers and specialised anti-corruption officers in the way they perceive corruption?
 - b. What are the possible causes for these differences?
3. In what respect have citizens different perceptions of corruption to police officers?
4. What are the possible explanations for similarities and differences in the perception of corruption?

In what follows we will elaborate the above formulated research questions in relation to the differential association theory.

5.1. Perceptions of corruption and the process of differential association

The first element to consider is the requisite skills and techniques needed to commit a crime. Zaloznaya (2012) observed that people might choose different means of engaging in corruption.

Cultural and social inequality, for example, might interfere in how people access opportunities for and the benefits from corruption (Bernburg & Thorlindsson, 2001). de Sousa (2008) referred to petty influence as an example of an instrument that is attributed to the 'underprivileged' as a way for them to achieve their goals. 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 sphere and those of the economic and social markets.

More recently, Jancsics found that working-class citizens and entrepreneurs make corrupt deals with low-level public agents. Middle-class and elites, on the other hand, are not engaged in 'direct' corrupt deals and are more focused on 'transferring the case to their arena of influence' (Jancsics, 2013, p. 339). They do not need to make a direct payoff, instead they deploy their social capital and use corrupt influence at the top of organisations. These examples aptly illustrate that, depending on their access to 'resources' and networks, people explore different opportunities and learn how to apply different skills. Respondents without access to particular networks are not introduced to particular skills which are salient for that group. Redlawsk and McCann (2005, p. 271) showed that political favouritism is experienced as an acceptable way of rendering service by members of the upper classes of society. Lower- and middle-class citizens, however, disapprove of elites engaging in the accessing of political privileges. Groups 'perceive' potential corrupt acts differently which cannot be seen as being isolated from the shared definitions which circulate within the groups.

These definitions, which are the second element in the learning process, make crime more justified or acceptable (Bandura et al., 1996). Therefore groups that are assimilated and socialised within a permissive environment have a wide range of alternative definitions for corruption. In many occupations, deviant practices are accepted as a way of doing business and are probably not defined as corrupt. Vande Walle and Dormaels (2010) observed, for example, that Belgian custom officers described potential corrupt cases as 'protecting the economic interest of Belgium' or stated 'we have to re-orientate our position from a controlling to a more client-oriented service'. These examples illustrate that persons facilitate the cognitive restructuring of high-risk situations in such a way that they appear not corrupt at all. Tavits (2010) empirically proved that public officials and citizens are more likely to engage in corruption when they do not define corruption as wrong.

Zaloznaya (2012) observed that members of specific organisations learn either favourable or unfavourable definitions of corruption. Likewise, experience within these networks influences members' choice of one definition over other potential definitions rather than influencing members' instrumental considerations and moral beliefs regarding corruption (Zaloznaya, 2012, p. 312). Jacobsson (2012) ascertained that suspects of white-collar crime refer to their prevailing business

culture and use other labels for bribery. Such an occupational culture influences the modalities of definitions to which people are exposed.

Our assumption is that people, depending on their occupational status, will be exposed to different occupational normative systems, or cultures with different attitudes toward the committing or avoiding of corruption. Distinction is made between four classifications of occupational statuses: non-active group, low-esteem occupation, middle-esteem occupation, high-esteem occupation.

The above translates into the first general theoretical hypothesis of this study, which is that tolerance toward corruption is learned through interactions within networks of like-minded individuals – what Sutherland referred to as differential association (Sutherland et al., 1992). All else being equal, access to particular networks and powers should result in more tolerance toward equivalent situations.

This translates into the following two research hypotheses:

HYP1: Members of a high occupational status group are more tolerant toward situations that describe ‘grand’ corruption, and vice versa.

HYP2: Members of a low occupational status group are more tolerant toward situations that describe ‘petty’ corruption, and vice versa.

5.2. 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 (Sutherland et al., 1992). The concept of differential social organisation implies that people will be exposed to various competing definitions of corruption and learn different skills depending on their distinct group membership. In view of studying the process of differential social organisation, we introduce within our study a group organised in 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 are – as members of a group organised against crime – supposed to be less tolerant in judging corrupt situations.

An interesting question remains, however: to what extent is the process of differential social organisation ‘offence-specific’ or ‘offence-general’ (Jackson, Charles & Mary, 1986; Matsueda 1988)? Stated differently, are the police as a group organised against criminality less tolerant of corruption than they are for other crimes? Or do different units encounter a specific process of differential organisation? This question is studied including police respondents with different

backgrounds and specialisations in our sample. The Belgian police is structured on two levels: the federal police and the local police. The federal police are responsible for ‘specialised’ police activities, such as complex and serious judicial investigations throughout the whole territory of Belgium. They are also in charge of providing a wide range of subsidiary operational and administrative support for the local police forces. The local police carry out non- ‘specialised’ activities such as beat policing, intervention, victim support, local criminal investigation, public order maintenance and traffic safety. The Belgian territory is divided into 195 local police forces. Although both levels are autonomous, they cooperate in order to perform an integrated police function. In our sample, therefore, a distinction has been made between 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). The core task of the CORC is to investigate complex and serious cases of corruption and related offences such as misappropriation of public funds or conflicts of interest. In order to conduct complex investigations, this office recruits specialists with a very high level of expertise. Next to the CORC, the 27 districts of the federal judicial police are concerned with criminal behaviour that threatens the democratic nature of the regime, such as organised crime, corruption, people-trafficking, fiscal fraud, terrorism. The local judicial police are in many cases concerned with local crimes and individual victimisation, such as theft or acts of violence (Ponsaers et al., 2010).

In line with the principles of the process of differential social organisation we expect that police officers will be less tolerant toward corruption compared with different occupational status groups. Next to that, we assume that the process of different socialisation is crime-specific. In that case CORC officers will be less tolerant compared with other police officers because they are exposed more intensively to negative definitions of corruption.

The above outlined theoretical framework informs the second theoretical hypothesis of this study. Because of the interrelation between differential association and differential social organisation (Sutherland et al., 1992, p. 90), groups organised against corruption will present an abundance of favourable corruption definitions. This hypothesis is translated into the following research hypotheses:

HYP3: Police officers are less tolerant of corruption compared with varying occupational status groups.

HYP4: Specialised anti-corruption officers share different perceptions of corruption compared with other investigative officers.

6. Research design

The design of our study consists of three research phases. The first phase of the research was dedicated to the methodological construction of the research design and on the scientific and social contextualisation of the study. This is the conceptual design of the study. The central focus of our study is to understand what kind of situations are perceived as corrupt by citizens and the police and how distinct groups perceive corruption differently. To that end we conducted a large scale population survey during the second research phase. A scenario-based questionnaire was distributed amongst a sample of Flemish citizens and police officers. This quantitative data revealed which kinds of situations are perceived as corrupt and to what extent distinct groups have different perceptions of corruption. In a third qualitative research we addressed the question how differences between groups can be explained and to what extent police officers their perceptions influence their behaviour in the field. For that purpose we organised focus groups with police officers.

The consistency between the three phases and the particular aims and outcomes of each of them are represented in the scheme below. In what follows, each of the three phases is described in more detail and followed by some considerations on the limitations of this research design.

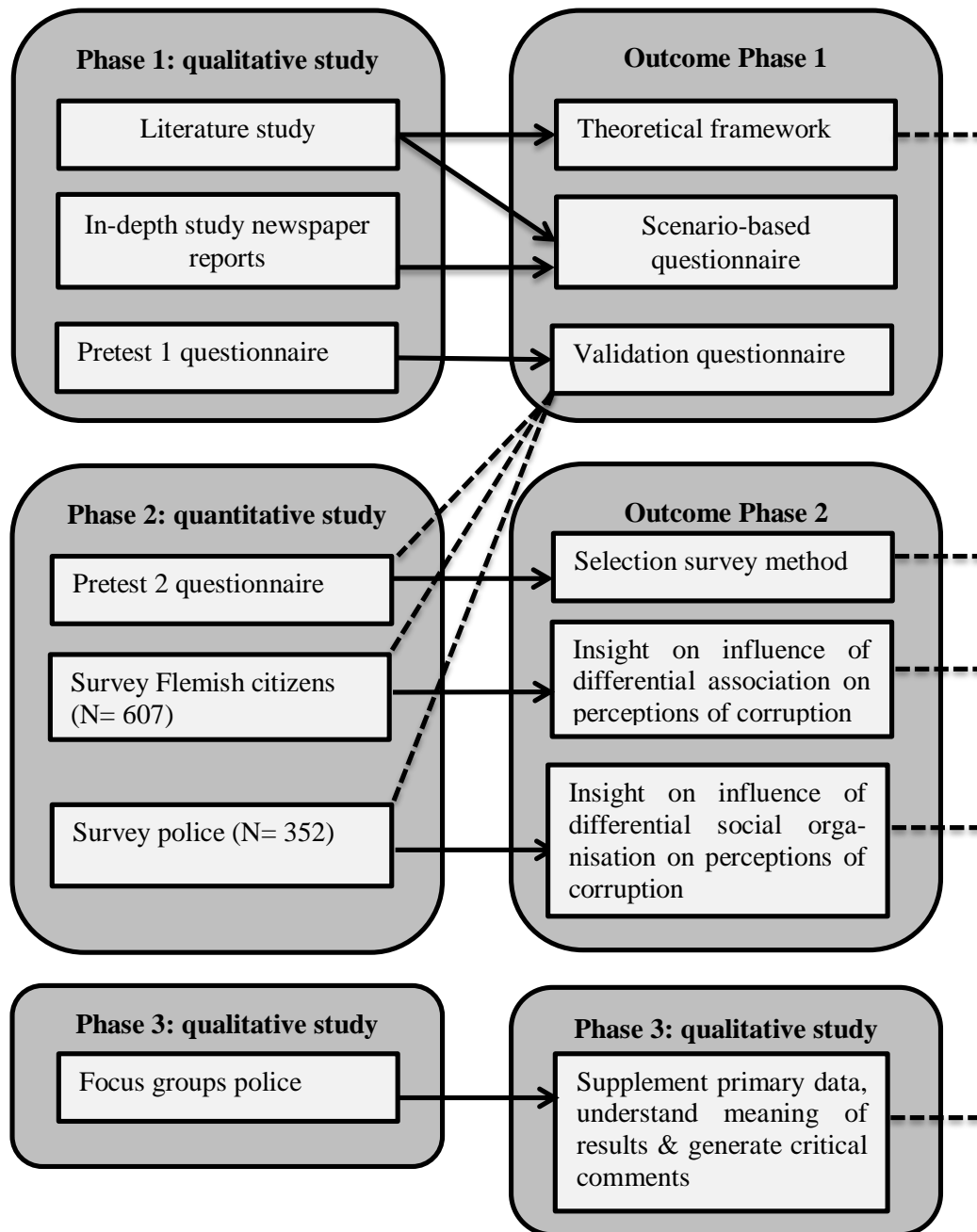


Figure 2: research design. A \longrightarrow B means: primarily determines. A $- - \longrightarrow$ B means: secondary purpose

During phase 1, feedback was obtained via the participation in two summer schools. The first summer school *PhD-Net Police Science. Police Science: Theory, Methodology and Practice* took place at the German Police University (Hiltrup Muenster, Germany) from 23 to 30 August 2009 and was organised by Ruhr-University Bochum (in cooperation with the German Police University Muenster and University of Duisburg-Essen) and the University of Cape Town. The second summer school, *PhD-*

Net Police Science. Police Science: Theory, Methodology and Practice, took place at the University of Cape Town (Cape Town, South Africa) from 22 January to 2 February 2010. It was organised in cooperation with the Ruhr-University Bochum and the University of Duisburg-Essen.

Feedback on the technical and methodological elaboration of the quantitative study was obtained during two PhD seminars. A first PhD Midwinter Seminar (10 and 11 March 2011) was organised by the Police Academy of the Netherlands, the Department of Governance Studies of the VU University, the Defence Academy of the Netherlands and the Research Group ‘Governing & Policing Security’ (GaPS) of the University College Ghent. A second Intensive Seminar *Making Strategic Choices in Researching Criminological Issues* (7–9 September 2011) was organised by the Doctoral School of Ghent University. A thorough and detailed review on the construction of the questionnaire was obtained via the participation to a three-day Doctoral Seminar *Questionnaire Design* organised by Ghent University.

6.1. Phase 1: literature study and questionnaire design

The methods used in the first phase are a literature study and qualitative in-depth study of newspaper databases.

6.1.1. Literature study

The literature review is motivated by two reasons. The first one is to embed the present PhD study in the existing literature on perceptions of corruption. The question of understanding the scope, nature or dynamics of corruption has occupied many scholars and resulted in various debates, studies and theories (Heywood, 1997; Kolthoff, 2012). Since the seventies Anglo-Saxon scholars have explored alternative ways to study the phenomenon of corruption. Western society has been confronted with drastic political scandals such as Watergate, Vietnam, and the ‘Bert Lance’ scandal within the administration of President Carter. Researchers became aware of the extent and consequences of corruption: ‘Corruption has gone too far and is too deep for any return to health and vitality’ (Euben, 1978, p. 104). The variety of definitions employed by social scientists received much attention from scholars. The rush to study the perceptions or opinions regarding corruption meant an important methodological transformation was needed to gain a more profound understanding of corruption (Blaise, 2008; Von Alemann, 2004). The study of corruption always took the form of the researcher adopting a specific viewpoint on corruption, which influenced the definition debate and the debate on methodologies used to research the concept. This literature study resulted in our theoretical framework which is based on Sutherland’s theory of differential association theory.

A second motivation to conduct a literature review was to select meaningful situations describing hypothetical corrupt situations to be included in our scenario-based questionnaire. As already mentioned, the focus of the present study is to understand corruption in its broadest sense. As a consequence thereof we did not apply a criminal law-based definition of corruption in order to select our scenarios. Alternatively, we gathered relevant situations describing potential corrupt cases on the basis of an in-depth search within the Flemish Digital Press Database Mediargus.⁹ In this qualitative study we analysed articles reporting corruption over the period January 1995 to March 2009. The Dutch language is rich in terms and phrases related to corruption. Although the use of different terms may vary depending on the context, the basic word referring to ‘corruption’ is understood in Dutch as ‘corruptie’. Nevertheless, a vast range of alternative synonyms exist, such as ‘omkoping’, understood as bribery, ‘gesjoemel’, translated as fiddling, ‘steekpenning’, to be understood as bribe, or ‘smeergeld’, understood as slush money. Based on this query with the aforementioned search terms we received over 15,000 articles reporting corruption in the broadest sense and covering different continents and regions. On the basis of this empirical information, we observed that a vast range of different situations is judged to be corrupt in the media. Moreover we observed that some cases are judged corrupt by only one individual person, while other situations are condemned by more than one person or a group of people (for example citizens, journalists, or professional groups such as the police, judicial service, or politicians). On the other hand, we observed that some situations have never been judged as corrupt (e.g. rapes, theft, assault and battery). This observation provided the opportunity to select meaningful situations which were rich and diverse in such a way that they included all kinds of stories which came to the attention of the general public and have been judged in some way as corruption by at least one person or a group of people. The criteria for selecting situations was that each situation had been judged as corrupt by a person or a group of persons. Secondly, the aim was to select situations which described different kinds of corrupt behaviour such as, for example, petty corruption, grand corruption, corruption committed by private persons, politicians or public servants.

6.1.2. Construction & testing the quality of the scenario-based questionnaire

The results of the above-described literature study were also useful for the design of the scenario-based questionnaire. The questionnaire has been constructed based on the work by Peters and Welch (1978). 15 newspaper reports have been selected in order to construct our scenario based questionnaire containing 15 scenarios. Each of these scenarios was drawn up neutrally, as for instance, ‘*A mayor visits the office of a political associate to speed up the finalisation of a building file*’. By means of the four dimensions (payoff, undue advantage, donor of the payoff, public or private role) identified by

⁹ This database contains all news articles from the Flemish newspapers.

Peters and Welch (1978), we changed salient characteristics within every scenario in order to influence the perception of corruption such as: ‘*Do you think it is acceptable for a mayor to discuss a file in order to accelerate the construction of an industrial site in his municipality?*’ or ‘*Do you think it is acceptable that the mayor discusses a file in order to accelerate the construction of a golf course in his municipality?*’ (see Chapter III, p. for more information on the elaboration of the questionnaire, p. 59). Each of the 15 situations group three or four consecutive questions. (See Appendix 1 for a copy of the questionnaire).

The clarity of the questions and the reliability of the answers were assessed during a focus group (N= 6) which can be considered a useful method for testing the quality of questionnaires (O’Brien, 1993).¹⁰ It turned out that the questions were too complex and that differences between the different questions were too subtle. As a consequence thereof respondents demanded time to reread the questions. The observations during this focus group made it clear that a telephone survey would not result in valid data.¹¹ A paper-pencil method would not only enable respondents to revise their answer, it would also provide the possibility emphasising changing salient characteristics.

A second simplified version of the questionnaire was tested during a small-scale pretest (N= 16) in June 2010. A paper-pencil method was applied. Account was taken of people with diverse backgrounds. We observed during this pretest that the structure of the questionnaire was considered simple and clear for the respondents and that they clearly and accurately navigated through the questionnaire. Respondents who participated in the pretest also admitted that they would prefer a paper-pencil test over a telephone survey.

Finally, a professional data collection centre MAS (Louvain, Belgium) organised a computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) pretest. During this test it became clear that respondents were not able to distinguish between the different questions. A telephone survey would thus not guarantee quality of the data. For this reason, we opted for a postal survey in preference to a telephone survey. A final argument was that it was impossible to organise a survey amongst police officers using a telephone interview. In view of excluding a method effect we chose to organise a paper-pencil method (Erhart, Wetzel, & Kruegel, 2009; Knapp & Kirk, 2003) amongst a sample of Flemish citizens as well as amongst a sample of police officers.

The outcome of this qualitative research phase is reflected in two theoretical articles of this PhD thesis. The added value of studying perceptions of corruption is discussed in a first article (Dormael

¹⁰ This focus group was composed of fellow researchers in Criminology (Ghent University) and Public Administration (University Colleges Ghent) and took place at Ghent University on 20 May 2009.

¹¹ Note that at the time of submitting the second article (Dormael, 2010) the objective was to apply a telephone survey. However, we revised our view at a later time.

& Easton, 2011), which can be found in Chapter II: *Understanding public opinions about corruption* (p. 39.). A second theoretical article reflects the methodological construction of the scenario-based questionnaire (Dormael, 2010). This article is included in Chapter III: *Corruption as a judgment label* (p. 59).

6.2. Phase 2: quantitative survey

Phase 2 consists of two quantitative surveys. The first survey consisted of a large-scale population survey. The different police departments were surveyed in a second survey. In what follows each of these surveys is described in more detail and an explanation is offered in relation to the construction of the research sample.

6.2.1. Population survey

The fieldwork was conducted by a professional firm specialising in population surveys (MAS, Louvain). In the simple random 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 B.I.P.T. records only households with a fixed and/or a mobile phone number. A minority of 1% of Flemish citizens, mainly elderly and lower-educated persons, does not make use of either a mobile or a fixed telephone (Pickery, 2010). Before sending out the questionnaires, respondents were contacted by telephone. In order to ensure representativeness, contacts took place outside office hours (16h–20h). These telephone calls created a threshold-lowering effect by producing some ‘goodwill’ to the persons contacted (Fox, Crask, & Kim, 1988). Distributed over three waves, 2.256 questionnaires were sent in the period from February to May 2011. A total of 607 valid surveys was obtained, a 26.9% response rate. Elderly persons were slightly over-represented in the response group while low-educated persons were under-represented. The response sample consisted of 18.9% of low-educated, 38% of middle-educated and 42.8% of high-educated persons whereas the ratio in Belgium is respectively 37.43%, 25.31% and 37.27%.¹² Another key variable for this study is employment. The response sample, with 1.6% unemployed respondents, 37.3% inactive persons and 61.1% employed persons is similar to the 2012 official employment statistics: 5.09%, 33.06% and 61.85%.¹³ The sample was weighted using three variables: gender, age and county, although middle- and high-educated persons are slightly over-represented.

The basic premise in how we sought to construct our subgroups is that ‘occupational status’ is an indicator for one’s membership of different types of occupational organisations and networks.

¹² Directorate-General Statistics and Economic Information, <http://statbel.fgov.be/>, consulted on 27/11/2013.

¹³ Directorate-General Statistics and Economic Information, <http://statbel.fgov.be/>, consulted on 27/11/2013.

Occupational status guaranteed different opportunities for individuals to access political, economic and administrative powers, and thus to benefit from corruption.

Given the goal of creating a valid classification system, respondents were asked to provide information on their occupational status. First, respondents were polled about their status; distinctions were made between those performing a paid occupation, pensioners (including early retirees), the unemployed, those drawing disability (including both illness and the disabled), students and homemakers.

Second, this study distinguished between a function within the government, the private sector or self-employed persons. Finally, one question measured the status of the occupation. For public officials, a distinction was made between the highest level, A, and the lowest level, D. For private-sector workers, a distinction was made between unskilled workers, skilled workers, lower clerks, middle clerks, senior clerks and management. For self-employed persons, a distinction was made between small independents, farmer/fisherman, contractors, wholesalers and, finally, the professions (e.g., lawyers, accountants, doctors). The rank ordering of the respondents' job status is presented in the table below.

Table 1: Classification of occupational statuses N (%)

Group 1: Student (80; 13.2%)	Group 2: Non-active group (232; 38.6%)	Group 3: Low-esteem job (91; 14.6%)	Group 4: Middle-esteem job (114; 18.6%)	Group 5: High-esteem job (39; 6.3%)
Student 80 (13,2%)	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%)

Group 2 represents Flemish citizens with the lowest occupational status whereas Group 5 represents citizens with the highest occupational status. The number of 607 respondents results in a confidence interval of 3.94% at a 95% confidence level (MAS, 2011).

This population survey is organised in relation to the hypothesis that 'members of a high occupational status group are more tolerant toward situations that describe 'grand' corruption, and vice versa' (HYP1) and that 'members of a low occupational status group are more tolerant toward situations that describe 'petty' corruption, and vice versa' (HYP2). Both are analysed in the article: Dormaels, A. (in

review) ‘Understanding Perceptions of Corruption Through Differential Association: An Empirical Analysis of Survey Data from the Belgian Region Flanders’, *Crime, Law and Social Change* (Submitted on March 18, 2013, received a minor revision report on November 16, 2013. Resubmitted on 4 December 2013). This article is presented in Chapter IV (p. 77).

6.2.2. Police survey

In view of the fact that we are studying the effect of differential social organisation on perceptions of corruption we included police respondents. In order to analyse whether the concept of differential social organisation is crime-specific we included police respondents from different types of police organisations in our sample. In what follows we provide a detailed description of the police sample and the organisation of this survey.

Within the federal police we included officers from the Central Office for the Repression of Corruption (CORC) and the federal judicial police (FJP) in our research sample. Because the CORC is rather a small police department we contacted all officers. Thirty-four of the 57 police investigators working at the CORC in February 2012 filled in a questionnaire. In the period September–December 2012, all 14 Flemish Judicial Police Departments of the federal police (FJP) were visited. During these visits we outlined the PhD study in a nutshell. All officers from the units’ financial and economic crimes and an equal number of officers from other sections received a copy of the questionnaire. These questionnaires were returned afterwards. We received in total 190 questionnaires from 13 FJP.

During a last phase, we invited 27 local police forces (Lps) to participate in the research. Local police forces are very diverse in terms of size, territory and urbanisation. Because the diversity of the local police forces is not distributed equally, we used a stratified random sampling. Local police forces are categorised into five groups based on their urbanisation rate, varying from a metropolis police to weak urbanised forces (Van Den Bogaerde, Van Den Steen, De Bie & Marchand, 2011). A stratified sampling was therefore used. Individual police forces were randomly selected within each strata. An estimation of the sample size was calculated in respect of the theoretical figures which are available in the Royal Decree of 21 September 2001, establishing the organisation and functioning standards of the local police¹⁴ and in the Ministerial Circular on minimum standards¹⁵. According to the Royal Decree of 21 September 2001, the reserved capacity for the local judicial police is determined according to the following rules: 10% of the operational staff when the staff strength is over 230 and 7% of the

¹⁴ Koninklijk besluit van 17 september 2001 tot vaststelling van de organisatie- en werkingsnormen van de lokale politie teneinde een gelijkwaardige minimale dienstverlening aan de bevolking te verzekeren, *B.S.*, 12 oktober 2001.

¹⁵ Ministeriële omzendbrief PLP 10 van 9 oktober 2001 inzake de organisatie- en werkingsnormen van de lokale politie met het oog op het waarborgen van een minimale gelijkwaardige dienstverlening aan de bevolking, *B.S.*, 16 oktober 2001.

operational staff when staff strength is less than 230. The minimum requirement of 7% is applicable to 90% of the police (Rekenhof, 2004). The minimum staff strength for each judicial investigation unit for each local police force was calculated based on these governance guidelines.

Unlike the federal police services it was not possible to visit all the selected local forces. Those forces which confirmed their participation received the questionnaire by mail. In order to increase the response rate we provided a prepaid return postage. We also made multiple follow-up contacts. A first follow-up contact took place via e-mail after two weeks. A second follow-up contact took place one week later via telephone. Despite these incentives, the response rate in this group (these incentives were based on the meta-analysis of Richard, Melvin, & Jonghoon, 1988) was lower than within the other police organisations. The most cited reasons for not taking part were staff shortages and time pressure. Fourteen of the 27 forces participated and 125 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=193) for the FJP and 50% (N=125) for the LP. More detailed figures on the sample are provided in the table below (for a more detailed table see Appendix 2).

Table 2: Overview sample and response rate

	Sample	Response	Response rate
Flemish citizen	N = 2.256	607	26,91
Central Office for the repression of Corruption	N = 57	34	59,65
Federal Judicial Police	N = 240	193	80,42
Local police	N = 250	125	50,00

The hypotheses that ‘police officers are less tolerant of corruption compared with varying occupational status groups’ (HYP3) and that ‘specialised anti-corruption officers share different perceptions of corruption compared with other investigative officers’ (HYP4) are analysed during this phase of our research. The results are published in the article: Dormaels, A. (2014). ‘Perceptions of Corruption in Flanders: Surveying Citizens and Police. A Study on the Influence of Occupational Differential Association on Perceptions of Corruption. *Policing and Society*, Advance online publication: DOI:10.1080/10439463.2014.895351. This article is presented in Chapter IV (p. 94).

6.3. Phase 3: focus groups

The third phase of our research design contains three focus groups. The purpose of these focus groups was to supplement our primary quantitative data because it does not provide insight into the questions of ‘*whether*’ and ‘*how*’ the concepts of normative conflict, differential association and social organisation are manifested and influence perceptions of corruption. Through these group discussions we aimed to understand the meaning of our results and to generate critical comments on the findings (Fyfe, 2009 August).

Each focus group was structured according to two goals. A first goal was dedicated to the theoretical aims of this study: the question of whether occupational differential association influence the perception of corruption. This question is addressed via the introduction of the following scenario: ‘*A tax official works in an audit office and deals with the tax returns of his district. Do you think it is corrupt that, in return for payment, the official completes the tax return in such a way as to submit the best possible return[s] in his district?*’ Respondents discussed the following questions in relation to this scenario after each of them answered whether they agreed (yes/no) or not with the questions:

1. Do you think most citizens perceive this scenario as corrupt?
2. Do you think one of the occupational status groups perceives this scenario more corrupt than the others?
3. Do you think most police respondents perceive this scenario as corrupt?
4. Do you think that one of the three police services (LP, FJP or CORC) perceives this scenario more corrupt than the other two services?

The second goal of the focus groups was to study of the effects of police officers their perceptions of corruption on their behaviour in the field. The question regarding to what extent police officers believe that their perceptions and the perceptions of their colleagues influence the enforcement of anti-corruption laws was addressed during a second part of each focus group. To that end we introduced the following two hypothesis. Again, respondents were invited to discussed the following hypothesis after the answered whether they agreed (yes/no) or not:

1. A similar situation is handled differently depending on the perception of the police officer.
2. Police officers their perception of corruption is of little importance, especially since the policies of the public prosecutor and superiors determine the actions of police officers.

All three the focus groups were set up in such a way that they were able to maximize the above formulated research goals. Most researchers recommend aiming for homogeneity within each group in order to capitalise on respondents’ shared comments and viewpoints (Acocella, 2012; Kitzinger, 2005;

Morgan, 1997; Slocum, 2006). There is, in addition to this practical argument, an theoretical motivation for opting for homogeneous focus groups. We assume that the process of differential association is crime-specific and that specialised officers are less tolerant of corruption than other police officers. We therefore decided to organise three focus groups, one with each police service, in order to get a detailed account of how they motivate their viewpoints and to study in more depth the effect of differential association within the different police services. Through these homogeneous focus groups with all three police services we aimed to stimulate a thorough 'group discussion' on the presented questions and hypothesis and to reveal genuine empirical information. Mixed focus groups with police officers from different services would accentuate the differences between the groups whereas we are first and foremost interested in a more profound understanding of the mechanism of differential association.

Respondents who filled in the questionnaire during our quantitative research phase were invited to participate in the focus groups. A practical note is that these focus groups turned out to be difficult to assemble. In order to resolve this problem it was decided to organise one focus groups within the offices of the CORC, one group for the FJP and one group for the LP. The first focus group brought together police respondents from the different FJP (6 December 2013, N=7). The second focus group invited police respondents from the LP (7 January 2014, N = 3). The third focus group was organised to discuss the results with the specialised CORC officers (10 January 2014, N = 3).

Standard questions and a script for running the session have been tested in advance, together with the quality of the questions and the extent to which they provoke discussion.¹⁶ This try-out of the focus group provided the opportunity to assess the extent to which the script stimulated debate and interaction among the participants to the discussion. A moderator introduced questions and participants were invited to express their reflections 'speaking in turns'. Subsequently, the moderator encouraged participants afterwards to explain themselves and to react to the viewpoints of other participants. Each focus group was recorded and transcribed. Respondents' anonymity was guaranteed. All audio recordings were converted to a transcript and all personal information of the respondents was deleted. Afterwards, the audio recordings were removed so that no statement can be linked to an individual respondent.

The results are presented in the third section of Chapter IV (p. 114) discussing the whether and how the process of differential association causes different perceptions of corruption.

¹⁶ This test focus group took place on 26 November 2013. Four fellow researchers in Public Management and Social Work and Welfare Studies participated.

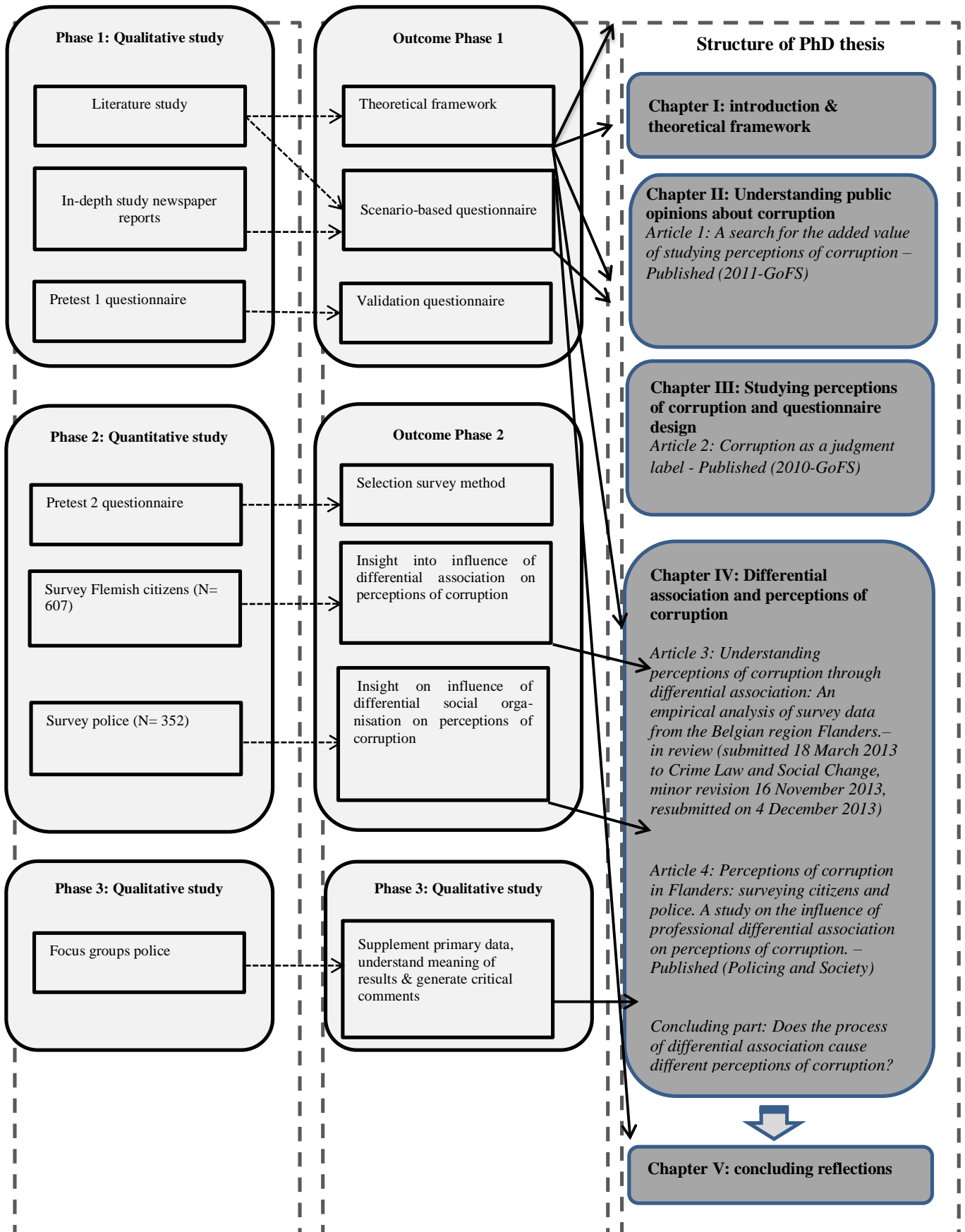
6.4. Limitation of the research design

There is an important limitation regarding the research design used in the current study that should be addressed. The questionnaire consists of scenarios based on Flemish newspaper reports. The way in which the different scenarios are scored is not generalizable to other countries or regions. An international study comparing the integrity perceptions of police officers revealed that there exists an important difference between countries in the level of ‘intensity’ with which a conduct is disapproved of (Klockars, Ivković, & Haberfeld, 2004). This may be a result of the translation of the questions, although this does not offer a full explanation (Punch, Huberts, & Lamboo, 2000, p. 22). Variations in cultural norms might influence the way respondents judge the scenarios. Because of budget restrictions it was not possible to organise a nationwide survey in both the Flemish and Walloon Region of Belgium. Consequently, the present research is not able to reflect on cultural influence on perceptions nor are the perceptions of Flemish citizens generalizable for other regions. This methodological limitation does, however, also reflect opportunities for future research. Comparative research using the constructed questionnaire could, for example, result in a more profound understanding of the influence of normative and cultural context on the perceptions of corruption.

7. Structure of the PhD thesis

This PhD thesis consist of five chapters. The first chapter contains the general introduction to the theoretical framework, methodology and research design of this PhD study. The core of this PhD thesis consists of four articles which are integrated into chapters II, III and IV. The first article (Chapter II) is dedicated to the question of the added value of studying perceptions of corruption. The construction of a scenario-based questionnaire and the lessons learned from previous perception studies is reflected in the second article (Chapter III). Chapter IV comprises two articles in which the research questions are discussed. The influence of the concept of differential association on the perception of corruption is analysed in the third article. The fourth article includes the concept of differential socialisations in our analysis and reflects on the influence of occupational differential association on perceptions of corruption. The findings which derive from our focus group are discussed in the third part of Chapter III. Finally, Chapter V comprises the overall conclusions. The structure (including the publications) is visualised in the figure 2 below:

Figure 2: Structure of PhD thesis



CHAPTER II: UNDERSTANDING PUBLIC OPINIONS OF CORRUPTION: A SEARCH FOR THE ADDED VALUE OF STUDYING PERCEPTIONS OF CORRUPTION

PUBLISHED: Dormaels, A. & Easton, M. (2011). Understanding public opinions about corruption: A search for the added value of studying perceptions of corruption. In: M. Cools, B. De Ruyver, M. Easton, L. Pauwels, P. Ponsaers, G. Vande Walle, T. Vanderbeken, F. Vander Laenen, G. Vermeulen, & G. Vynckier (eds.), *EU Criminal Justice, Financial & Economic Crime: new perspectives interest-based dispute resolution, Governance of Security Research Papers Series*, Volume 5 (pp. 205-226). Antwerpen-Apeldoorn: Maklu.

Corruption has been on the agenda of social scientists for a long time (Gardiner, 1967; Heidenheimer, 1970; Roebuck & Barker, 1974). So far, the socio-scientific study of this phenomenon has remained the domain of political scientists and, more recently, of economists, and has experienced a boom since 1990. Recent paradigms in the study of corruption have included, for example, the new institutional economics perspective (Lambsdorff, Taube & Schramm, 2006) and the legal anthropological perspective (Nuijten & Anders, 2007). Today, the sociological meaning of corruption continues to receive a less deal of attention. Through a literature review within the field of public opinion studies on corruption, we will present the added value of studying perception of corruption. We will discuss the theoretical models and methods used in these kinds of studies, together with their advantages and limitations. The main objective is to identify the areas which are most in need of further research, while arguing for the added value of studying perceptions of corruption at the individual and contextual levels.

1. Introduction

Although there is a long-standing history of research into corruption (Jain, 2001), recently, there has been an upsurge of academic interest in this area (Heywood, 1997). The seemingly swift the way scientific researchers have addressed the concept of corruption is interesting. From the 1960s to 1980s, the literature on (political) corruption was dominated by the debate over how corruption should be defined (Williams, 1999). This resulted in the belief that corruption is difficult to grasp and that a single universal definition which will fuse together the various theoretical understandings cannot be expected (Kurer, 2005). As a result, contemporary research on public perceptions of corruption is very scarce. This does not alter the fact that the number of published articles that deal with corruption,

(international) organisations combating corruption, the relevant colloquia etc. is still increasing. From the 1990s onwards, ‘good government’, ‘good governance’ and economic development seem to have been conditioned by corruption (Doig, 1995; Hindess, 2001; Jain, 2001; Azra, 2007; Arvate, Curi, Rocha & Sanches, 2010) and have even become keywords in the fight against corruption (Andersson & Heywood, 2009). The scientific efforts to define corruption have paved the way for the prevention of corruption. Nowadays, corruption is seen as the excrescence of ‘bad governance’. As a logical result, the aetiology of corruption has become more and more prominent in the academic agenda (Gobert & Punch, 2003; Punch, 2009; Vande Walle & Dormaels, 2010). The use of economics and the science of public administration (Larmour & Wolanin, 2001) to understand the incentives behind corruption resulted in an increase in the number of academic publications as well as the involvement of the civil society in combating corruption. Indicators of governance and corruption together with methods of measuring corruption became more important (Čábelková & Hanousek, 2004; Heller, 2008). Contemporary models of analysing corruption are frequently applied in order to explore anti-corruption policies. For example, Gobert and Punch (2003) distinguished five key variables: social, economic and cultural factors; the nature and structure of organisations; the elements of intent, rationality and competence; defence mechanisms and mechanisms of dissociation and the consideration of whether or not the industry is crime-facilitative or crime coercive, in order to explain corruption without falling into a one-dimensional causal explanation and without prejudicing ‘the authenticity’ of each specific criminal case. Anti-corruption policies have become multi-fronted. National and international law has developed and improved. The involvement of the government and the state in the economy has been reoriented e.g. the fight against corruption has become an integral part of the external and trade police. In addition, the discretionary powers of officials, recruitment, career prospects and salary conditions influence levels of corruption and have been integrated within a profound anti-corruption policy (Wei, 1999).

The emergence of (good) governance and, on the other hand, corruption as a symptom of ‘bad’ governance which influences economic growth has, however, resulted in some pitfalls. A remarkable observation is that contemporary research, above all, associates corruption with ‘developing’, non-democratic nations. All too often it has been argued that corruption acts as a major deterrent to growth and development. This has been translated into Western-dominated global indices designed to measure corruption (Gupta, 1995; Sissener, 2001; Galtung, 2007; Razafindrakotoa & Roubaud, 2010) and the belief that the success of any anti-corruption campaign depends on the reformation of domestic institutions in countries which are currently corrupt (Wei, 1999). It is curious, however, to note that Western democracies have turned out to be not at all immune to corruption and that corruption can no longer be simply viewed as an ‘aberrant’ deviation from the Western norm (Heywood, 1997). Or, to cite Ades and DiTella: “*Governments of all political colours in countries of all levels of wealth are*

affected by corruption scandals with a frequency and intensity that seems to be always on the increase” (1997: 496).

This new academic interest in corruption has resulted in useful insights into corruption and anti-corruption policies. There is, however, also a drawback to this and that is that the concept of corruption and the question of how to define this phenomenon have been overlooked by so many researchers. Williams (1999) argued that nowadays, the concept of corruption as such is cunningly parried. In his view, there is a “*reluctance to say what they mean by corruption. This issue is either avoided completely or dismissed in a cursory fashion*” (Williams, 1999: 503). Heywood remarked, for example, that so far on the Transparency International index (TI index) there is no evidence that those polled – multinational business people, institutions and experts – share the same concept of corruption (Heywood, 1997). Corruption, the provision of services, customer-oriented service, political favours, a kind turn, and so on – what is called corrupt by one person will not be labelled as corrupt by another. So far, there is no evidence that people are operating under the same concept of corruption. On the contrary, Jackson and Smith (1996) revealed empirical evidence that supports the hypothesis that judgements regarding whether or not situations are corrupt vary between persons or groups (Jackson & Smith, 1996). From a social perspective, it has also been illustrated that social understandings of corruption are diverse and that conceptions about what corruption is are constantly evolving (Anechiarico & Jacobs, 1996). Kjellberg (1995) discussed the contrast between what was publicly perceived as a scandal and the actual existence of corruption within the municipal administrations of Oslo. A striking point in his analysis is the gap between the verdict in the media and public opinion about the alleged corruption scandals on the one hand, and the outcomes of three City Commissions exculpating the administration on the other.

In what follows we will discuss the relevance for studying public opinions about corruption. After indicating what is meant with ‘perception of corruption’, we will start this contribution with a discussion of identified public opinion studies trying to capture people perception of corruption. Public opinions studies have encountered criticism in the past. We will not draw up a list with these critics; rather we will these in an integrated way how to encounter these points of discussion. This will allow us to conclude our article with our proposition that public opinion studies still are a valuable method in the realm of corruption research.

2. Public opinion and corruption research

The way in which public opinion concerning corruption has been discussed in the literature will be described in the following section. Reconsidering the literature on public opinion regarding corruption might reveal gaps in contemporary corruption research.

2.1. Perceptions about corruption versus corruption perception

If we take a closer look at the research tradition which is linked to perceptions of corruption, we are able to distinguish between the two foremost scientific approaches. The first goes back to the context in which “perception of corruption” is understood as the judgment of whether or not a situation is corrupt. These kinds of studies try to isolate values, norms and characteristics that might influence such judgments. As discussed above, these studies aimed either to achieve a more profound understanding of the sociologically constructed concept of corruption or to search for a public opinion-based definition of it. We observed, however, that there has been an obvious shift in the meaning attributed to the perception of corruption. Nowadays, this refers to an econometric method which is used to measure “real” levels of corruption. “Corruption perception” refers to measuring the scale of corruption using perception-based indicators. In other words, not measuring corruption itself but opinions about its prevalence (Treisman, 2007). The underlying idea is that these perception-based indices can “predict” the “real” levels of corruption. The sociological meaning of corruption has today made way for an econometric and governance-based discourse which is dominated by the measurement and prevention of corruption.

According to some scholars, the subject of corruption is even neglected as an area of sociological research (Hodgkinson, 1997). Two important drawbacks are related to this evolution. First, scientific literature is very discrete on the social meaning of corruption and very little attention is devoted to citizens’ attitudes towards and opinions of what exactly corruption means. From a normative perspective, corruption implies a serious violation of standards and expectations, usually those associated with a public role. It is, however, doubtful whether, and to what extent, the general public is influenced by these boundaries. Taking, for example, a widely cited definition of corruption: “the abuse of public office for private gain”. It became clear in a survey by the World Bank on the performance and weaknesses of the public administration of Kazakhstan (Anderson & Mukherjee, 2002) that corruption becomes a very broad concept on the basis of this definition. However, making use of public opinion about hypothetically corrupt situations provides us with the opportunity to delimit the concept on the basis of intrinsic characteristics. This survey response indicates that the population is the least tolerant of corruption when a transaction is paid in cash, rather than in kind,

when the payment is demanded or requested rather than offered and when it takes place before, rather than after, the provision of services.

Second, too little attention is paid to defining the concept of corruption within econometric corruption studies. Many of these studies assume that their respondents share the same meaning of the concept 'corruption'. This is, however, a problematic presumption (Heywood, 1997). Corruption is all too often limited to "bribe taking" and does not take into account that the population might distinguish between a much broader variety of actions (Galtung, 2007). Hereinafter we will discuss the state of the art of public opinion studies addressing corruption.

2.2. State-of-the-art corruption perception studies

Between 1978 and today we gathered nine public opinion studies on corruption. We come to the conclusion that the methodology introduced by Peters and Welch (1978) inspired most of the following public opinion studies on corruption. It also appears that the public opinion studies are not successful in defining corruption because public opinions are very difficult to pin down. This observation initiated a lot criticism towards the address of the public opinion studies on corruption. Analyzing public opinion studies on corruption convinced made clear that this method might in the first place help us to understand in a more profound way the phenomenon corruption and not so far result in a clear definition of corruption.

In 1978, Peters and Welch conducted a scenario-based questionnaire study in order to explore Heidenheimer's (1970) theory of 'political' corruption. In doing so, they sent questionnaire to 978 senators in 24 US states with the aim of providing an adequate classification – for the very first time – of many varieties of corrupt acts. Finding an explanation for why some acts are labelled as corrupt and others are not was one of the questions addressed in this project. Peters and Welch's questionnaire was built from a set of 10 scenarios concerning the actions of public officials that might be judged to be corrupt. Each scenario had to be rated on a five-point scale according to whether or not the senators believed that the scenario was corrupt, whether they believed that most members of the public would condemn the act and whether they believed that most public officials would condemn it. In an innovative fashion, they varied the significant characteristics of the scenarios, the so-called "salient characteristics". They successfully unravelled the process of judging corruption into four significant dimensions: the "public official" involved, the actual "favour" provided by the public official, the "payoff" gained by the public official and the "donor" of the payoff. Peters and Welch concluded in their study that judgments of corrupt behaviour do not only vary between different social groups, but that they also vary in relation to the nature of the acts. The methodological framework elaborated on

by Peters and Welch presented new perspectives for the empirical study of corruption. This methodology allows researchers to observe, in a very meticulous way, the influence of the significant characteristics of different acts and to compare whether or not different social groups judge scenarios to be corrupt or not.

Johnston (1986) undertook a large scale survey of the greater Pittsburgh metropolitan area. The respondents were asked (amongst other things) to judge a set of 20 hypothetical scenarios as being either extremely, somewhat, slightly or not at all corrupt. In contrast to the study by Peters and Welch, the hypothetical situations referred to both public and private situations. The scenario-based questionnaire was not limited to the sphere of “political corruption”. Second, the hypothetical scenarios were selected because some kind of rule-breaking was arguably taking place. For this reason, this study revealed that people apply the term “corruption” to a wide variety of activities. The label of corruption demarcated a series of activities that lie beyond the codification of behaviour, morality and law only partially overlap in citizens’ views. Thus far, many scholars have referred to and discussed the conceptual findings of this perception study (Jackson, Kirby, Smith & Thompson 1994.; Gorta & Forell, 1995; Fording, Miller & Pattonv 2003; Redlawsk & McCann, 2005; McCann & Redlawsk, 2006). Very little attention, however, has been paid to the methodological framework put forth by Johnston (1986). His hypothesis that perception studies might unravel “fine gradations of judgement” and not sharp and clear cut (social) definitions of corruption allows us to understand in a more profound way the social meaning of corruption. According to this view, more-or-less judgment activities can be compared in order to understand the differences between them and to draw inferences about general social conceptions of corruption. In doing so, we will place corruption on a continuum through which the relationship between ‘illegal’ and ‘unethical’ can be explored. In addition, Keeschull (1992) pleaded for more attention to be paid to determining the placement of various acts on the continuum from ‘not corrupt’ to ‘corrupt’, because this connection can be used to explore the relationship between ‘illegal’ and ‘unethical’. This might indicate, amongst others things, the situations in which government powers should submit to private regulations of proper standards of conduct. In doing so, our sociological appreciation of corruption is challenged not only to understand the formal categories of the classification of procedures but also the less rigorous, privately normalised classification schema and interpretative criteria of individuals and groups.

Gorta and Forell (1994) explored the public judgement of situations by determining the types of activities which were labelled as corrupt by a random sample of 1.978 public sector employees from New South Wales. A central question in their study related to how people decide whether or not an activity is corrupt and how this relates to their willingness to take action about that activity. The core of their methodology consisted of brief descriptions of 12 scenarios, depicting different types of

conduct which could potentially occur in any public sector organisation. For each scenario, the respondents were asked to rate, on a six-point scale, how desirable they believed the behaviour to be, how harmful and how justified they considered. They were also asked to judge whether the conduct was corrupt or not. Rather than focussing on one single public opinion definition of corruption, Gorta and Forell ascertained that there appear to be numerous definitions of corruption. They examined the individual patterns of scenarios that were judged as being corrupt. This combination of the scenarios considered to be corrupt by different (groups of) individuals are of interest because they provide a way of exploring the criteria people use to judge whether or not a situation is corrupt (Independent Commission Against Corruption, 2001). In total, they discovered 254 different combinations of the 12 scenarios which were considered as being corrupt by individuals. After determining which patterns of scenarios were the most frequently judged as being corrupt, it emerged that 20 of the combinations were each used by 10 or more individuals and that eight combinations were each used by 20 or more respondents. The other 234 combinations were used by the remaining 478 respondents (Gorta & Forell, 1994). This large number of combinations of scenarios judged as being corrupt disproves the presumption that people share a common understanding of what is meant by corruption. This observation, that people might not recognise a corrupt situation or do not judge a situation as being corrupt, has thus far received very little scientific attention. More profound studies might, however, be relevant for more substantial preventive policies.

Twenty years after Peters and Welch's article was published, Jackson and Smith fortified the use of social perceptions to demarcate actions which are judged as being corrupt (Jackson & Smith, 1996). Jackson and Smith revealed empirical evidence that supports the hypothesis that judgements regarding whether or not scenarios as corrupt are affected by the four particular dimensions defined by Peters and Welch. Jackson and Smith used empirical evidence from 105 interviews with member of the New South Wales Parliament and over 500 voters using the scenarios set out by Peters and Welch. The politicians' and the public's judgments of corruption were affected by the broad dimensions of corruption – the natures of the official, payoff, favour and donor – in similar ways. Activities embodying a greater number and strength of salient characteristics were condemned by both the elites and the citizens. Activities with fewer and weaker salient characteristics turned out to be judged in a more ambiguous manner, and the politicians were the more lenient group. An important question is whether or not expressly prescribed legal definitions of corruption or the notion of public interest are decisive in the perception of a situation as corrupt or not. On the basis of the empirical data gathered by Johnston, one might conclude that in their reactions to cases of corruption people, are not influenced by the legality of acts (Johnston, 1986). This observation invites the question: what are the decisive factors in forming public opinion about corruption?

Redlawsk and McCann (2005) administered a questionnaire to 6,829 voters. This questionnaire included a group of questions in which voters had to rate the extent to which various hypothetical actions taken by government officials or citizens were judged as being corrupt. When examining popular judgments of what constitutes political corruption in the US, they found two distinct dimensions of judgment: corruption which is understood as law-breaking, and corruption through favouritism. Second, it became clear that these judgments are heavily conditioned by the voter's socioeconomic background and have political consequences.

When analysing data from a large-scale Canadian national survey on political ethics, Mancuso (2005) illustrated the utility of Peters and Welch's dimensional scheme. In his study, Mancuso examined the effects of changing the context – public, private or something in between – of an activity. Placing the judgment of a scenario on the spectrum from public to private proved to be useful in understanding how corruption is perceived. The outcome of this study indicates that scenarios are more likely to be judged as 'unacceptable' when they involve illegal activities, larger payoffs and more direct and immediate benefits. The dimensional analysis defined by Peters and Welch holds true in the context of Mancuso's study from 2005. What is more, the identification of the context in which an activity takes place seemed to be significant in the prediction of whether or not it would be judged as being 'unacceptable'. The core of this questionnaire was a series of 15 hypothetical scenarios describing political behaviour. The respondents had to assign the scenarios scores on a 10-point scale from 'completely unacceptable' to 'completely acceptable'. It is remarkable that Mancuso did not provide a definition of 'corruption'. He elicited implicit definitions from the respondents' answers. It is, however, very tricky to draw the conclusion that a hypothetical scenario is judged as corrupt or not corrupt because the respondent(s) judge it as being completely acceptable or unacceptable. Not all behaviour that is judged as unacceptable will be labelled as corrupt and vice versa. This problem with definitions has plagued many social studies of corruption, and most of the articles on public opinion about corruption evade the question of defining corruption within their research design.

Bailey and Paras (2006) explored the effects of perceptions of corruption on people's satisfaction with democracy. This article initiated two main lines of thought. First, Bailey and Paras identified a lack of direct experiences with corruption and perceptions of corruption. It is striking that only a few of the respondents had directly experienced or had been victims of corruption and that, nevertheless, the majority of the respondents were pessimistic about corruption in the public and political spheres. Bailey hypothesised that the respondents may have been dissatisfied with the government's performance or their own particular circumstances, and therefore used the word 'corruption' to express a general feeling of uneasiness (Bailey, 2006). This hypothesis raises an important question: do people differentiate between different forms of corruption and, if so, do we need to reframe the influence of

corruption perception on the perceived trustworthiness of a government? Empirical data tend to support the idea that people in more corrupt countries do not let petty corruption influence their trust in the government (Rothstein & Uslaner 2005; Uslaner, 2005). In order to scrutinise this hypothesis, we need first and foremost a profound understanding of whether or not people differentiate between different forms of corruption. Second, Bailey and Paras (2006) set out significant methodological queries relating to public opinion surveys of perceptions and attitudes concerning corruption. One of their findings was that, according to their analysis of significant public opinion surveys, Mexican respondents seemed to identify a wide range of different phenomena as being corrupt. More specifically, about a fifth of the respondents equated corruption with bribery. About 7% of the respondents equate corruption with “dishonest authorities” or “dishonest citizens”. Last but not least is the fact that only 2% of the respondents described corruption as an “abuse of power”. This is a striking result, as the definition of corruption which is most commonly accepted by scholars is “*the abuse of public powers for private benefit*” (Park, 2003: 30) and this is - in our opinion - a good illustration of the division between scholars’ and citizens’ conceptualisations of corruption. More problematic and remarkable in relation to opinion surveys is the fact that about 15% of the respondents stated that they could not assign a meaning to corruption. Some scholars might use this as an argument to criticise public opinion studies as a way of defining corruption. On this point, we would like argue in favour of public opinion surveys as a way to understand the concept of corruption. In very simple terms, we raise the following question: is asking people to define the colour ‘green’ different from asking people ‘whether or not an apple is green? Most of us will be able to answer the second question, while only a few of us will be able to adequately define the colour ‘green’. Does this mean that people are unable to recognise a green apple? Only a few people will be convinced that this is true. This makes our point clear, that public opinion studies are a suitable method with which to unravel the basis of common judgements of hypothetical scenarios of corruption and the characteristics of this phenomenon.

From 2006 to 2008, the University of Konstanz coordinated a study on the perceptions of political and administrative decision makers in various countries, as well as the representatives of various institutions and authorities and citizens and media in eight European countries (Soeffner & Tänzler, 2008). This project was, as far as we know, the first one to scientifically inquire into the perceptions of corruption, not only of politicians and their constituents, but also of other members of society such as the police and the forces of justice, the media, civil society and the economy. This project approached ‘corruption’ from an innovative sociological perspective, in which corruption “represent[s] the solution to a social problem” (Soeffner & Tänzler, 2008: 5). In other words, corruption is a social construct. From this point of view, the next step is to identify what motivates people to choose corrupt conduct. Building upon the assumption that the causes and motives that underpin corrupt behaviour are embedded both in current affairs as well as long-standing socio-cultural contexts, Soeffner &

Tänzler (2008) disclosed these roots via sociological analysis. In doing so, they focussed on the reconstruction of the cultural patterns underlying perceptions of corruption involving various target groups. Via analysis of documents and interviews with representatives of all of these target groups, the project reconstructed common-sense definitions of corruption and revealed that these definitions go well beyond the legal definitions. According to Lascoumes and Tomescu-Hatto (2008), this may be because of “*variation in the perception of acts as being normal or deviant, as well as from differences in evaluations of their gravity*” (Lascoumes and Tomescu-Hatto, 2008: 26). It is striking that the experts’ perceptions of corruption differ significantly from the perceptions held by people in their daily lives. Experts are more likely to be focussed on corruption on a grand scale involving public officials. Respondents from the general population show a more diverse perception of corruption, varying from widespread and socially tolerated ‘trivial’ offences (petty corruption) to condemnable acts which violate public interests. Experts and the general public appear to be guided by different concepts of corruption. This might be connected to the argument that indicators based on experts’ opinions are unconnected to those of the general public (Riaño, Hodess & Evans, 2009). This should be further explored in view of how the general public’s perceptions relate to those of experts.

The latter conclusion brings us to a more recent study conducted by Lascoumes and Tomescu-Hatto (Lascoumes & Tomescu-Hatto, 2008). They added new empirical evidence to the literature on a social understanding of political corruption. Based on a face-to-face survey conducted in France with a large sample of 2,000 people, Lascoumes and Tomescu-Hatto provided a new and original understanding of the perception of corruption. This research project was situated within the constructivist tradition and did not apply an a priori definition of corruption. A number of focus groups took place in order to unravel the socially structured concept of corruption (Lascoumes & Tomescu-Hatto, 2008). The objective of this study is to look into the French ambiguities in understanding political corruption. It emerged that two dimensions are good predictors of whether or not people will judge a situation as being ‘politically’ corrupt or not: “acceptance of favouritism” and “the perception of the degree of importance of corruption”. People with a high tolerance of favouritism have a ‘restrictive’ conception of integrity that is limited to cases of corruption on a grand scale. People with a low tolerance of favouritism have an ‘extensive’ concept of integrity and consider the slightest forms of favouritism as an offence against the community. Combining these two dimensions can elucidate, to some extent, the ambiguities in social representations of corruption. Lascoumes and Tomescu-Hatto distinguished between four types of respondents. The first two types (tolerant optimists and denunciators) can coherently form a normative point of view, whereas the second two types (intolerant realists and worried pragmatists) are dominated by normative ambiguities.

3. What difficulties do public opinion studies encounter?

3.1 How to conceptualise corruption within public opinion studies

A central question is how one should construct the concept of corruption through public opinion studies. Some scholars have defined corruption within the framework of their research. Others evaded the question of defining corruption. Mancuso (2005) avoided the problem of defining corruption by having respondents place activities on a scale of acceptability or tolerance instead of indicating how corrupt they judged the prescribed acts to be. This creates, to our understanding, another methodological pitfall, as tolerating something or not tolerating something is not the same as judging something as being corrupt or not. Within this context, we refer to the following observations which came out of the ‘Unravelling corruption II’ project: (a) respondents do not seem to have difficulty in labelling a situation as corrupt or not, and (b) they do differentiate between labels such as “undesirable” and “corrupt” (Independent Commission Against Corruption, 2001). In other words, it is difficult to conclude that particular situations are labelled as corrupt because the respondents will not tolerate the behaviour in question.

In fact, this problem can be reduced to the function of two main objectives which are generally attributed to public opinion studies. As previously mentioned, researchers apply public opinion surveys in order to deduce a public opinion-based definition of corruption (Peters & Welch, 1978). Others consider corruption as a social construct to be unravelled via public opinion studies (Johnston, 1986; Soeffner & Tänzler, 2008). We want to underline this difference clearly in order to delve further into two important points of the discussion of public opinion studies.

First, we will address the question of whether or not the application of an a priori definition of corruption is fundamental to the application of public opinion studies in order to understand corruption. With regard to this point, we refer to the work of Gardiner (1970a, 1970b) who introduced a behavioural and normative perspective in the context of analysing the judgement of a situation as corrupt or not. An important methodological improvement was made, in that Gardiner introduced the application of scenarios describing the situations. The respondents had to judge whether or not, and to what extent, a scenario was corrupt. This constructivist method has since been expanded in several public opinion studies of corruption (Bezes & Lascoumes, 2005). Peters and Welch did not make use of a predefined concept of corruption when compiling their scenario-based questionnaire. Instead, they proposed analysing ‘potentially’ corrupt acts according to the constituent elements involved in every corrupt act or exchange (Peters & Welch, 1978). The perception of a scenario – as corrupt or not – was constructed on the basis of the opinions of their respondents. Jackson and Smith (1996) applied the

same 10 scenarios in their public opinion study. The same methodological framework was applied by Johnston (1986), who used hypothetical examples of rule-breaking in order to see whether or not people judged them as being corrupt or not, and by Gorta and Forell (1995) who designed their scenarios around activities with one or more potentially undesirable acts. This group of research projects analysed hypothetical and potentially corrupt acts. In doing so, they avoided using public opinion studies as a way of validating predefined concepts of corruption (Kurer, 2005; Dormaels, 2010). This is something different from presenting respondents with hypothetical corrupt situations based on an implicit definition of corruption. Lascoumes and Tomescu-Hatto (2008) refused to use any a priori definition of corruption. Instead, they organised focus groups prior to their quantitative survey in order to allow hypothetical scenarios to be judged as corrupt or not.

Second, it is frequently formulated that it is very difficult to set the boundaries of public opinion and as a consequence thereof it is very difficult demarcating public opinions. This criticism can be reduced to the failure to operationalise public opinion-based definitions (Kurer, 2005). More specifically, scholars cannot decide whether to accept an opinion-based definition because the public at large do not take a unanimous stand on a definition of corruption. However, in the words of Osborne and Rose: *“to argue that something shouldn’t exist, or shouldn’t exist in this form, is not to say that it doesn’t exist”* (Osborne & Rose, 1999). In other words, the supposition that ‘defining’ corruption via the application of public opinion surveys is problematic does not mean that there is no public opinion concerning corruption. Johnston (1986) concluded that public attitudes are a response to corruption and not a definition of it. Those who reported angrier reactions to corruption tended to judge the hypothetical scenarios more harshly. In addition, other projects have revealed that people have difficulty in defining corruption in response to a direct question, but that they are able to judge a situation as corrupt or not (Aromaa, Taybakov, Klemetshov, Demi & Tumanov, 2009). This is relevant for the following reason. Public opinion studies, as a scientific method, are very interesting in that they provide a way to understand in a more profound way why situations are labelled as corrupt or not and how certain circumstances may influence people’s perceptions. From this point of view, studying public opinion may help us to understand in a more profound way how corruption is facilitated or impeded by its societal context (Caiden, 1988). The analytical framework presented by Peters and Welch (1978) renders the public opinion-based approach usable for the following reason. By introducing ‘gradients’ of the corruptness of an act, one might address the criticism that public opinion is difficult to pin down. Some acts are judged as being more corrupt than others, which allows us to unravel the salient characteristics of more high-scoring scenarios compared to lower-scoring activities. Additionally, a distinction must be made between respondents being asked to ‘define’ corruption and respondents being asked to state whether a hypothetical scenario is corrupt or not. My assumption is that the relationship between people and the word ‘corruption’ is diverse and can be

divided into three levels (Dormaels, 2010). On the first level, the word ‘corruption’ is considered to be a term which needs to be defined. This defining activity is the result of an individual's conscious reflections. On the second level, the word ‘corruption’ is used as a label to demarcate a variety of situations within the ontological reality. On the third level, the word ‘corruption’ is used to judge a particular concrete situation or a description of a particular concrete situation as corrupt or not. We assume that a judgement of such a hypothetical scenario presented in a scenario-based questionnaire study might be a ‘reflexive’ (emotional) or a ‘reflective’ (rational) activity. The latter has also been implicitly addressed by other scholars. For example, Lambropoulou concluded that “*the discourse on ‘honesty and corruption’ in politics belongs to an emotionally loaded rhetoric*” (2007: 8).

3.2 Does public opinion about corruption exist?

Perceptions about what constitutes corruption change over time within populations (Anechiarico & Jacobs, 1996). Heywood (1997) argued that the public’s tolerance of corruption changed in the 1990s with the collapse of the post-war order (Heywood, 1997). When it comes to the financing of political parties, for example, people have become lately much more aware of petty corruption and are consequently wary of close relationships between political parties and private companies (Persily & Lammie, 2004; Maras, 2010). This example illustrates Maingot’s (1994) statement that although there might be profound continuities with regard to corrupt behaviour, the societal responses to this behaviour, on the other hand, tend to occur in cycles. From this point of view, understanding what the public at large labels as corrupt is important because the public's perceptions will determine, to a large extent, whether they take action to disapprove and condemn corrupt behaviour. Gorta and Forell (1995) observed that perceptions about what constitutes corruption are diverse and, to some extent, influence the public’s willingness to take action in response to corruption. In fact, this reasoning is straightforward: corrupt behaviour will only be disapproved in so much as it is ‘recognised’ or judged as being corrupt. Public opinion studies might help us to understand which situations are labelled as corrupt under which circumstances and whether or not this label of corruption means that certain actions are met with disapproval.

Although the concept of corruption is difficult to define, one cannot ignore that corruption exists as a social construct. The question is: how do we understand the ways in which behaviour is judged as being corrupt? Corruption, when considered as a cultural phenomenon, raises the following question: how does society understand the rules and what constitutes a deviation from the rules (Williams, 1999; Melgar, Rossi & Smith, 2010)? The basis from which to answer this question is the fact that the concept of corruption depends on social and cultural factors (Soeffner & Tänzler, 2008). However, Cibnall and Saunders (1977) illustrated that there is a conflict between the core universal meaning of

'corruption' and a relative autonomous sub-universe being at odds with a common-sense and/or codified definition of corruption. In other words, perspectives on corruption vary, and so there exists no stable symbolic meaning with which a society may label acts as corrupt or not. Moreover, empirical research suggests that popular concepts of corruption do not conform to formal definitions of corruption. Public opinion studies might help us to gain a better understanding of the social construct of corruption.

Thus far, very little attention has been paid to the question of how acts are classified and judged as corrupt or not, and the question remains: do common sense interpretative criteria exist and how does a specific social context coincide with these situational interpretative criteria? Does a manager interpret gift-giving in terms of business while the same act is interpreted as being corrupt by a public prosecutor? Occupational groups may view behaviour which is common within their group as reasonable, and not as deviant (Chibnall & Saunders, 1977; Martin, Cullen, Johnson & Parbotheeah, 2007). In fact, the latter illustrates the conflict between situational morality and the codified concept of corruption. A fundamental understanding of the way in which corruption functions is essential to understanding corruption from the individual's perspective (Warburton, 2001). At this point, studying public opinion about corruption might be considered as an adequate method.

According to the Hungarian Gallop Institute (1999), it is still not clear how we should capture various corrupt activities, because it is unclear what exactly these activities are. This question is even more complicated than constructing a theoretical definition of corruption. Today, this still constitutes a gap in the research addressing the issue of corruption. The behaviours, practices and activities which society considers to be corrupt should be researched if we are to understand why some acts are judged as being corrupt and others are not. The search for an understanding of individuals' perceptions of corruption is not only important from an academic point of view. Gorta and Forell (1994) revealed that one's own perception of what is considered to be corrupt has an impact upon the perpetuation of corrupt practices. If people do not recognise a situation as corrupt, or as witnesses or participants in a 'corrupt' activity, they will not react in appropriate way. Identifying a behaviour as corrupt is often a precondition to being willing to take action (Gorta, 1995: 337), or in other words, perceptions of what is corrupt will surely condition how citizens respond to a 'corrupt' situation (Redlawsk & McCann, 2005). What is more, public opinion and social definitions of corruption are more salient in terms of governing behaviour than legal or formal definitions (Werner, 1983; Johnston, 1986; Gorta & Forell, 1995). Understanding how public perceptions of corruption might be of use in the prevention of corruption within sub-groups, for example, profession groups. How does this fit with the methodology of public opinion studies? Corruption and corruption perception can be considered as cultural phenomena because they depend on how a society understands the rules and what constitutes a

deviation from them. In some cases, behaviour that might be labelled as corrupt is taken for granted and vice versa. However, Melgar, Rossi and Smith, (2010: 120) concluded that “... *it does not depend only on society but also on personal values and moral values*”. The question is whether or not public opinion studies are a suitable method with which to understand people’s perceptions about corruption. Osborne and Rose (1999) conducted a profound historical study on the practice of public opinion studies within the social sciences. They stated that “*people learn to have opinions; they become ‘opinioned’ – or perhaps, even, ‘opinionated’ – persons. In that sense, opinion polls ‘make up’ people; people come to ‘fit’ the demands of the research; they become, so to speak, persons that are by nature ‘researchable’ from that perspective*” (Osborne & Rose, 1999: 392). In other words, opinions and perceptions about corruption are measurable on an individual level, but can also be extrapolated to the level of a population.

4. The added value of public opinion studies

Assuming that people take the position that corruption is morally reprehensible and consider it as being wrong, it is difficult to understand why corruption is widespread and difficult to grasp, and why in some situations it is even commonly accepted. The persistence of corruption may be explained in either of the following ways: people ignore corrupt behaviour or simply do not recognise a situation as corrupt. Ignoring a corrupt situation may be less justifiable than not recognising it. Facilitating the process of blurring moral norms is, in both cases, problematic and perpetuates corruption. As has been repeatedly observed (Werner, 1983; Kamp & Brooks, 2005; Moore, 2008), colleagues have an important influence over the attitudes and behaviours of other employees. Employee deviance is more constrained by informal social controls present in primary work-group relationships than by the more formal reactions to deviance by those in positions of authority within the formal organisation. People ignoring corruption at work might easily preserve a tradition of corruption.

The second reason – that people do not recognise a corrupt situation or do not judge a situation to be corrupt – has thus far received very little scientific attention. In essence, the question to be answered is what is perceived as corrupt, what is not perceived as corrupt and in what sense does this perception deviate from the normative definitions – such as those provided by penal law – that are dominant in terms of classifying corrupt and non-corrupt situations?

It is our assumption that societal perceptions of corruption might reveal more profound knowledge about society’s awareness of corruption. Only a few researchers have previously addressed issues relating to public opinion about corruption (for an overview see: Bezes & Lascoumes, 2005). Most of these articles have been confined to political corruption and have tried to generate a public opinion-

based definition of corruption and/or to unravel the causal relationship between perceived political corruption and voting preferences amongst constituents. Thus far, almost no knowledge has been developed concerning general public opinion about corruption. Today, it is unclear what is perceived as corrupt and what is not, where the line is between what is perceived as a question of integrity (the decline of moral standards) and what is alleged as being morally wrong and labelled as a criminal offence, and if and why perceptions about corruption differ between different groups. Corruption is not only a difficult phenomenon to define from an academic point of view. Above all, it is a difficult phenomenon to understand. A few studies have underlined the observation that citizens have many different conceptualisations of corruption (Bailey & Paras, 2006; Bowman & Gilligan, 2007; Aromaa, Taybakov, Klemetshov, Demi & Tumanov, 2009; Ferreyra-Orozco, 2010). As previously discussed, recent research on perceptions of corruption has identified different dichotomies between various groups within society in terms of understanding corruption (Soeffner & Tänzler, 2008), such as legalistic conceptions versus public interested based conceptions.

4.1. Capturing the societal meaning of corruption

Corruption is a vague and broad concept which, fairly often, goes unrecognised. People ignore the existence of corruption within their social or occupational networks. Consequently, it is difficult to conduct a debate on the subject of corruption or to pursue a policy to prevent and prosecute corruption. Two empirical studies have illustrated that some forms of ‘corruption’ might have become commonplace in daily practice. Lascoumes and Tomescu-Hatto (2008) discovered that French citizens tend to relativise ‘nepotism’ or ‘petty corruption’ and do not consider them to be forms of corruption, even accepting the existence of favouritism. They are indecisive in recognising ‘grey areas’ of political corruption and hesitate to condemn corrupt situations. The result of this is that citizens consider it the duty of political personnel to address personal matters which might easily result in corruption. The interaction between the perception of corruption and the tolerance of favouritism should be included within a prevention approach to corruption. Ferreyra conducted an ethnographic study in order to examine corruption within the Mexican judicial services. “*Petty corruption, connections, and cronyism have been commonplace in the daily life of the Mexican judicial system*” (Ferreyra-Orozco, 2010: 248). Ferreyra demonstrated that some forms of corruption are not considered as deviant practices, but have become normal, common practices rooted within the daily judicial practice. If we assume that people who no longer consider actions to be deviant practices are more likely to engage in corrupt behaviour, it is necessary to gain an understanding about what they perceive as being corrupt and what they do not. Thus far, we know of no systematic research explaining general public opinion about what is corrupt and what is not, or elucidating the difference

between general public opinion and the perceptions of specific profession groups. As Reed stated, we need “*to achieve as accurate as possible an appreciation of how people view corruption, its causes and effects, if education strategies are to be effective*” (Reed, 1992: 195). This might enable us to ascertain whether or not specific groups deviate from the general opinion of corruption. Take, for example, the case in which private managers have no moral reservations against offering kick-backs to government officials for selecting their companies. In order to create preventive programmes, it might be useful to ascertain whether and in what way certain occupational groups deviate from the norms of penal law and how this conflicts with general perceptions about corruption within society.

4.2. Corruption indices: what do they measure?

We will not go further into the issue of the accuracy of various corruption rating scales. Instead, we will address some conceptual questions which go together with the perception-based indices of corruption, such as the corruption perception index by Transparency International or the World Bank’s control of corruption. The underlying idea is that these indices measure the perceived levels of corruption as a way of ‘determining’ the real levels of corruption within a society. A general observation which has been made is that the concept of corruption itself is not well defined. Instead, these perception indices make use of a set indicators from different sources which are aggregated into one index (Ko & Samajdar, 2010).

The core of the different perception indices consists of expert assessments and surveys of businesspeople (Thompson & Shah, 2005). The perceptions of the general public are rarely included in corruption ratings. Nonetheless, recent research tends to indicate that perceptions differ between different groups in a society. A diagnostic report on Kazakhstani governance and service delivery demonstrated that public officials exhibited the least tolerance for various types of behaviour and that more of them judged various types of scenarios to be corrupt than Kazakh citizens or entrepreneurs (Anderson & Mukherjee, 2002). This is surprising, because corruption is traditionally associated with the government sector. More recently, researchers have observed that expert perceptions about corruption strongly differ from opinions within civil society (Soeffner & Tänzler, 2008). Experts are predominantly focussed on corruption committed on a grand scale by public officials. Citizens seem to have a more colourful view of corruption, and their perceptions range from petty corruption to ‘real’ corruption. Apparently, the word corruption means different things to different people (Anderson & Mukherjee, 2002; Dormaels, 2010). This ambiguity in perceptions and the possible consequences have not received much attention in the past. This might not only influence the validity of corruption rankings, as a pertinent question is: what are these general corruption indices actually measuring? “Measuring beliefs about corruption rather than corruption itself skirts the inherent difficulties

involved in measuring corruption directly, but raises the question of how those being surveyed form their beliefs in the first place, and how accurate those beliefs actually are” (Olken, 2009). In other words, it is not clear whether different corruption indices measure the same dimensions of corruption: petty corruption, grand theft, state capture etc. The might result in a situation in which corruption indices solely based on experts’ views are not connected to the common sense perceptions of corruption which are shared by the general public. Additionally, the differences between ranked countries might refer to actual levels of corruption as well as to different conceptualisations of corruption: “the individuals who comprise the study populations for perceptual corruption indices also possess varied definitions of corruption and the behaviours that constitute corruption” (Warren & Laufer, 2009). If ‘corruption’ is, for example, understood as being a very broad breach of norms within a society it will be perceived as more of a problem compared to a society in which corruption coincides more with the parameters of criminal law. de Sousa refers in this context to the risk of “morally over-stretching the concept of corruption” (de Sousa, 2002). This could result in any situation which accompanies a general feeling of discomfort being labelled as corrupt. To date, we are not aware of any research addressing the variances in the way in which corruption is perceived by different groups. Besides the audit report on the Kazakhstan Governance and Service Delivery by the World Bank, we have no examples of surveys which include the perceptions of the general public.

4.3. Institutional anti-corruption policies

Corruption is a sociological phenomenon which does not accord well with narrow governmental policies designed to combat corruption. Above all, the definition of corruption according to penal law serves as a standard with which to decide what is corrupt and what is not and to gauge what is punishable. The definitions from penal law are, however, insufficient to frame the reality of corruption (de Sousa, 2002). In the section above, we supported the principle that corruption is a social construct. The meaning of corruption within society, the way in which this social phenomenon is perceived and the way this influences the appearance of corruption cannot be grasped on the basis of a definition set down by criminal law. A gap exists between the penal law concept of corruption and what is actually perceived as corrupt within a society. This observation in itself is not necessarily a critique of the penal law definition of corrupt behaviour. The principle of repressive state intervention accompanies narrower penal law definitions and a reduced application. It is, however, problematic if definitions from penal law are used as a way of interpreting reality. In that sense, penal law definitions are an inadequate way to delimit a sociological phenomenon. Linder and Linder (2008), for example, showed that corruption is, in special cases, perceived as a competitive requirement and not as a lack of morality. This conflicts with the idea that corruption is – theoretically – an offence under all

circumstances. In practice, however, the concept of corruption is flexible depending on contextual and (sub-)cultural characteristics. The subject of perceptions of corruption and the gap between the penal law definition and more common definitions has been neglected as an area of research. Nevertheless, this difference is present in our society in two ways. First, repressive state interventions are confined to those activities that fall within a criminal law definition of corruption. Public opinion studies of corruption might help us to understand the ways in which perceptions about what is corrupt and what is not are influenced by contextual and cultural characteristics. Second, a vast part of the activities referred to as corrupt fall outside of the penal definition of improper behaviour. Bowman and Gilligan (2007) demonstrated that greater levels of accountability are expected from those in the public sector. Although certain behaviours might not be corrupt from a legal point of view, in the case that a majority of the general public perceives them as being corrupt, this will undermine their general trust in the authorities. Take, for example, two different cases in which the word ‘corruption’ is used. The first case refers to a situation in which a chief executive officer negotiated a very generous income for himself (Dendooven, 2006). The public judged this situation as being corrupt. As a result of incessant public indignation, the CEO resigned without any state intervention. A second case in which a CEO was held responsible for bribing civil servants would probably result in a criminal investigation. Studying public opinion might provide us with a more profound understanding of why certain situations are judged as being corrupt. In doing, so we will place corruption on a continuum through which the relationship between ‘illegal’ and ‘unethical’ can be explored. These new insights might cultivate the debate regarding where state intervention should start and to what extent more informal approaches to prevent corruption are recommended.

5. Conclusion

Through a literature review within the field of public opinion studies on corruption, we presented the added value of studying perception of corruption. It became clear that perceptions about what is corrupt change over time and change between populations. Moreover, societal response to corrupt behaviour tends to be influenced by what is perceived as corrupt. A lesser deal of corruption research focuses, however, on the question how to capture various perceptions about what is corrupt. Behaviours, practices and activities, which make a society to think that corruption is there should be object of research if we want to understand why some acts are judged corrupt and others not. From this point of view perceptions about corruption can be considered as cultural phenomena and these perceptions are influenced by how a society understands rules and what constitutes a deviation. Within this view corruption exists as a social construct and the question is how to understand the way behaviour is judged as corrupt. At this point the method of studying public opinions about corruption

might be an adequate method. Opinions and perceptions about corruption are measurable on individual level but also extrapolated to a level of a population. It is our assumption that the study of perceptions about corruption might provide us with new and original knowledge about corruption. This is important for (at least) three reasons. First of all, it provides us with an impression of the 'corruption-resistance' of the members of a society. Corruption is a negative phenomenon, and calling something corrupt means that people (morally) disapprove a situation. Consequently, this might also (to some extent) prevent people from taking part in corrupt activities. Second, preventative policies have to take into account public's perceptions about corruption. Third, the ways in which a society perceives corruption influence institutional reactions, such as prevention and prosecution policies. In other words, whether and how members of a society perceive some acts as forms of corruption are important in terms of exposing corruption, inducing an institutionalised reaction and creating more substantial and effective preventive policies. We are convinced that public opinion-based studies might result in original and useful information about the social concept of corruption.

CHAPTER III: CORRUPTION AS A JUDGMENT LABEL

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The study of corruption always meant that the researcher adopted a specific viewpoint on corruption, which influenced the definition debate and the debate on methodologies used to research the concept. The aim of this contribution is to use the lessons learned from previous research on corruption in developing a methodology aimed at assessing the judgement of a situation as corruption or not. Using Peters and Welch's methodology a quantitative survey is constructed using a questionnaire composed of different scenarios. An experimental design is used to examine individual judgement to a series of hypothetical scenarios as corrupt or not. The compilation and selection of those scenarios is illustrated as first step in a research design.

1. Introduction

The relationship between persons and the word 'corruption' is diverse and can be divided into the following three levels. On a first level the word 'corruption' is considered as a term which needs to be defined. This defining activity is the result of a conscious reflecting person. On a second level, the word 'corruption' is used as a label to demarcate a variety of situations within the ontological reality. It is our assumption that we are confronted on this level with a reflecting activity and that persons use either an explicit or an implicit definition of the word corruption. On a third level the word 'corruption' is used to judge a concrete particular situation or a description of a concrete particular situation as corrupt or not. We assume that a judgement of such a situation might rather be a 'reflexive' (emotionally) or a 'reflective' (rationally) activity.

Within each of the three above cited levels we observe an inter-personal or an inter-group variability. On the first - reflective - level we observe a manifest inter-personal variability. A good example to illustrate this inter-personal variability might be the academic definition debate on corruption. In the past, many researchers have tried to define the word corruption which resulted in many (overlapping) definitions of the word corruption (Heidenheimer, 1970; Gibbons, 1990; Johnston, 1991; Kurer, 2005). In this context it is useful to cite van Duyne who argued that the definition of corruption is used

in many overlapping contexts from a legal, economic, political or cultural comparative perspective. Based on the fundamental element of corruption – the behaviour of the individual deviant decision maker – van Duyne comes to the following definition of corruption “*corruption is an improbity or decay in the decision-making process in which a decision-maker (in a private corporation or in a public service) consents or demands to deviate from the criterion, which should rule his decision making, in exchange for a reward, the promise or expectation of it*” (van Duyne, 2001: 75). Other researcher have argued however that a single universal definition which will fuse together the various theoretical understandings is however hard to expect and that there exists little consensus about its definition (Werner, 1983). Gardiner illustrates for example the range of definitions by grouping seven “broad” (e.g. *the exercise of governmental power achieve nongovernmental objective*¹⁷) and “narrow” (e.g. *behaviour which deviates from the formal duties of a public officer for private wealth*¹⁸) categories (Gardiner & Lyman, 1978). We observe that even the classification of different definitions of corruption into types is very numerous. Johnston makes a distinction between ‘*Behaviour-Classifying Definitions*’ and ‘*Principal-Agent-Client Definitions*’ of corruption (Johnston, 1996). Peters en Welch (1978) introduced following types of definitions: legal definitions, public interest definitions and public opinion definitions.

Inter-personal or inter-group variability on the second – reflective – level would be for example a situation in which two persons use in the same sense the word corruption (with the same definition) but end up with a differentiated demarcation within the ontological reality. Take for example a discussion on the incrimination of corruption in the Belgian criminal law. Corruption is defined in article 246.§1 of the Belgian Criminal Code as followed: “*The action of a person performing public duties who requests or accepts, directly or through the intermediation of other persons, for himself or others, offers, promises or advantages of any kind, in exchange for committing the conduct referred to in Article 247 constitutes passive corruption.*”. One person or group might argue that it is necessary to read the whole of the expression used in §1, in which the notion of acceptance refers not only to an offer or promise, but also to an advantage, which implies the receipt of such an advantage. Another person or group might say that since acceptance of an offer is covered, then by extension the subsequent receiving of the advantage agreed must also be covered (GRECO, 2009). This discussion how to define the word corruption is by extension unmistakable related to the following question. Is it necessary that prior to a particular act or attitude on the part of the person performing public duties, he receives a request for an offer, promise or advantage of any nature (Flore, 1999)? Some persons will argue that in case no such offer was made to him there would consequently not be any question of the

¹⁷ Scott, J. C. (1972), *Comparative Political Corruption*, Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, as cited in Gardiner and Lyman 1978.

¹⁸ Nye, J.S. (1967), ‘Corruption and Political Development: A Cost-Benefit Analysis’, *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 61, 417-427, as cited in Gardiner and Lyman 1978.

offence of corruption. Others might defend the opposite interpretation and end up with an different demarcation.

Inter-personal or inter-group variability on the third – reflective and/or reflexive – level of judgment stands for any case in which a particular situation is judged as to be corrupt by one person or one group and not by another person or group. An excellent case to illustrate the inter-personal variability on this level is a case in which a cabinet counsellor in the city Antwerp, one of the major cities in Flanders, is responsible for the follow up of construction files for the city. Apparently, this counsellor rents for free a luxurious loft from a building contractor doing major city programmes. One day, a journalist raises the question of possible corruption in a newspaper article followed by many more news items covering this case (Van Der Aa, 2009b). Revealing is that at the outset local politicians and colleague cabinet counsellors did not label this case as corrupt. The media and the common public shared on the other hand a united opinion: this is obviously a corruption scandal. We found another illustration of inter-group variability in the work of Kjelberg (1995) who discusses the contrast between the publicity-perceived scandal and actual corruption within the municipality administrations of Oslo. Striking point in his analysis is the gap between the verdict in the media and the public opinion about the alleged corruption scandals on the one hand and the outcomes of three City Commissions exculpating the administration from the allegations.

My interest goes in present article to the third level, the level in which persons judge a situation as to be corrupt or not. We assume – on the basis of previous studies – that the judgement of such situation is influenced by two groups of characteristics (see for a discussion of these studies chapter 2 of present article). A first group contains situational characteristics (such as public official, favour, payoff, undue advantage, etc.). A second group consist of personal related characteristics of the observer (such as gender, social status, education, etc.). We assume that these characteristics influence either separated or in combination the judgement of a situation as corrupt or not.

In this article, we will describe a method – a so called scenario-based questionnaire – to assess to what extent the aforementioned two groups of characteristics, either themselves or in combination, influence the judgement of a situation as corrupt or not. The elaboration of our scenario-based questionnaire, which is the core subject of this article, will be discussed more into detail in chapter three.

In the past, a handful scholars conducted studies developing a methodology to study the influence of characteristic on the judgement process of a situation as corrupt or not. These methods – assumptions, procedures, results and understandings – form the basis of my methodology. These studies will be

presented together with their methodologies in a first introductory chapter of this article. Subsequent chapter will address the elaborations of our scenario-based questionnaire.

2. Understanding judgement of a situation as corrupt

2.1. Historical overview of relevant research

As mentioned above researchers have constructed methods to observe in a more meticulous way the influence of particular characteristics on the judgement of situation as corrupt or not.¹⁹ The subdivision between these two groups – situational and personal characteristics – forms the basis for structuring this chapter in which we will present previous research on judgments of situations as corrupt. Within each group we will address the researches in a chronological way. Some of the studies we will introduce in our article focused on the situational characteristic, others addressed the personal related characteristics.

2.1.1. Situational characteristics

Starting point is the work of Gardiner (Gardiner 1970a; Gardiner 1970b) who introduced a behavioural and normative perspective in the context of analyzing the judgement of a situation as corrupt or not. An important methodological improvement is that Gardiner introduced the application of scenarios describing situations. The respondents had to judge in this way whether or not, and to what extent a scenario is corrupt. As we will discuss further on, his constructivist method has been later on evolved (Bezes & Lascoumes, 2005).

At the same time, Heidenheimer (1970) opened new horizons to study the judgement of situations by appreciating the existence of different normative dimensions in this process. His approach resulted in the familiar black-white-grey classification of judgements of situation as corrupt. A political action not only condemned by public opinion but also demanded for punishment is evaluated as ‘black corruption’. Acts judged corrupt by both politicians and citizens, but not appreciated as severe enough

¹⁹ We should mention that ‘*judgement of a situations as corrupt or not is*’ is addressed in most of the above discussed researches as the ‘perception of corruption’. For that reasons we must make clear difference between two ways in which the word ‘perception of corruption’ is generally used. The first one relies to contexts in which the perception of corruption – or in other words the judgment of situations as corrupt is analyzed. These studies try to isolate values, norms, characteristics that might influence a judgement. The latter is what should be understood by within the framework of our present study.

‘Perception of corruption’ might refer however to another meaning: measuring the scale of corruption. This is measuring the scale of corruption by *perception* based indicators. In other words not measuring corruption itself but opinions about its prevalence (Treisman, D. (2007). "What have we learned about the causes of corruption from ten years of cross-national empirical research?" *Annual Review of Political Science* **10**: 211-244.) The underlying idea is that these perception-based-indices can ‘predict’ the ‘real’ levels of corruption.

to be punished is evaluated as 'white corruption'. 'Grey corruption' indicates that either public officials or citizens expect to see an act punished, while the other group does not. Rationalize the judging process of situations as corrupt proceeding from this continuum broadens the scope of the study subject. Several studies analyzing different indexes of 'judged situations as corrupt' validate the presumption that the judgment of a situation as corruption is a multi-dimensional process with different evaluative criteria intersecting to produce multiple perspectives on these situations (Gibbons, 1990; Treisman, 2000; Anderson & Tverdova, 2003).

In 1978 Peters and Welch conducted a scenario based questionnaire study amongst 978 senators in 24 US states to explore Heidenheimer's theory (Peters & Welch, 1978). Their questionnaire was built out of a set of ten scenarios. Each scenario had to be rated on a 5 point-scale whether the senators believed the scenario was corrupt, whether they believed most members of public would condemn this act and whether they believed most public officials would condemn this act. Innovatively, they varied amongst the scenarios significant characteristics, the so-called "*salient characteristics*". They successfully unravelled the judging process of corruption into four significant dimensions. The "public official" involved, the actual "favour" provided by the public official, the "payoff" gained by the public official and the "donor" of the payoff. Peters and Welch concluded in their study that judgments of corrupt behaviour do not only vary between different social groups but also vary in relation to the nature of the acts. The methodological framework elaborated by Peters and Welch presented new perspectives in the empirical study of corruption. This methodology allows to observe in a very meticulous way the influence of significant characteristics of different acts and to compare the judgments of scenarios as corrupt between different social groups.

Gorta and Forell (1994) explored the public judgement of situations by determining what types of activities are labelled to be corrupt by random samples of 1.978 NSW public sector employees. A central question in their study was how do people decide whether an activity is corrupt and how do this relate to their willingness to take action about that conduct. The core of their methodology exists of brief descriptions of twelve scenarios, depicting different types of conduct which could potentially occur in any public sector organisation. For each scenario respondents were, asked to rate, on a six point scale, how *desirable* they believed the behaviour to be, how *harmful*, and how *justified* they considered it to be. They were also asked to judge whether the conduct was corrupt or not.

Twenty years after the publishing of Peters and Welch's article, Jackson and Smith revealed empirical evidence that supports the hypothesis that judgements of scenarios as corrupt are affected by four particular dimensions (Jackson & Smith, 1996). They used empirical evidence from 100 interviews with Australian politicians and 500 voters using the scenarios elaborated by Peters and Welch. The politicians and public judgments of corruption are affected by the broad dimensions of corruption –

the natures of the official, payoff, favour and the donor – alike. Activities embodying a greater number and strength of salient characteristics were condemned by both the elites and the citizens. Activities with fewer and weaker number of salient characteristics turned out to be judged more ambiguous by which the politicians were the more lenient group.

Mancuso illustrated the enduring utility of Peters and Welch's dimensional scheme analyzing data from a large-scale Canadian national survey on political ethics (Mancuso, 2005). The core of his questionnaire was a series of hypothetical scenarios describing political behaviour. In his study Mancuso examined the effects of changing contexts – public, private or something in between – of an activity. Placing the judgment of a scenario along the spectrum from public to private proved to be useful in understanding how corruption is perceived. Scenarios are more likely to be judged as corrupt when it involves illegal activities, larger payoffs and more direct and immediate benefit. The dimensional analysis defined by Peters and Welch hold true in the context of Mancuso's study in 2005. What's more, the identification of the context in which an activity takes place seemed to be significant in the prediction whether or not it would be judged as to be corrupt.

Redlawsk and McCann (Redlawsk & McCann, 2005) presented a questionnaire to 6,829 voters. This questionnaire included a group of questions where voters had to rate the extent to which various hypothetical actions by government officials or citizens were judged corrupt. Examining popular judgments of what constitutes political corruption in the United States they found two distinct judgment dimensions: corruption understood as law-breaking, and corruption as favouritism. Secondly, it became clear that these judgments are heavily conditioned by the voter's socioeconomic background and are politically consequential. The latter should be seen as independent variables – personal related characteristics – interfering in the judgement process as addressed in the following part.

2.1.2. Personal related characteristics

Certain studies pointed out the importance of personal related characteristics interacting and influencing the judgment of situations as corrupt. More concrete, judgements of situations are probably influenced by independent variables such as demographic, socio-economic characteristics, trust in political or governmental organizations and gender (Jackson & Smith, 1996; Swamy, Knack, Lee, & Azfar, 2001; Park, 2003; Redlawsk & McCann, 2005; de Sousa, 2008).

Based on a multiple correspondence analysis, of data deriving from a nationally representative sample survey carried out in France in February 2006 on citizens' perceptions of occupational politicians, public office holders and political corruption, Lascoumes and Tomescu-Hatto empirically illustrated citizens ambiguities regarding the evaluation of corruption (Lascoumes & Tomescu-Hatto, 2008).

Personal information – sex, age and level of education – of each respondent, has been introduced in the analysis. One the outcomes was that a highly qualified professional turned out to be more tolerant for favoritism whether less well-educated persons and persons in lower status occupations are less tolerant for favoritism.

Analysts have long sought to understand whether women and men have different ethical orientations. Some researchers have argued that women and men consistently make fundamentally different ethical judgments especially of corruption. When it comes to gender for example, it seems to be the case that women, when individually surveyed, appear more public-spirited or less tolerant of corruption (Swamy, Knack, Lee, & Azfar, 2001). Others have found however no such disparities. Other studies have emphasized however the interaction between age and gender (Pharr, 1998; Aldrich & Kage, 2003). Aldrich and Kage statistically investigated the interactive effects between gender and age in a nationally representative data set from Japan. They concluded that the interaction between gender and age functions better as a predictor of moralism than the independent variables such as education or gender alone. Older individuals of both sexes were found to have similar strict moral perceptions.

Furthermore there is sturdy empirical finding that somebody's socioeconomic status conditions the judgment of a situation and to condemn behaviour as corrupt. The higher a persons' social status, the more he will approach corruption from a legalistically point of view and vice versa (Jackson & Smith, 1996; Redlawsk & McCann, 2005).

2.2. Concluding remarks

Presenting the aforementioned studies on the judgement of situations as to be corrupt or not it becomes clear that this phenomenon has been mainly studied from the field of the political science. From this point of view research on judging corrupt situations is limited to (disjunctions between) democracy and 'political' corruption and consequently restricted to the relationship between elites and voters. This relationship should be understood as the aforementioned inter-personal or inter-group variability in the judgement of situations as corrupt. Although corruption has gained more and more attention in the last decades, it is surprising to see that this subject has not yet entered into the broader field of socio- criminological research addressing the judgement of day-to-day scenarios possible labelled as corrupt.

Secondly, Heidenheimer's hypothesis about categorizing the judgment of situations into black-grey-white corruption has been severely discussed. This discussion is to our opinion mainly focused on defining corruption and should be located at our first identified level in which the word corruption is used. Nonetheless we found several empirical studies which supported Heidenheimer's polychromatic

approach of the judgment process of situations as corrupt (Heywood, 1997; Heidenheimer, 2004). For that reason it is surprising that only a handful of studies analyzed the judgement of situations from a multidimensional perspective involving both personal as situational characteristics. The same goes for the thesis that judgments of corruption vary between groups – the aforementioned intergroup variability – and over time which is ignored by many scholars.

The empirical approach introduced by Peters and Welch has been evolved and scrutinized by other scholars and proved to be a reliable and sturdy method to investigate opinions about corruption in relation to the context of the social group to which the respondent belongs to. Nevertheless we should draw attention to our observation that researchers have struggled in the past to cope with a multidimensional approach of the judgement of situations as corrupt and are in some way implicitly bounded to either the criminal law or to the widely used academic definitions. What really is judged by the public as to be corrupt in the broadest sense is in this respect not captured.

3. A scenario-based questionnaire to understand judgements of corruption

The question is how to capture the above discussed methodological points of attention in our research design? Hereafter we will present an alternative approach to study the judgement process of situations by evolving Peters and Welch method. To do so we will elaborate a questionnaire constructed out of a set of scenarios. Preceding, we will raise attention to the similarities and differences between our methodological concept and the methods used within the above discussed researches. Secondly, we will make clear how we selected meaningful situations to be judged as corrupt or not. Subsequently, the introduction of different dimensions covering various characteristics which may possible influence the judgement of a situation will be introduced. To conclude this chapter we will present the blueprint of our questionnaire.

3.1. Analogy with previous research methods

Our proposed method relies on a rich research tradition focused on understanding the judgement process of situations as corrupt or not. Similar to those studies, we introduce the assumption that salient characteristics are involved in judging a situation. As explained above we make a clear distinction between situational and personal characteristics. Our project has the aim to contribute to the question which dimensions and salient characteristics are involved in judging a situation as corrupt or not. To do so, we will work with a comparable research design. On the basis of a questionnaire we will organise a quantitative survey and statistical analysis of the results. In other word we will organise an experimental design to examine individual judgement to a series of hypothetical scenarios.

We will however add some new elements in our research method and design. In line with recent findings we will involve both situational and personal characteristics in our present study. In this way we will try to combine different dimensions and their salient characteristics into the judgement process.

Secondly, we elaborated a method to vary more than one salient characteristic regarding to a particular situation. Our questionnaire is constructed out of different scenario describing in a neutral way a meaningful situation. We will successively bring in salient characteristics during the judgment of the scenarios as corrupt or not. In this way we will try to observe the shift of a respondent's opinion. Our thesis is that in this way we will be able to differentiate transgressive variables through which we expect to detect the bascules in the judgement process.

In our research we will give very broad interpretation of situation to be judged as corrupt or not. So far, studies dealing with the question to understand the judgement process used a set of scenarios illustrating situations within a political context to be assessed as corruption. Additionally, some of these studies addressed the question how these judgements affect the ballot box (Fackler & Lin, 1995; Karahan, Coats & Shughart, 2006; McCann & Redlawsk, 2006; Birch, 2008; Ferraz & Finan, 2008; Lascoumes & Tomescu-Hatto, 2008). Outlining the relationship between political corruption and democracy was the main focus of these studies (Gardiner, 1967; Redlawsk & McCann, 2005). As already mentioned above it is our intention to broaden the scope and to study the phenomenon corruption *as such*.

Last but not least we remind to our observation that there exists inter-personal or inter-group variability within the judgement of situations as corrupt. In line with this observation, we will include samples out of different populations (police, customs, municipalities, private companies, ...) to help us to better understand the judgments situations.

3.2. Selection of the scenarios

We conducted a profound search for articles reporting about corruption within the Flemish Digital Press Database "*Mediargus*" over the period January 1995 to March 2009. The Dutch language is rich in terms and phrases related to corruption. Although the use of different terms may vary depending on the context, the basic word referring to 'corruption' is understood in Dutch respectively as '*corruptie*'. Nevertheless there exist a vast range of alternative synonyms such as '*omkoping*' understood as bribery, '*gesjoemel*' translated as fiddling, '*steekpenning*' to be understood as bribe or '*smeergeld*' understood as slush money. Based on a query with the aforementioned search terms we received over 15.000 articles reporting about corruption in the broadest sense and covering different continents and

regions. On the basis of this empirical information, we observed that a vast range of different situations is judged as corrupt.²⁰ Moreover we observed that some cases are judged corrupt by only one individual person while other situations are condemned by more than one person or a group of persons (for example citizens, journalist, profession group such as police, judicial service, politicians). On the other hand, we observed that some situations have never been judged as corrupt (e.g. rapes, theft, assault and battery, ...). This observation provided the opportunity to select meaningful situations which were rich on diversity in such a way that they include all kind of stories which came at the attention of the general public and have been judge in some way as corruption by at least one person or a group of persons.²¹

3.3. Dimensions covering different characteristic to influence the judgement

Different dimensions involved in the judgement of a situation as corruption resulted out of the analysis of the newspaper reports. These dimensions were on the whole congruous with the components of a potentially corrupt act and the salient characteristics introduced by Peters and Welch (Peters & Welch, 1978). In what follows we will describe the four dimensions – public/private actor, undue favour, relationship corruptor and bribed, payoff – in which we will bring in salient characteristics to observe shifts in the judgement of a situation.

3.3.1. Public versus private actor

The component ‘public official’ and ‘the role that a public official performed’ introduced in the study of Peters and Welch is transformed in the present study into the continuum ‘public’ versus ‘private’ actors.

A public actor has to be understood as any role relating to a public or a political position. A private actor means any private branch or personal position. Doing so, we bring in more differentiation into potentially corrupt relationships. This provides us the opportunity to test if a private role for example is less severe judged than a public role when it comes to corrupt behaviour. In other words, is the

²⁰ We obtained the impression that ‘smeergeld’ is in essence associated with the context of political and governmental corruption. Private corruption or the concept of active corruption is often put into the word ‘steekpenning’. Financial fraud and corruption in financial and economic context is often expressed as ‘gesjoemel’ (see for a more detailed discussion of the influence of news journals on the perception of corruption: Bové, 2009).

²¹ Our first idea was to come to a selection of hypothetical scenarios based on a qualitative case study using court cases. However, case studies are often the result of a complaint or an investigation following alleged violations of the law. Consequently, we had to admit that the resulting scenarios would illustrate the criminal law definition and be consequently incongruous with our research objective to study situations as corrupt or not. In fact, we would be using our survey methodology as a method to validate in some way the criminal law definition. Or in other words the scope of our project would be situated at the second level in which the word ‘corruption’ is used – in a reflective way – to label a variety of corrupt situations.

general public more reluctant for private-to-private corruption in opposition to corruption involving public officials or politicians? We believe that the position of the party concerned will determine the dimension of the judgement to a large extent. Someone engaged in a public function will be judged more harshly than a private employer abusing his position for personal gain. The latter is often called as 'just doing businesses. Secondly, it seems interesting to investigate to what extent the position of the 'initiator' determines one's judgement. In other words does it matters who requests or receives an undue advantage? Is a public servant who demands for business-class-tickets in exchange for influencing the allocation procedure more blameworthy than a corporate manager engaged in hanky-panky via gift giving during the bidding procedure?

3.3.2. *Favour*

The second dimension to be considered is the favour or the undue advantage intrinsically linked to the process of corruption. The favour and the perceived corruptness of the favour will vary strong from one situation to another. Nevertheless we will try to cover following two axes in our scenarios: the nature of the conduct that brings about the favour and secondly the beneficiary of it. To illustrate the vast nature of the conduct we refer to the following scenario that has been included in the questionnaire: "*Bart is engineer and he is responsible for the production in an automobile plant. A supplier of airbags wants to increase his deliverance of airbags*". When it comes to judgement of a scenario as corrupt there are different possible situations to test. Firstly, does it matter if the favour rendered by Bart means a breach of his duties? This has been translated to the following question: "*Do you consider it corrupt if the supplier of airbags reward Bart with a holiday trip before Bart optimized the production*". What about the situation in which the undue advantage is linked to a routine part of Bart's his job? The question would then be "*Do you consider it corrupt if the supplier of airbags reward Bart with a holiday trip after Bart optimized the production.*" To what extent does it affect the general public opinion if Bart has to break rules for rendering the favour? This can has been translated into the following question: "*Do you consider it corrupt if the supplier of airbags reward Bart with a holiday trip before Bart organized errors in the production*".

3.3.3. *Relationship corruptor and corrupted*

Who or what is the beneficiary of the undue advantage and does it affect the judgement of potentially situation as corrupt? To test our assumptions we introduced different situations in which we alternate the characteristics of this dimension trying to influence the bascule in the verdict. The most obvious way to catch the dynamics of this dimension is to introduce a gradual transition in the characteristics of the beneficiary from the public interest to personal gain into particular scenarios. For that reason we give the scenario a purposeful twist as follows: "*A local politician visits the cabinet of a fellow party*

member to discuss and fasten the settlement of a construction licence". Particular to this case is that the Belgian general public is very reluctant when it comes to doing politics. We do not want to run ahead of the research findings but we expect that playing with the salient characteristics of this dimension we might get a switch in the evaluation of the described situation. Does the judgement for example vary if the local politician is doing politics and tries to promote the building of a home of rest in his town? What if it goes about promoting the setting up of economic grounds? These first two situations are strongly related to the common good and will probably be accepted by most part of the respondents. Let us enter the grey zone via the following situation. How will the general public perceive the situation in which the politician goes to a fellow party member to fasten the construction of a golf course? This is less linked up to the common good and we expect therefore a more diversification in the respondent's opinions. Moreover, this grey zone would be for example very informative if we could interpret the respondent's response in relation to his or her demographic, socio-economic characteristics, age and gender characteristics or in relation to the social group the respondent belongs to. At last we refer to the situation in which the politician tries to influence the renovation of his ranch (farmhouse) out of self-interest.

3.3.4. Larger/smaller and direct/indirect payoff

In our study we will also take into account to date research findings that suggest that situations are more likely to be judged as corrupt when it involves larger payoffs, more direct payoffs and more immediate payoffs (Peters & Welch, 1978; Johnston, 1991; Welch & Hibbing, 1997). Does it mitigate judgements when it involves less direct and less immediate gifts? In that way we will make for example a distinction between:

- Settle the invoice by paying x Euros...
- Deposit an amount x Euros into one's own account...
- Deposit an amount x Euros into the account of political party...
- Demanding for a free portable computer...
- Receiving a free portable computer...

Furthermore, we believe that the nature of the relationship between the "giver" and the "receiver" affects the judgment. When the connections between giving and getting are more clearly within the sphere of interest peddling we expect to be the judgments less tolerant. Does it involve for example a local constructor or an international construction firm? Will opinions change when it involves just a business meeting in Brussels or a business trip to Mallorca?

3.4. Blueprint of the survey instrument

All the aforementioned dimensions have been processed to a guiding scheme to catalogue situations as potentially corrupt acts based on the combination and interaction of different dimensions and their salient characteristics (see table 3). Although this scheme is a draft and is the result of an evolving scientific process we think it is useful to discuss the dimensions of hypothetical situations as corrupt acts.

On the basis of following scenario we will illustrate the application of the scheme: “*Jean works as a cabinet counsellor and is responsible for the follow up of construction files for the city. Jean rents a luxurious loft from a building contractor doing major city programmes*”. We expect that this scenario is to be categorized in a certain sense as neutral, meaning that most people would not condemn the described act. Through the combination of some significant dimensions we will try to capture the bascule in the judgments of this situation from a tolerated to a condemned situation. For that purpose, we present successively four situations following the neutral scenario in order to shift the respondent’s opinion. In this way we will try to differentiate transgressive variables through which we expect to detect the bascules.

- How corrupt do you consider this situation?
- How corrupt do consider it if Jean sister would rent the loft at reduced tariff?
- How corrupt do consider it if Jean would rent the loft at reduced tariff?
- How corrupt do consider it if Jean would rent the loft for free?

We expect that the majority of the respondents will judge the first situation acceptable. It is more plausible that the second situation would enter the grey zone and that respondents will state that they reject the third and fourth situation. On the basis of the scheme we disentangle the situations into the following characteristics:

Table 3. Characteristics potentially influencing judgement

	Position	Payoff	Favour/gift	Relationship
Situation 1	Private benefit from public act (++)	Ambiguous (+/-)	Unknown (-) Not direct (-)	Yes +
Situation 2	Private benefit from public act (++)	Third party (+/-)	Unknown (-) Not direct (-)	Yes +
Situation 3	Private benefit from public act (++)	Large (+)	Unknown (-) Not direct (-)	Yes +
Situation 4	Private benefit from public act (++)	Large (++)	Unknown (-) Not direct (-)	Yes +

+ More corrupt
- Less corrupt

The favour remains in all three situations unknown and has probably no significant influence affecting the bascule in the judgment. When it comes to the payoff we distinct a clear shift in the characteristic of this dimension. Starting from an ambiguous situation (just renting) it goes over a more objectionable payoff (reduced rent for Jean's sister) up to the culpable payoff understanding as a free rent. Important in this scenario is that even in the first situation it might very well be the case that respondents disapprove the fact that Jean is renting the loft from a building contractor. This because the ambiguous payoff interferes with a strong closeness, i.e. 'building contractor' doing city jobs. Testing the influence of the dimension 'closeness' trough other scenarios with other characteristics will probably provide interesting information. Last but not least we have the position of the persons concerned. In this case it concerns a public official who collects a big favour misusing his function. This is a classic dimension in the judgement of situations as corrupt and we believe that this will be judged more harshly compared to for example a pure private business.

3.5. Format of the scenarios

The formulation of our scenarios is crucial for our research. Each scenario and the forced choices have to be drafted in a way that they can be easily understood by the respondents. Secondly, the wording of our scenarios has to be simplified as much as possible in order to be able to use the survey to be read by the respondents themselves but also to be used in interviewing by telephone as we aim to reach different social groups.²²

For that reason we tested our questionnaire in a focus group²³. The organizational set-up of this focus group imitated a telephonic interview. Nobody received a paper version of the questionnaire and all scenarios have been read to the participants. Let us illustrate the major outcomes with the aforementioned question about Jean working at a cabinet. We learned that it seemed to be more proper to insert all the information that remained unaffected throughout this situation into the neutral scenario itself:

- Jean is a counsellor,
- Construction dossiers,
- Rents a loft from a prominent building contractor.

²² The elaborated questionnaire will be used within the framework of a six year PhD-study on corruption. The project consists of two distinguished phases: (1) a quantitative empirical study involving different social groups and (2) a qualitative study. A telephonic survey based on the CATI-method will be organized together with postal surveys within different samples out of the population (different profession groups) during this quantitative phase. Our questionnaire has to serve in other words for a telephonic as well as a postal survey.

²³ This focus group took place at May 20, 2009. The group consisted of college scholars at Ghent University.

Whereas the situations following the neutral scenario have to incorporate the changing characteristics and background information:

- His sister gets reduced tariff,
- Jean get reduced tariff,
- Jean gets it for free.

Otherwise the respondents get confused in distinguishing the variable versus the invariable information and not knowing anymore what has changed compared to the previous situations. Secondly it came to our attention that this way of presenting our scenarios demanded less efforts and concentration what is a profit when it comes to a telephone interview.

We observed that it is from utmost importance that we restrained from inserting different meaningful variables within one scenario. This would make it impossible to draw valid conclusions. We can make this clear on the basis of an illustration. Let us reconsider again the scenario in which a politician tries to influence the renovation of his ranch and therefore visits the cabinet of a fellow party member. Via the question “*Do you consider this corrupt?*” we try to find out if this way of “doing politics” is denounced. If we for example would speak about a “ranch located within a nature reserved area” we run the risk that respondents would in the first place condemn the lack of respect for nature reserved area instead of rejecting a possible act of political corruption.

3.6. Measuring the judgement

Last but not least we have to discuss the selection of our question format. Will we use forced-choice questions or apply rating-scales items? Previous studies have used a point scale asking their respondents to answer ‘how corrupt’ they perceive the behaviour. This leads however to problems when we want to dichotomize responses into ‘corrupt’ versus ‘not corrupt’ (Gorta & Forell, 1995).

Seeing that we want to understand the bascules in the judgement of corruption it implies that we will have to force respondents to take a certain position: whether they condemn a hypothetical corrupt scenario or they have no hard feelings about it. Doing so it is less useful to let our respondents take position on for example a 5 point-scales whether they condemn the scenario or not. In this case directionality is all that is necessary and in that case the best approach is to use a simple two-point or four-point scale: do you consider it appropriate or not (and to what extent)? But there is much more about choosing a question format.

When it comes to increase the response degree experimental research has shown that respondents to forced choice questions produce higher endorsement than for example the web check-all format

(Smyth, Christian & Dillman, 2008). More important is that experiments found out that respondents spent significantly longer on the forced-choice formatted questions and endorsed to be same number of options regardless of response time. This suggests that all respondents more deeply process the response options in this question format. In relation to the organization of a telephonic organized survey we must take into account that it will be hardly impossible that respondents will readdress a question or demand for additional information contrary to in depth-interviews. For that reason we must increase their attention to process the questions.

3.7. Used surveys and samples

Surveys are important means for assessing corruption and surveys always go together with samples. According to Langseth a common error in the study of political corruption is to over-sample urban areas, where people are more accessible and to under-sample more rural areas (Langseth, 2007). One of our methodological assumptions is that our sample does not only has to be representative but also has to cover various social groups.

A general public survey for example can show that a great part of the citizens does not tolerate it that a local politician visits the cabinet of a fellow party member to discuss and fasten the settlement of a construction licence. On the other hand it may very well be the case that a sample of elites does not at all experience this particular scenario to be corrupt. Studies on political corruption revealed that opinions of corruption can vary over different social groups. Jackson and Smith subjected Heidenheimer's theory about political corruption through a significant interview-based study amongst Australian politicians and voters (Jackson & Smith, 1996). Reckon with the results of their survey – perceptions from government insiders differ from perceptions based on outsiders – it is likely that the outcome of our study on the perception of corruption will be strongly determined by our sample choice.

In 2005 Bezes and Lascoumes made a pointed analysis of twelve identified empirical studies on the perception and judgement of political corruption (Bezes & Lascoumes, 2005). They came to the conclusion that a significant number of studies applied Peters and Welch's methodological design (Peters & Welch, 1978) to scrutinize Heidenheimer's hypothesis of black-grey-white corruption. However, most of these studies investigated the perception and judgement of corruption from one single setting: either they investigated the citizens or the elite's perspective of corruption. Heidenheimer's thesis was however that whether a corrupt activity was tolerated (white corruption) or condemned (black corruption) depended upon the type of social group the observer belonged to (Heidenheimer, 2004). Only the study of Jackson and Smith (Jackson & Smith, 1996) analysed the

perception and judgement of corruption by comparing the citizen's and the politician's perceptions of corruption (Bezes & Lascoumes, 2005). This methodological framework presented by Heidenheimer and followed by a selected number of scholars proved to be useful to gain new insights into the judgements and opinions of unethical behaviour.

As opposed to the empirical findings which suggest that it may be that members of some subgroups of the population share a common understanding of corruption which differs from the understanding shared by other subgroups, Gorta and Forell (1995) ascertained that the existing literature has not revealed clear cut distinctions. The differences in findings are the result of studies being conducted in different decades and involving different social groups. In line with this, it is our contention that if we want to deduce a more comprehensive understanding of the perception and judgement of corruption we must analyse scenarios about corrupt behaviour involving different social groups within a restricted time span.

As far as we know no one has examined the judgement of situations using empirical evidence in a direct comparison of different social groups and elucidate the inter-personal or inter-group variability in the judgment of situations as corrupt or not. As discussed above the equation of the judgments of different social groups brought up significant findings into the study field of political corruption. So, why should this not be the case in researching corruption in broad sense from a criminological point of view?

4. Conclusion

The perception of a particular situation or a description of a situation as corrupt (or not) is not a linear judgement. Our assumption is that one's judgement of a situation shifts along multiple dimensions in relation to the particular activity and the context of the observer in relation to the one being observed.

We assume – on the basis of previous studies – that the judgement of a situation is influenced by two groups of characteristics. A first group contains situational characteristics (such as public official, favour, payoff, undue advantage, etc.). A second group consists of personal related characteristics of the observer (such as gender, social status, education, etc.). Our assumption is that these characteristics influence either separated or in combination the judgement of a situation.

In this article, we described a method – a so called scenario-based questionnaire – to assess to what extent the aforementioned two groups of characteristics, either themselves or in combination, influence the judgement of a situation as corrupt or not. For that reason we evolved Peters and Welch's methodology and elaborated a questionnaire composed of different scenarios. Each scenario

is followed by descriptions of different successively situations in order to shift the respondent's opinion. In this way we will try to differentiate transgressive characteristics through which we expect to detect the bascule in the judgments of a situation from a tolerated to a condemned situation.

The purpose is to more precisely elucidate these shifts in order to enhance our understanding of corruption. In other words we will try to catch situational and personal related characteristics or combinations of characteristics which determine the judgement of a scenario as corrupt or not.

CHAPTER IV: THE INFLUENCE OF DIFFERENTIAL ASSOCIATION ON PERCEPTIONS OF CORRUPTION

1. Understanding perceptions of corruption through differential association: An empirical analysis of survey data from the Belgian region Flanders.

Key words: corruption, perception, citizens, differential association

Perception of corruption is a complex phenomenon. Perceptions of corruption vary between subgroups and are difficult to pin down. The aim of this article was to develop a theoretical approach to understand inter-group variations. The general theoretical hypothesis of this study is that tolerance toward corruption is learned through interactions within networks of like-minded individuals—what Sutherland referred to as differential association. A scenario based questionnaire was distributed to a random sample of 2.256 citizens of the Belgian region Flanders. Cross-table analyses revealed associations between membership of status groups and between perceptions of corruption.

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1.1. Introduction

Corruption as a phenomenon is characterised by divergent academic views as to its definition, causes and solutions. Not only do scholars differ in the way they perceive or conceptualise corruption, potentially corrupt situations are judged in different ways by subgroups of society. Take, for example, the alderman who asks for a discount when purchasing a computer for his daughter before he places an order for computers for his city—that contains potential ‘corruption’. This situation was included in a scenario-based questionnaire that was sent to a random sample of 2.256 citizens living in the Flemish Region of Belgium with the goal of identifying inter-group variations in the judgement of potentially corrupt situations. Only 56,9% of Flemish respondents judged this situation to be corrupt; 26% judged it not corrupt at all and 17,1% judged it to be neither corrupt nor not corrupt (Dormaels, 2012). This

study was designed to examine the extent to which tolerance toward corrupt behaviour is the result of socialisation within closed groups or subgroups of likeminded individuals.

The present article is structured as follows. The main findings of prior studies into perceptions of corruption are discussed in the section on theory. This theoretical overview challenges the idea that perceptions are influenced only by the situational characteristics of corrupt behaviours. We introduce an alternative framework for the analysis of perceptions of corruption that draws on Sutherland's differential association theory (Sutherland, 1967). Our assumption is that differential socialisation processes within groups or subgroups results in either more or less tolerance toward corrupt behaviour. Our research design and methodology is reported in relation to this theoretical framework. Our principal findings are discussed in the following section.

1.1.1. Theoretical introduction

During the 1970s and 1980s, a number of studies examined respondents' judgements of hypothetically corrupt situations in an effort to identify the extent to which perceptions were influenced by 'salient' situational characteristics (Gorta & Forell, 1995; Jackson & Smith, 1996; Johnston, 1986; Mancuso, 2005; McCann & Redlawsk, 2006; Peters & Welch, 1978). These studies, which focused on the way in which situational characteristics influenced people's perceptions, provided empirical support for the notion that salient characteristics within four basic dimensions influenced perceptions of corruption: public officials, the donor of the payoff, the payoff itself and the undue advantage.

First, characteristics of the dimension of 'public official' (Peters & Welch, 1978) have an impact on the way people perceive a situation as corrupt. For example, politicians and public servants are judged to be more corrupt than private functionaries. The misuse of a public position for private benefit will be judged as more corrupt than a decision that would serve the public's general interest. In addition, a public context can be expected to be judged more corrupt than a private context (Mancuso, 2005). Unfortunately, most of the perception studies have focused primarily on the study of political corruption while private corruption has gone largely unnoticed by researchers. It is therefore unclear to what extent the context of public versus private is able to override assessments of a situation as being corrupt (Argandoña, 2003). The second dimension is the 'donor of the payoff'. The nature of the relationship between the 'giver' and the 'receiver' was found to influence judgment of a situation. Research on political corruption (Peters & Welch, 1978) has proven that if the donor is a constituent, then a favour given is more likely to be perceived as less corrupt than if the favour is rendered to a non-constituent. Also, politicians that favour family members or friends are judged to be more corrupt.

Third, there is the dimension of the ‘payoff’, the most obvious characteristic of which is the value of the payoff. The higher the payoff’s value, the more corrupt an action should be expected to be considered (Johnston, 1986; Peters & Welch, 1978). Taken in conjunction with the value issue, a ‘specific’ payoff, such as cash, is considered to be more corrupt than a ‘general’ payoff, for instance in the form of goodwill (Johnston, 1991; Peters & Welch, 1978). Anderson and Mukherjee (2002) stated that a situation is considered to be more corrupt if a payoff is received beforehand. In addition to the chronology of the payoff and the offering of favours in return, Johnston (1991) stated that the act of seeking out a payoff is assessed as being more corrupt than the act of receiving a payoff. Finally, there is the dimension of the ‘undue advantage’, which influences the perception of corruption. The beneficiary of the undue advantage strongly influences the assessment of the level of corruption (Gorta & Forell, 1995; Johnston, 1986). An undue advantage that serves the interests of the general public will be judged as less corrupt compared to a private favour. Also, the nature of the action that results in the undue advantage influences the assessment of the situation. Behaviour that is in line with the individual’s routine activities will be perceived as being less corrupt than behaviour or a favour granted that is the result of deviant acts.

What the above-cited studies have neglected is that Peters and Welch’s (1978) study revealed a thought-provoking ambiguity. Significant numbers of respondents do not judge situations as corrupt despite the presence of salient characteristics. Some respondents, however, perceived a situation as corrupt even in absence of ‘corrupt’ situational characteristics. Peters and Welch (1978) suggested that respondents may hold differential views of situational characteristics—for example, what is seen as a large payoff by one person is a petty amount to another. Many compatible explanations have been challenged by researchers who have discussed how the salient characteristics of key elements of corruption—such as public officials, favours, payoffs or undue advantages—influence perceptions of corruption. Jackson and Smith (1995) found that politicians closer to the seat of political power are more tolerant while side-lined politicians, who are excluded from the centre of political power, are less tolerant when judging scenarios that describe potentially corrupt situations. Similarly, Nyblade and Reed (2008) observed that access to political power correlates with increased tolerance toward politically deviant behaviour. Experienced politicians who have access to networks of influence and power are substantially more likely to loot. This observation is of particular interest to the present study, as it suggests that tolerance toward corrupt behaviour might be the result of a socialisation process within closed groups or subgroups of likeminded individuals. Differential Association theory, developed by Sutherland (1939), is based on the assumption that individuals learn definitions in favour of committing crime and learn the right skills within intimate settings. In the following section, we will introduce two research questions that draw upon Sutherland’s theory of differential association.

1.1.2. Differential association and perceptions of corruption

Few studies have examined the effect of differential association on corruption. Zaloznaya (2012) found empirical support for the notion that Sutherland's differential association theory offers a useful theoretical framework within which we can explain differences between subgroups in their appraisal of corruption. By means of a qualitative in-depth study, she was able to demonstrate that tolerance toward corruption is learnable and is learned through social interactions with 'like-minded' individuals.

Differential association theory consists of three interrelated concepts: normative conflict, differential association and differential organisation (Sutherland, Cressey & Luckenbill, 1992). Sutherland stated that the modern industrial society is segmented into groups that conflict over the definition of appropriate behaviour. Some groups in society make their behaviour completely in concordance with the applicable laws. Other groups define law as a rule that, not necessarily, should be followed under all circumstances whereas a third kind of group is almost not confined by law (Matsueda, 1988). Criminal behaviour is initiated by this normative conflict between groups over definitions favourable toward crime versus definitions unfavourable toward crime (Sutherland, Cressey & Luckenbill, 1992:105). The process whereby offenders learn how to commit deviant behaviour is called differential association. This 'learning' of deviant behaviour includes two elements: skills and definitions (Akers, 1998; Burgess & Akers, 1966; Sutherland, Cressey & Luckenbill, 1992). A burglar needs to learn how to use a crowbar or to by-pass the intrusion alarm. The second element, the learning of definitions, is seen as a key element in the process of differential association (Sutherland, Cressey & Luckenbill, 1992). These definitions are either favourable or unfavourable to crime. Important is that "these definitions are not merely ex-post facto rationalisations of crime, but rather operate to cause criminal behaviour" (Matsueda, 2006: 5). Definitions in favour of crime 'rationalise' deviant behaviour in such a way that it appears to be less harmful (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, 1996). The modality of these definitions may, however, vary from frequency, duration, priority and intensity (Sutherland, Cressey & Luckenbill, 1992). The concept of differential socialization implies that people will be exposed to various competing definitions of corruption and learn different skills depending on their distinct group membership. According to Sutherland's theoretical model there exist two kinds of organisations, those organised against crime and those organised in favour of crime. Sutherland hypothesized that the relative strength of organizations in favour of crime versus organizations against crime could explain the crime rate of groups in or society (Sutherland, Cressey & Luckenbill, 1992). Sutherland's concept implies that groups organised in favour of corruption will show more associations with definitions of corruption compared to groups organised against crime.

In the following paragraphs, we will apply the principles of the process of differential association in view of studying inter-group variations in the perception of corruption.

The first element is the requisite skills and techniques needed to commit a crime. Zaloznaya (2012) noted that people might choose different means of engaging in corruption. Cultural and social inequality, for example, might interfere in how people access opportunities for and the benefits from corruption. De Sousa (2008) referred to petty influence as an example of an instrument that is attributed to the 'under-privileged' as a way for them to achieve their goals. 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 sphere and those of the economic and social markets. Both examples illustrate aptly that, depending on their access to 'resources' and networks, people explore different opportunities and learn how to apply different skills. Respondents without access to particular networks are not introduced to skills which are salient for that group. Redlawsk and McCann showed that political favouritism is experienced as an acceptable way of rendering service by members of the upper classes of society. Lower and middle class citizens, however, disapprove of elites engaging in the accessing of political privileges (Redlawsk & McCann, 2005: 271). Groups 'perceive' potential corrupt acts differently which cannot be seen isolated from the shared definitions which circulate within groups.

These definitions, which are the second element in the learning process, make crime more justified or acceptable (Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, 1996). Groups that are assimilated and socialised within a tolerant environment therefore have a wide range of alternative definitions for corruption. In many occupations, deviant practices are accepted as a way of doing business and are probably not defined as corrupt. Tavits (2010) empirically proved that public officials and citizens are more likely to engage in corruption when they do not define corruption as wrong. Zaloznaya (2012) observed that members of specific organisations learn either favourable or unfavourable definitions of corruption. Likewise, experience within these networks influences members' choice of one definition over other potential definitions rather than influencing members' instrumental considerations and moral beliefs regarding corruption (Zaloznaya, 2012: 312). Jacobsson (2012) ascertained that suspects of white-collar crime refer to their prevailing business culture and use other labels for bribery. Such an occupational culture influences the modalities of definitions where people are exposed to.

The above literature review informs the general theoretical hypothesis of this study, which is that tolerance toward corruption is learned through interactions within networks of like-minded individuals—what Sutherland referred to as differential association (1939). All else being equal, access to particular networks and powers should result in more tolerance toward equivalent situations. This hypothesis translates into the following two research questions:

RQ1: Members of a high occupational status group are more tolerant toward situations that describe ‘grand’ corruption, and vice versa.

RQ2: Members of a low occupational status group are more tolerant toward situations that describe ‘petty’ corruption, and vice versa.

1.1.3. Methodology and research design

To elucidate inter-personal differences, we applied a scenario-based questionnaire. Meaningful scenarios for the construction of this questionnaire were selected on the basis of a qualitative in-depth study of Flemish newspapers. A database search within the Flemish Digital Press Database, Mediargus selected all newspaper reports containing terms such as ‘corruption’, ‘bribery’, ‘fiddling’, ‘bribe’ and ‘slush money’ during the period January 1995 to March 2009. Fifteen meaningful news reports were selected from this diverse collection to construct the scenario-based questionnaire (Dormaels, 2010). The present study thus contains stories that have been judged as corrupt by at least one person or one group of persons. Based on the four-dimensional scheme that Peters and Welch (1978) developed, we varied the salient characteristics within each scenario by means of 3 or 4 different situations, such as: “Do you think it is acceptable for a mayor to discuss a file in order to accelerate the construction of an industrial site in his municipality?”, or, “Do you think it is acceptable that the mayor discusses a file in order to accelerate the construction of a golf course in his municipality?”. Respondents were asked to score the extent to which they judged the situations as corrupt on a five-point Likert scale. Afterward, the individual scores were recoded as follows: 1–2 represented a score as corrupt, 3 represented a score that was neither corrupt nor not corrupt, and 4–5 represented a score that was not corrupt.

The survey was conducted by a by a professional firm specialized in population surveys. The random sampling is simple and a-select. In the random 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 B.I.P.T. record only households with a fix and/or a mobile phone number. A minority of 1% of Flemish citizens, mainly elderly and lower educated persons, does not make use either of a mobile or a fix telephone (Pickery, 2010). Before sending out the questionnaires respondents were contacted by telephone. In order to ensure representatively, contacts took place outside office hours (16h - 20h). These telephone calls created a threshold lowering effect by producing some ‘goodwill’ to the persons contacted (Fox, Crask & Kim, 1988). Divided over three waves, 2.256 questionnaires were sent in the period from February to May 2011. A total of 607 valid surveys was obtained, a 26,9% response rate. Elderly persons were slightly overrepresented in the response group while low-educated persons are underrepresented. The response sample consist of 18.9% of low-educated, 38% of middle

educated and 42,8% of high educated persons whereas the ratio in the Belgium is respectively 37,43%, 25,31% and 37,27%. Another key variable for this study is employment. The response sample with 1,6% unemployed respondents, 37,3% inactive persons and 61,1% employed persons is similar to the 2012 official employment statistics: 5,09%, 33,06% and 61,85%. The sample was weighted using three variables: gender, age and county, although middle and high educated persons are lightly overrepresented.

The basic premise in how we sought to construct our subgroups is that ‘job status’ is an indicator for one’s membership of different types of occupational organisations. As consequence thereof we assume that the variable job status will result in variations in exposure to different occupational normative systems, or cultures with different attitudes toward the committing or avoiding of corruption. Job status guaranteed different opportunities for individuals to access political, economic and administrative powers, and thus to benefit from corruption. Given the goal of creating a valid classificatory system, respondents were asked to provide information on their job status. First, respondents were polled about their status; distinctions were made between those performing a paid job, pensioners (including early retirees), the unemployed, those drawing disability (including both illness and the disabled), students and homemakers.

Second, this study distinguished between a function within the government, the private sector or self-employed persons. Finally, one question measured the status of the profession. For public officials, a distinction was made between the highest level, A, and the lowest level, D. For private sector workers, a distinction was made between unskilled workers, skilled workers, lower clerks, middle clerks, senior clerks and management. For self-employed persons, a distinction was made between small independents, farmer/fisherman, contractors, wholesalers and, finally, the professions (e.g., lawyers, accountants, doctors). The rank ordering of the respondents’ job status is presented in Table 4. Due to their very tolerant attitudes, students have been treated as a separate group in our sample.

Group 2 represents Flemish citizens with the lowest job status whereas Group 5 represents citizens with the highest job status.

Table 4: Classification of occupational statuses (N; %)

Group 1: Student (80; 13.2%)	Group 2: Non- active group (232; 38,6%)	Group 3: Low- esteem job (91; 14,6.%)	Group 4: Middle- esteem job (114; 18,6%)	Group 5: High- esteem job (39; 6,3%)
Student (80; 13,2%)	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	Low-level clerk	Clerk	Management/Board

	(13; 2,2%)	(47; 7,2%)	(57; 9,3%)	(6; 0,9%)
	Homemakers (31; 5,2%)	Small independent (18; 3,0%)	Contractor, medium to large independent (3; 0,5%)	'Professional' (3; 0,5%)

The assumption that tolerance toward deviant behaviour is learned through repeated contact within subgroups precluded the possibility that personal characteristics such as gender, level of education, working status or age might influence how potentially corrupt situations are judged. According to Sutherland's theory of differential association, these individual factors affect criminality indirectly by affecting the probability of learning the definitions that are either favourable or unfavourable to deviance. We therefore included certain control variables, such as age, gender and variables that indicated respondents' socio-economic status and level of education.

There are several considerations regarding the research design used in the current study that should be addressed. The way how the different scenarios are scored is not generalizable to other countries or regions. The questionnaire consists of scenarios based on Flemish newspaper reports. Comparative research would, however, result in a more profound understanding of the influence of normative and culture context on the perceptions of corruption. Despite this limitation, this study makes an exploratory contribution to the literature on perceptions of corruption by stepping into a research void and by identifying differences in the way occupational status groups perceive corruption. The key process of this article –tolerance towards different forms of corrupt behaviour is learned through repeated contact within subgroups–is to our opinion generalizable. Cross-national comparison contrasting the influence of occupational status groups on perceptions of corruption would render empirical support in this sense. Finally, we should address a theoretical caveat. Sutherland's differential association theory consist of three interrelated concepts: normative conflict, differential association and differential social organisation. Present article is committed to study the influence of the 'concept of differential association' on perceptions of corruption: i.e. the process by which individuals come to engage in corruption. Further research should include the concept of differential social organisation (Sutherland, Cressey & Luckenbill, 1992:104). One possibility is to include a group organised to suppress corruption.

1.2. Results and discussion

In a previous publication (Dormaels, 2012), we discussed how situational characteristics influence Flemish citizens' perceptions. Although the outcome of this analysis provides empirical support to Peters and Welch's (1978) four-dimensional scheme, it became apparent that situational characteristics

alone are insufficient to determine corrupt from not corrupt situations. The following section discusses the hypothesis that tolerance toward corruption is learned through interactions with peers within occupational and social networks. First, we will consider the relationship between the control variables to exclude the possibility that perceptions of corruption are in the first place influenced by these personal characteristics. Second, we will examine the extent to which perceptions are influenced through a process of differential association. In the statistical analysis of the study, a Pearson Chi-Square test was used.

Although it has been noted that women and men make fundamentally different judgements of corruption (Swamy, Knack, Lee & Azfar, 2001), gender turned out to be the weakest variable in explaining the differences in perceptions of corruption. Only two situations were judged as more corrupt by women: the situation in which the sister of a consultant at an administrative office is able to rent, below-market price, a luxurious flat that is owned by a real estate agent who executes large building projects for the city, $\chi^2 (2, N = 604) = 11.92, p < 0.01$; and, the situation in which a pharmaceutical company organises an information session for a group of doctors on the island of Mallorca and also invites their families, $\chi^2 (2, N = 603) = 6.30, p < 0.05$.

While perceptions of corruption varied across the 23 cases (41,07%) between the different age groups, it was unclear how perceptions of corruption were influenced by age. The youngest group of respondents (those 18–35 years of age) were, in general, the most tolerant toward the situations presented as compared to the older age groups (36–54 years and 55+ years of age). Two situations stand in contrast to this observation. The oldest respondents judged the situation in which an export company proposed that a customs official take more shoes than was necessary so that they might receive the export documents more quickly as being significantly less corrupt, $\chi^2 (4, N = 596) = 14.32, p < 0.01$. A similar observation was made regarding the situation in which a mayor visits the office of a political associate to discuss the regularisation of his own estate, which was also judged as less corrupt by older respondents, $\chi^2 (4, N = 599) = 13.77, p < 0.01$. Other studies, however, have emphasized the interaction between age and gender (Aldrich & Kage, 2003; Pharr, 1998). These studies concluded that, through their interaction, gender and age function as better predictors of moralism than the independent variables of education or gender on their own.

A third control variable is level of education. Previous studies had concluded that highly qualified professionals were more tolerant of potentially corrupt situations whereas less well-educated individuals were less tolerant (Lascoumes & Tomescu-Hatto, 2008). Our study has provided empirical proof that level of education is associated in a complex way with perceptions of corruption. In 26% (15 out of 56) of the situations presented, a significant difference was found to exist between respondents with a low, medium or high level of education, respectively. Two trends can be

distinguished. On the one hand, respondents with a lower level of education were less tolerant of situations that described types of behaviour that are traditionally referred to as grand corruption. Some of the situations that were judged as less corrupt by respondents with a high level of education and more corrupt by respondents with a low level of education included: “Do you find it corrupt that a member of Parliament provides his contacts for free to his daughter so she can secure more real estate contracts?”, $\chi^2(4, N = 599) = 17,87, p = 0.001$; “Do you find it corrupt that a lawyer sends his overview to a political party to which he belongs to receive more cases?”, $\chi^2(4, N = 595) = 30,66, p < 0.001$; or, “Do you find it corrupt that Jan rents, at a common tariff, a luxurious flat owned by a real estate company that is involved in large building contracts for the city?”, $\chi^2(4, N = 601) = 22.76, p < 0.001$. Highly educated respondents seemed to share a quite different notion of corruption and were less tolerant of situations that described forms of petty corruption, which were more likely to involve members of the lower or middle classes of society. For example, the situation in which a supplier of airbags gives the person responsible for the maintenance of a production line in a car factory a holiday to make sure he or she will improve the production process and thereby ensure a higher rate of productivity was judged as more corrupt by respondents with a higher level of education, $\chi^2(4, N = 598) = 11,06, p < 0.05$. Similar observations apply to the situation in which a governmental official requested that companies looking to secure contracts for maintenance work on behalf of the government provide him with business-class football tickets, $\chi^2(4, N = 594) = 13,00, p < 0.05$, and to the situation in which a customs official takes more shoes than are required for verification while being aware that the export company will silently agree out of fear that their export documents will be delayed, which was judged as significantly more corrupt by highly educated respondents, $\chi^2(4, N = 600) = 14,84, p < 0.01$.

The relationship between working status and perceptions of corruption is not straightforward. Analogous with level of education, situations associated with grand corruption were judged to be more corrupt by unemployed respondents.

The situation in which a Member of Parliament (MP) provides his contacts to his daughter, who works for a real estate agency, so that she can secure more real estate contracts, was judged as significantly more corrupt by unemployed respondents, $\chi^2(4, N = 590) = 32,65, p < 0.001$. The same applies when an MP provided these contacts for free, $\chi^2(4, N = 588) = 15,98, p < 0.01$, or when he sold them for 10.000 euro to entrepreneurs, $\chi^2(4, N = 592) = 13,09, p < 0.05$, as well as for the case in which a lawyer sends his overview to secretaries at ministerial offices to solicit support in securing more cases, $\chi^2(4, N = 589) = 23,87, p < 0.001$, or to the offices of his political party, $\chi^2(4, N = 590) = 27,36, p < 0.001$. Even in cases where the lawyer was described as being friends with the minister, $\chi^2(4, N = 594) = 25,85, p < 0.001$, or where the minister is the spouse of the lawyer, $\chi^2(4, N = 589) = 13,46, p <$

0.01, unemployed respondents perceived this as a significantly more severe form of corruption. On the other hand, these respondents were more tolerant of situations that described forms of petty corruption, such as the case in which the customs official took more shoes than were required for verification, being aware of the fact that the export company silently agrees because if not, it fears the export documents will not arrive in time, $\chi^2(4, N = 595) = 10,60, p < 0.05$, or the situation that described an alderman receiving a discount for a computer for his daughter leading to the purchase of computers for the city, $\chi^2(4, N = 587) = 19,01, p < 0.001$. The difference is less, although still significant, if the alderman were to explicitly ask for a discount, $\chi^2(4, N = 586) = 11,02, p < 0.05$. Finally, there is the case of the public servant who asks for business-class football tickets from companies that want to receive service contracts; unemployed respondents were significantly more tolerant of this situation, $\chi^2(4, N = 588) = 10,66, p < 0.05$.

The outcome of this analysis using control variables suggest that the explanatory value of traditional characteristics such as gender and age are rather weak. These variables are, in ad of themselves, insufficient to explain the differences that exist in the perception of corruption. An interesting observation is that the level of education and working status are associated in a particular way with perceptions of corruption and result in substantive divergences in the perception of corruption. As reported by Bruinsma (1985) and Zaloznaya (2012), personal characteristics play an indirect role in the process of differential association by affecting the probability of learning either the favourable or unfavourable definitions of deviant behaviour. A middle-aged individual with a high level of education in a high job status will, for example, be more likely to be a member of a higher social class, which will in turn provide that individual with access to different kinds of networks or economic and political powers as compared to members of lower social classes. If tolerance for corruption is learned through contact with likeminded individuals in shared networks, then the variable ‘job status’ should result in more pronounced differences between groups in how they perceive of corruption as compared to the control variables this study has considered. In 26 separate scenarios (46%), a different job status tend to be related to different perceptions of corruption. Members of a higher status group have different conceptions of corruption as compared to members of lower status groups.

Table 5: differences in the perception of corruption based on group membership status group.²⁴

	Student	Low status – unemployed	Low status employed	Middle status	High status
<i>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 the mayor is invited to the Brussels establishment of the building company?***</i>					
not corrupt	88,5 (69)	60,8 (138)	52,8 (47)	60,6 (66)	59,0 (23)

²⁴ In order to save space, only the cross table of the core analysis on the influence of status-group membership on the perception of corruption is presented. Cross tables based on the control variables can be requested by mail to the author.

corrupt	3,8 (3)	19,8 (45)	24,7 (22)	22,0 (24)	12,8 (5)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	7,7 (6)	19,4 (44)	22,5 (20)	17,4 (19)	28,2 (11)
<i>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 John rents a luxurious flat at a regular rental price, the flat being owned by a real estate agent who executes large building assignment for the city?*</i>					
not corrupt	77,5 (151)	65,1 (151)	67,4 (60)	70,8 (80)	79,5 (31)
corrupt	24,6 (57)	24,6 (57)	16,9 (15)	19,5 (22)	10,3 (4)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	17,5 (14)	10,3 (24)	15,7 (14)	9,7 (11)	10,3 (4)
<i>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 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?***</i>					
not corrupt	28,8 (23)	15,9 (37)	8,9 (8)	12,5 (14)	2,6 (1)
corrupt	51,2 (41)	57,8 (134)	74,4 (67)	61,6 (69)	82,1 (32)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	20,0 (16)	26,3 (61)	16,7 (15)	25,9 (29)	15,4 (6)
<i>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 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?*</i>					
not corrupt	8,8 (7)	7,0 (16)	4,5 (4)	12,5 (14)	10,5 (4)
corrupt	60,0 (48)	78,7 (181)	86,4 (76)	73,2 (82)	78,9 (30)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	31,2 (25)	14,3 (33)	9,1 (8)	14,3 (16)	10,5 (4)
<i>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 rewards Bart with a holiday after Bart has improved the production process resulting in a higher airbag productivity?***</i>					
not corrupt	80,0 (64)	55,0 (127)	60,7 (54)	51,3 (58)	52,6 (20)
corrupt	6,2 (5)	29,0 (67)	22,5 (20)	32,7 (37)	21,1 (8)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	13,8 (11)	16,0 (37)	16,9 (15)	15,9 (18)	26,3 (10)
<i>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 a Brussels meeting area for free, where they can organise their event?*</i>					
not corrupt	82,3 (65)	70,0 (161)	57,5 (50)	61,1 (69)	54,1 (20)
corrupt	7,6 (6)	13,0 (30)	14,9 (13)	17,7 (20)	27,0 (10)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	10,1 (8)	17,0 (339)	27,6 (24)	21,2 (24)	18,9 (7)
<i>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 a Brussels meeting area for free and pays the invoice of the dinner?*</i>					
not corrupt	55,0 (44)	40,8 (93)	38,6 (34)	29,5 (33)	26,3 (10)
corrupt	25,0 (20)	35,1 (80)	36,4 (32)	42,0 (47)	39,5 (15)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	20,0 (16)	24,1 (55)	25,0 (22)	28,6 (32)	34,2 (13)
<i>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 to organise this informative day on Mallorca, at the expenses of the company?*</i>					
not corrupt	12,7 (10)	13,1 (30)	18,0 (16)	9,9 (11)	15,4 (6)
corrupt	58,2 (46)	74,2 (170)	66,3 (59)	69,4 (77)	74,4 (29)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	29,1 (23)	12,7 (29)	15,7 (14)	20,7 (23)	10,3 (4)
<i>A contractor regularly executes large assignments for a city. Do you think it is corrupt that this contractor sponsors the election brochures of the alderman of public works and pays the invoice amounting to 1,000 euro?***</i>					
not corrupt	18,8 (15)	21,6 (50)	18,9 (17)	13,3 (15)	0,0 (0)
corrupt	47,5 (38)	65,8 (152)	74,4 (67)	70,8 (80)	73,0 (27)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	33,8 (27)	12,6 (229)	6,7 (6)	15,9 (18)	27,0 (10)
<i>A contractor regularly executes large assignments for a city. Do you think it is corrupt that 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?*</i>					
not corrupt	11,4 (9)	13,0 (30)	11,4 (10)	13,3 (15)	2,6 (1)
corrupt	64,6(51)	71,4 (165)	78,4 (69)	76,1(86)	69,2 (27)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	24,1 (19)	15,6 (36)	10,2 (9)	10,6 (12)	28,2 (11)
<i>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 ask companies that want to do maintenance work for the company he works at to give him business class football tickets?*</i>					
not corrupt	30,4 (24)	20,6 (47)	15,7 (14)	17,1 (19)	5,3 (2)
corrupt	57,0 (45)	58,8(134)	57,3 (51)	64,9 (72)	76,3 (29)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	12,7 (10)	20,6 (47)	27,0 (24)	18,0 (20)	18,4 (7)
<i>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 to ask companies that want to do maintenance work for the government to give him business class football tickets?*</i>					
not corrupt	15,2 (12)	12,7 (29)	11,1 (10)	11,7 (13)	0,0 (0)
corrupt	63,3 (50)	74,1 (169)	70,0 (63)	78,4 (87)	94,7 (36)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	21,5 (17)	13,2 (30)	18,9 (17)	9,9 (11)	5,3 (2)
<i>An alderman purchases computers for his city service at a chain store. Do you think it is corrupt that the alderman, 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?***</i>					
not corrupt	43,0 (34)	58,1 (133)	47,2 (42)	45,9 (50)	28,9 (11)
corrupt	43,0 (34)	27,1 (62)	34,8 (31)	26,6 (29)	31,6 (12)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	13,9 (11)	14,8 (34)	18,0 (16)	27,5 (30)	39,5 (15)
<i>An MP has very good contacts in the real estate market. Do you think it is corrupt that this MP gives his contacts to his daughter who works for a real estate agency. Doing so, she can acquire more real estate contracts.***</i>					
not corrupt	55,7 (44)	25,7 (59)	30,3 (27)	27,0 (30)	35,9 (14)
corrupt	16,5 (13)	49,6 (114)	39,3 (35)	45,0 (50)	43,6 (17)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	27,8 (22)	24,8 (57)	30,3 (27)	27,9 (31)	20,5 (8)

<i>An MP has very good contacts in the real estate market. Do you think it is corrupt that this MP gives his contacts to fellow entrepreneurs. Doing so he can acquire real estate contracts.***</i>					
not corrupt	36,2 (29)	18,9 (43)	22,5 (20)	28,8 (32)	33,3 (13)
corrupt	32,5 (26)	55,7 (127)	49,4 (44)	51,4 (57)	46,2 (18)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	31,2 (25)	25,4 (58)	28,1 (25)	19,8 (22)	20,5 (8)
<i>An MP has very good contacts in the real estate market. Do you think it is corrupt that this MP sells his contacts to fellow entrepreneurs for 10.000 euro. Doing so these entrepreneurs can acquire real estate contracts.**</i>					
not corrupt	1,2 (1)	3,0 (7)	3,4 (3)	1,8 (2)	0,0 (0)
corrupt	90,0 (72)	95,7 (220)	93,3 (83)	90,0 (99)	84,2 (32)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	8,8 (7)	1,3 (3)	3,4 (3)	8,2 (9)	15,8 (6)
<i>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 Emma postpones the collection of the VAT debt?***</i>					
not corrupt	19,0 (15)	10,9 (25)	10,0 (9)	8,9 (10)	15,8 (6)
corrupt	49,4 (39)	73,9 (170)	68,9 (62)	75,0 (84)	84,2 (32)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	31,6 (25)	15,2 (35)	21,1 (19)	16,1 (18)	0,0 (0)
<i>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 Emma advises the restaurant owner to go bankrupt so he does not have to settle his debts?***</i>					
not corrupt	13,8 (11)	6,6 (15)	11,2 (10)	8,8 (10)	7,9 (3)
corrupt	60,0 (48)	86,4 (197)	73,0 (65)	76,1 (86)	73,7 (28)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	26,2 (21)	7,0 (16)	15,7 (14)	15,0 (17)	18,4 (7)
<i>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 secretariats of minister offices to apply for support to get more assignments?***</i>					
not corrupt	73,1 (57)	48,7 (112)	56,3 (49)	46,4 (52)	71,1 (27)
corrupt	3,8 (3)	28,3 (65)	20,7 (18)	17,0 (19)	26,3 (10)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	23,1 (18)	23,0 (53)	23,0 (20)	36,6 (41)	2,6 (1)
<i>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 his survey to the political party he is a member of in order to get more assignments that way?***</i>					
not corrupt	61,5 (48)	35,2 (81)	50,6 (44)	40,2 (45)	61,5 (24)
corrupt	14,1 (11)	42,6 (98)	27,6 (24)	27,7 (31)	25,6 (10)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	24,4 (19)	22,2 (51)	21,8 (19)	32,1 (36)	12,8 (5)
<i>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 his survey to a minister friend to get more assignments?***</i>					
not corrupt	31,6 (25)	21,6 (50)	32,2 (28)	23,2 (26)	36,8 (14)
corrupt	40,5 (32)	62,5 (145)	32,2 (28)	49,1 (55)	44,7 (17)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	27,8 (22)	15,9 (37)	35,6 (31)	27,7 (31)	18,4 (7)
<i>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 his survey to his wife who is a minister, to get more assignments?*</i>					
not corrupt	15,4 (12)	16,5 (38)	22,7 (20)	15,0 (17)	28,2 (11)
corrupt	61,5 (48)	73,0 (168)	55,7 (49)	69,0 (78)	64,1 (25)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	23,1 (18)	10,4 (24)	21,6 (19)	15,9 (18)	7,7 (3)
<i>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 provides against payment advice to friends in order to submit the best possible tax return in his district?***</i>					
not corrupt	47,5 (38)	26,4 (61)	23,9 (21)	38,7 (43)	38,5 (15)
corrupt	31,2 (25)	48,9 (113)	51,1 (45)	31,5 (35)	53,8 (21)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	21,2 (17)	24,7 (57)	25,0 (22)	29,7 (33)	7,7 (3)
<i>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 completes the tax return against payment in order to submit the best possible return in his district?***</i>					
not corrupt	21,2 (17)	23,0 (53)	22,7 (20)	39,3 (44)	36,8 (14)
corrupt	51,2(41)	56,5 (130)	64,8 (57)	34,8 (39)	52,6 (20)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	27,5 (22)	20,4 (47)	12,5 (11)	25,9 (29)	10,5 (4)
<i>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 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?***</i>					
not corrupt	3,8 (3)	8,2 (19)	3,4 (3)	14,2 (16)	2,6 (1)
corrupt	72,5 (58)	78,8 (182)	85,4 (76)	73,5 (83)	89,5 (34)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	23,8 (19)	13,0 (30)	11,2 (10)	12,4 (14)	7,9 (3)
<i>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 regularization of his own estate?***</i>					
not corrupt	1,3 (1)	12,0 (28)	2,2 (2)	8,0 (9)	10,5 (4)
corrupt	78,2 (61)	78,5 (183)	82,0 (73)	81,4 (92)	81,6 (31)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	20,5 (16)	9,4 (22)	15,7 (14)	10,6 (12)	7,9 (3)

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

Respondents with a high status job were found to be the most lenient toward situations that described opportunities such as those that might arise from inclusion in certain political or economic networks. The relationship between a high status job and perceptions of corruption was significant in the following cases: a mayor who is invited to the Brussels offices of the construction company in order to convince him to award a building contract, $\chi^2(8, N = 591) = 20,57, p < 0.001$; a consultant at an administration office who is responsible for the follow-up of building files and who rents a luxurious flat at a below-market price in a building owned by a real estate agent who subsequently secures a large building contract for the city, $\chi^2(8, N = 601) = 22,76, p < 0.001$; a contractor who regularly executes large contracts for the city deposits 1.000 euro in the bank account of a political party in order to sponsor the election brochures of an alderman, $\chi^2(8, N = 550) = 15,58, p < 0.05$; and, an MP who provides his contacts to his daughter, who works for a real estate agency, so that she can secure more real estate contracts, $\chi^2(8, N = 548) = 35,33, p < 0.001$. The relationship between a high status job and tolerance for the corrupt situations described was also significant in the case of a MP who provided his contacts to an entrepreneur so that the entrepreneur could secure real estate contracts, $\chi^2(8, N = 547) = 19,08, p < 0.05$ and the scenario in which the MP sold his contacts to entrepreneurs for 10.000 euro so that they could secure real estate contracts, $\chi^2(8, N = 547) = 22,54, p < 0.01$. Finally, there is a scenario of a lawyer who tries to get as many public contracts as possible and therefore sends an overview of the cases he already has and the cases he would like to get to some of his contacts. Respondents from the high job status group judged these four situations as less corrupt compared to respondents from lower job status groups: the case in which the lawyer sends his overview of cases to the secretaries of the ministerial offices to apply for support in securing additional case assignments, $\chi^2(8, N = 545) = 42,18, p < 0.001$; that in which he sends his overview of cases to the offices of his political party, $\chi^2(8, N = 546) = 36,62, p < 0.001$; and that in which he sends his overview of cases to the offices of his minister or to a minister friend, $\chi^2(8, N = 548) = 33,32, p < 0.001$. The situation in which the lawyer sends his survey to his wife, who is a minister, is proportionally more likely to be judged as not corrupt by respondents in the high job status group, $\chi^2(8, N = 548) = 18,51, p < 0.05$.

On the other hand, members of the high job status group were less tolerant of situations that described forms of petty corruption of the type that are more readily accessible to members of the lower job status groups. The scenario involving a manager who asks companies that are interested in acquiring maintenance contracts for business-class football tickets was judged as more corrupt by members of the high job status group as compared to members of the lower job status groups, $\chi^2(8, N = 545) = 16,85, p < 0.05$. This difference between the job status groups is even more pronounced in the case of a public servant who makes a similar request for football tickets, $\chi^2(8, N = 546) = 17,57, p < 0.05$. The situations in which a customs official takes more shoes than required to verify the transport license was judged as corrupt by nine out of ten members of the high job status group, whereas seven

and eight out of ten members, respectively, of the low and middle job status groups judged the situation to be corrupt, $\chi^2(8, N = 551) = 20,63, p < 0.01$. The situation in which an airbag supplier rewarded a factory employee with a holiday after improving the production process, resulting in increased productivity, was judged as less corrupt by members of the lower job status group, $\chi^2(8, N = 551) = 26,72, p < 0.001$. Respondents belonging to the lower job status groups might have limited access to political or economic networks and might be excluded from accessing the centre of such types of power. This does not mean, however, that they do not have other opportunities to benefit from corrupt behaviours.

In addition to the differences in the perception of corruption between high- and low-job status groups, there is a second observation that supports the hypothesis that tolerance toward corruption is learned through interactions that occur within subgroups. Respondents seem to be more tolerant when their status provides them access to opportunities to benefit from 'corruption'. When taxes rise for the middle class (Maus, 2012), respondents belonging to the middle job status group are more tolerant toward the situation in which a tax official provides advice to friends so that they can submit the best possible tax return in his district, $\chi^2(8, N = 549) = 28,25, p < 0.001$. If the official completes the tax return against payment, this is judged in a comparable way, $\chi^2(8, N = 548) = 28,52, p < 0.001$. Moreover, members of the low-status job group, comprised primarily of low-skilled workers and small independent contractors are significantly more tolerant of the situation in which a restaurant owner postponed the collection of a VAT debt, $\chi^2(8, N = 549) = 28,90, p < 0.001$. Even the situation in which a public official advises the restaurant owner to file for bankruptcy so that he does not have to settle his debts is judged as less corrupt by the low status job group, $\chi^2(8, N = 548) = 27,58, p = 0.001$.

There are two observations that might be interpreted as contradictory to the above-formulated research hypotheses. First, respondents with low status jobs are significantly more tolerant toward the situations that described corruption involving local politicians. This is the case in the situation of a contractor sponsoring the election brochures of the alderman of public works and paying the invoice amounting to 1,000 euro, $\chi^2(8, N = 551) = 40,41, p < 0.001$, as well as the situation in which an alderman who, after purchasing computers for the city, gets a discount from the dealer for the purchase of a computer for his daughter without having to request it, which is judged as less corrupt by members of the low status job group, $\chi^2(8, N = 544) = 28,93, p < 0.001$. A similar result has been observed for the situation of a mayor who visits the offices of a political associate to discuss a case to accelerate the regularisation of his own estate. Although this situation is judged as very corrupt, members of the low status job group are significantly more tolerant of it, $\chi^2(8, N = 551) = 20,90, p < 0.01$. This increased tolerance toward the corrupt behaviour of politicians might be due to the Belgian 'pacification state'

(consociationalism), which facilitates multiple informal contacts between politicians and citizens (André, Depauw & Sandri, 2010; De Winter, 2003). Consociationalism is not unique to the Belgian region Flanders, but the Belgian structure distinguishes itself from nearby pacification states, such as the Dutch and the Swiss models, via its provisioning of multiple, direct and easily accessible contacts between citizens and local politicians (Peters, 2006). This ambiguous relationship between government and citizen was caused in part by the strong ideological compartmentalisation that occurred in Belgium. The outsourcing of administrative tasks such as education, unemployment benefits and family allowances, for instance, to the private sector created a growth medium for ‘clientism’ (Billiet, 1982). Citizens of the low status job groups are more dependent on political services as a way to benefit from facilities.

The second observation to make is that there are a number of situations that described behaviours that were more akin to grand corruption and which were judged as more corrupt by the high status job group. This observation suggests that there are limits to what are perceived as ‘tolerable’ forms of corruption, even by members of the high status job group. In particular, this observation applies to situations that described behaviour that might be harmful to the general public’s interests. A pharmaceutical company that produces a new medicine and offers a doctors’ association a free information session is judged as significantly more corrupt by respondents with a high job status, $\chi^2(8, N = 546) = 21,09, p < 0.01$, as was the situation that concerned the consultant at an administration office responsible for the follow-up of building permits who was able to rent a luxurious flat at a reduced price, $\chi^2(8, N = 553) = 28,26, p < 0.001$. This finding is in line with those reported by prior studies (Jackson & Smith, 1996; Redlawsk & McCann, 2005), which found that the higher a persons’ social status, the more he or she will approach corruption from a legalistic point of view.

1.3. Conclusion

Although the data used in this article are drawn from a random sample of Flemish Belgian citizens—a sample that is presumably disproportionately not involved in corrupt behaviours—we observed significant differences in the judgement of scenarios that described potentially corrupt situations. While the shape and the opportunities varied markedly, both high and low status groups were to some extent tolerant toward corruption. Members of low status groups were more tolerant of petty corruption and vice versa. I argue that tolerance toward corruption is learned within close networks of peers via the process of differential association. Respondents share perceptions of corruption that are in accordance with distinct opportunities for that status group and their ability to apply proper skills and definitions in favour of corruption. These findings have both societal as well as scientific implications. Perception-based indices of corruption, such as the corruption perception index

developed by Transparency International or the World Bank, rely on expert assessments and surveys of businesspeople (Thompson. & Shah, 2005) and are limited to the higher status job groups. Perceptions of other societal groups are rarely included in these corruption ratings. In line with our research findings, it is debatable to what extent these indices result in a valid estimation of the corruption tolerance of a given society. Another point for discussion is that some forms of corruption are not considered to be deviant practices. Does this mean that these behaviours have become normal, common practices rooted within the daily society? This question is important because the degree to which someone systematically commits criminal behaviour is determined by the frequency and consistency of contacts with criminal behaviour (Bruinsma, 1985). Further research comparing different occupational networks might identify those groups which are most at risk. The extent to which occupational networks perceive behaviour as corrupt is an indicator for those groups' willingness to expose corruption, induce an institutionalised reaction and create more substantial and effective preventive policies.

2. 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 352 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.

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2.1. 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, Maras, Giannakopoulos & Rogowski, 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 (Dormaels in review). 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, Cressey & Luckenbill, 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 (Dormael in review). 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, Cressey & Luckenbill, 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 & 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 politician 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.²⁵ 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.

²⁵ 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).

Our research design and methodology is reported on in relation to this theoretical framework, and our principal findings are discussed in the final section.

2.2. 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 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, Cressey & Luckenbill, 1992; Matsueda, 2006).

2.2.1. Perceptions of corruption and the process of differential association

According to Sutherland, 'learning' of deviant behaviour includes two elements: skills and definitions (Sutherland, Cressey & Luckenbill, 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, Cressey & Luckenbill, 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.

2.2.2. 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, Cressey & Luckenbill, 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, Charles & Mary, 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, Cressey & Luckenbill, 1992), 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?

2.3. 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, Crask & Kim, 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%.²⁶ 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

²⁶ Directorate-General Statistics and Economic Information, <http://statbel.fgov.be/>, consulted on 27/11/2013.

61.85%.²⁷ 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: Dormaels, 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

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

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 6.²⁸ Group 1 represents Flemish citizens with the lowest occupational status, whereas Group 4 represents citizens with the highest occupational status.

Table 6: 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%)

2.4. Results and discussion

A previous analysis concluded that members of different occupational status groups have different perceptions of corruption (Dormaels in review) 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)²⁹. Situations 8, 9 and 23 are exceptions to this trend.

²⁸ Due to their very tolerant attitudes, students have been treated as a separate group in our sample.

²⁹ Each situation is followed by a reference number that corresponds with the order of appearance in the cross table.

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 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.

2.4.1. 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.³⁰ 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

³⁰ Five situations were omitted from the Chi-square analysis because too many cells had an expected count of less than 5.

in how they perceive corruption. This gap seems to accord with the division between petty and grand corruption. The individual scores on the items is presented in the table below:

Table 7. 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	<i>...to ask companies that want to do maintenance work for the government to give him business class football tickets?***</i>						
	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	<i>... to receive business class football tickets from companies that want to do maintenance work for the government?***</i>						
	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	<i>...receive business class football tickets from companies that want to do maintenance work for the company he works at?*</i>						
	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	<i>...ask companies that want to do maintenance work for the company he works at to give him business class football tickets?***</i>						
	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	<i>...gives Bart a holiday to make sure he will improve the production process so it would result in a higher airbag productivity?***</i>						
	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	<i>...rewards Bart with a holiday after Bart has improved the production process resulting in a higher airbag productivity?***</i>						
	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	<i>...Emma postpones the collection of the VAT debt?***</i>						
	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	<i>...Emma advises the restaurant owner to go bankrupt so he does not have to settle his debts?***</i>						
	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	<i>...Emma does not everything it takes to collect the VAT debt, so less VAT is paid?*</i>						
	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	<i>...the mayor is invited to the Brussels establishment of the building company?*</i>						

	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	85,2 (52) 9,8 (6) 4,9 (3)	57,9 (173) 21,4 (64) 20,7 (62)	53,4 (39) 23,3 (17) 23,3 (17)	60,0 (51) 18,8 (16) 21,2 (18)	62,5 (20) 28,1 (9) 9,4 (3)	60,4 (212) 21,7 (76) 17,9 (63)
11	<i>...that the mayor visits the head office in Italy, at the expenses of the building company?***</i>						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	25,8 (16) 21,0 (13) 53,2 (33)	19,9 (60) 14,9 (45) 65,2 (197)	13,7 (10) 21,9 (16) 64,4 (47)	18,6 (16) 23,3 (20) 58,1 (50)	15,5 (5) 15,6 (5) 68,8 (22)	10,8 (38) 12,0 (42) 77,2 (271)
12	<i>...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?***</i>						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	6,5 (4) 14,5 (9) 79,0 (49)	7,2 (22) 6,9 (21) 85,9 (261)	6,8 (5) 4,1 (3) 89,0 (65)	9,3 (8) 8,1 (7) 82,6 (71)	6,2 (2) 12,5 (4) 81,2 (26)	4,0 (14) 3,7 (13) 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	<i>...the secretariats of minister offices to apply for support to get more assignments?***</i>						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	72,1 (44) 23,0 (3) 4,9 (3)	50,2 (152) 23,4 (71) 26,4 (80)	56,9 (41) 23,6 (17) 19,4 (14)	41,4 (36) 40,2 (35) 18,4 (16)	75,0 (24) 6,2 (2) 18,8 (6)	55,0 (193) 27,1 (95) 17,9 (63)
14	<i>...the political party he is a member of in order to get more assignments that way?***</i>						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	60,7 (37) 26,2 (16) 13,1 (8)	35,4 (107) 22,5 (68) 42,1 (127)	51,4 (37) 22,2 (16) 26,4 (19)	37,9 (33) 34,5 (30) 27,6 (24)	59,4 (19) 15,6 (5) 25,0 (8)	44,2 (155) 25,9 (91) 29,9 (105)
15	<i>...a minister friend to get more assignments?***</i>						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	31,1 (19) 27,9 (17) 41,0 (25)	20,7 (63) 16,8 (51) 62,5 (190)	33,3 (24) 33,3 (24) 33,3 (24)	21,8 (19) 27,6 (24) 50,6 (44)	37,5 (12) 18,8 (6) 43,8 (14)	27,6 (97) 23,1 (81) 49,3 (173)
An MP has very good contacts in the real estate market. Do you think it is corrupt that this MP...							
16	<i>...gives his contacts to his daughter who works for a real estate agency. Doing so, she can acquire more real estate contracts.**</i>						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	51,6 (32) 29,0 (18) 19,4 (12)	26,8 (81) 24,2 (73) 49,0 (148)	30,1 (22) 31,5 (23) 38,4 (28)	30,2 (26) 24,4 (21) 45,3 (39)	34,4 (11) 15,6 (5) 50,0 (16)	35,1 (122) 26,4 (92) 38,5 (134)
17	<i>...sells his contacts to fellow entrepreneurs for 10.000 euro. Doing so these entrepreneurs can acquire real estate contracts.*</i>						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	1,6 (1) 9,7 (6) 88,7 (55)	3,6 (11) 1,3 (3,6) 95,0 (288)	4,1 (3) 5,5 (4) 90,4 (66)	2,3 (2) 8,1 (7) 89,5 (77)	0,0 (0) 9,4 (3) 90,6 (29)	2,6 (9) 3,4 (12) 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	<i>...of a home for elderly his municipality?*</i>						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	80,3 (49) 14,8 (9) 4,9 (3)	85,2 (260) 9,5 (29) 5,2 (16)	69,9 (51) 17,8 (13) 12,3 (9)	77,0 (67) 19,5 (17) 3,4 (3)	81,2 (26) 12,5 (4) 6,2 (2)	74,9 (262) 17,1 (60) 8,0 (28)
19	<i>...of a golf course in his municipality?*</i>						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	45,0 (27) 25,0 (18) 30,0 (18)	54,4 (166) 21,0 (64) 24,6 (75)	49,3 (36) 21,9 (16) 28,8 (21)	55,2 (48) 20,7 (18) 24,1 (21)	56,2 (18) 28,1 (9) 15,6 (5)	65,1 (228) 20,0 (70) 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	<i>...a Brussels meeting area for free and pays the invoice of the dinner?***</i>						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	56,5 (35) 21,0 (13) 22,6 (14)	39,5 (118) 24,1 (72) 36,5 (109)	36,1 (26) 26,4 (19) 37,5 (27)	28,7 (25) 29,9 (26) 41,4 (36)	31,2 (10) 31,2 (10) 37,5 (12)	31,1 (109) 22,5 (79) 46,4 (163)
21	<i>...to organise this informative day on Mallorca, at the expenses of the company?*</i>						
	not corrupt neither corrupt/not corrupt corrupt	12,9 (8) 29,0 (18) 58,1 (36)	12,7 (38) 12,7 (38) 74,7 (224)	17,8 (13) 13,7 (10) 68,5 (50)	9,3 (8) 20,9 (18) 69,8 (60)	12,5 (4) 12,5 (4) 75,0 (24)	10,0 (35) 13,2 (46) 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	<i>...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?***</i>						
	not corrupt	43,5 (27)	57,1 (172)	46,6 (34)	50,6 (43)	31,2 (10)	36,0 (126)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	14,5 (9)	16,3 (49)	17,8 (13)	24,7 (21)	34,4 (11)	20,6 (72)
	corrupt	41,9 (26)	26,6 (80)	35,6 (26)	24,7 (21)	34,4 (11)	43,4 (152)
23	<i>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?***</i>						
	not corrupt	25,8 (16)	28,7 (87)	23,6 (17)	29,4 (25)	31,2 (10)	14,3 (50)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	19,4 (12)	16,5 (50)	11,1 (8)	17,6 (15)	15,6 (5)	12,3 (43)
	corrupt	54,8 (34)	54,8 (166)	65,3 (47)	52,9 (45)	53,1 (17)	73,4 (256)
24	<i>...after he purchased computers for the city, asks the chain store to get a discount for the purchase of a computer for his daughter?***</i>						
	not corrupt	25,8 (16)	34,4 (103)	24,7 (18)	30,6 (26)	15,6 (5)	10,3 (36)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	27,4 (17)	15,7 (47)	21,9 (16)	15,3 (13)	15,6 (5)	12,6 (44)
	corrupt	46,8 (29)	49,8 (149)	53,4 (39)	54,1 (46)	68,8 (22)	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	<i>...provides against payment advice to friends in order to submit the best possible tax return in his district?***</i>						
	not corrupt	45,2 (28)	26,7 (81)	23,3 (17)	37,2 (32)	40,6 (13)	23,4 (82)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	22,6 (14)	26,7 (81)	26,0 (19)	31,4 (27)	9,4 (3)	19,1 (67)
	corrupt	32,3 (20)	46,5 (141)	50,7 (37)	31,4 (27)	50,0 (16)	57,4 (201)
26	<i>...completes the tax return against payment in order to submit the best possible return in his district?***</i>						
	not corrupt	21,0 (13)	23,4 (71)	22,2 (16)	36,8 (32)	37,5 (12)	18,9 (66)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	25,8 (16)	22,4 (68)	13,9 (10)	26,4 (23)	12,5 (4)	16,9 (59)
	corrupt	53,2 (33)	54,3 (165)	63,9 (46)	36,8 (32)	50,0 (16)	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	<i>...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?***</i>						
	not corrupt	27,4 (17)	15,5 (47)	9,6 (7)	13,8 (12)	3,1 (1)	6,0 (21)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	21,0 (13)	26,0 (79)	19,2 (14)	23,0 (20)	15,6 (5)	13,8 (48)
	corrupt	51,6 (32)	58,6 (178)	71,2 (52)	63,2 (55)	81,2 (26)	80,2 (280)
28	<i>...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?*</i>						
	not corrupt	8,1 (5)	7,6 (23)	6,8 (5)	12,6 (11)	6,2 (2)	9,4 (33)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	30,6 (19)	14,2 (43)	8,2 (6)	14,9 (13)	12,5 (4)	12,3 (43)
	corrupt	61,3 (38)	78,1 (236)	84,9 (62)	72,4 (63)	81,2 (26)	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	<i>...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.*</i>						
	not corrupt	0,0 (0)	3,3 (11)	4,1 (3)	1,2 (1)	3,1 (1)	0,9 (3)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	6,5 (4)	6,3 (19)	2,7 (2)	3,5 (3)	3,1 (1)	1,1 (4)
	corrupt	93,5 (58)	90,0 (270)	93,2 (68)	95,3 (82)	93,8 (30)	98,0 (342)
A customs official 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	<i>...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?***</i>						
	not corrupt	0,0 (0)	6,2 (19)	4,1 (3)	4,6 (4)	0,0 (0)	1,4 (5)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	11,3 (7)	7,9 (24)	4,1 (3)	9,2 (8)	3,1 (1)	1,4 (5)
	corrupt	88,7 (55)	85,9 (262)	91,8 (67)	86,2 (75)	96,9 (31)	97,1 (340)
31	<i>... the customs official simply takes more shoes than required for the verification?***</i>						
	not corrupt	3,2 (2)	9,2 (28)	4,1 (3)	11,5 (10)	3,1 (1)	7,4 (26)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	24,2 (45)	13,8 (42)	9,6 (7)	14,9 (13)	9,4 (3)	2,6 (9)
	corrupt	72,6 (45)	77,0 (235)	86,3 (63)	73,6 (64)	87,5 (28)	90,0 (316)
32	<i>...the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary in order to receive the export documents much quicker?***</i>						
	not corrupt	1,6 (1)	7,5 (23)	5,5 (4)	2,4 (2)	0,0 (0)	1,1 (4)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	4,8 (3)	8,5 (26)	4,1 (3)	11,8 (10)	6,2 (2)	1,4 (5)
	corrupt	93,5 (58)	83,9 (256)	90,4 (66)	85,9 (73)	93,8 (30)	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	1,6 (1)	6,6 (20)	4,1 (3)	5,8 (5)	0,0 (0)	1,1 (4)
	neither corrupt/not corrupt	6,5 (4)	11,5 (35)	6,8 (5)	11,6 (10)	6,2 (2)	1,4 (4)
	corrupt	91,9 (57)	81,9 (249)	89,0 (65)	82,6 (71)	93,8 (30)	97,4 (342)
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: $p < 0.05$ *= $p < 0.01$ ** = $p < 0.001$ ***

2.4.1.1. 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 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) ($\chi^2 = 54.64$; $df = 10$; $N = 906$; $p < 0.001$), 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) ($\chi^2 = 22.36$; $df = 10$; $N = 906$; $p < 0.05$). 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) ($\chi^2 = 38.35$; $df = 10$; $N = 906$; $p < 0.001$), or one who completes the tax return in return for payment (No 26) ($\chi^2 = 31.42$; $df = 10$; $N = 907$; $p < 0.01$) 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) ($\chi^2 = 23.79$; $df = 10$; $N = 902$; $p < 0.01$).

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 ($\chi^2 = 34.89$; $df = 10$; $N = 908$; $p < 0.001$), 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 ($\chi^2 = 24.26$; $df = 10$; $N = 903$; $p < 0.01$).

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) ($\chi^2 = 27.36$; $df = 10$; $N = 869$; $p < 0.01$). 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 ($\chi^2 = 23.94$; $df = 10$; $N = 873$; $p < 0.05$).

2.4.1.2. Petty corruption perceived 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 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 ($\chi^2 = 51.06$; $df = 10$; $N = 903$; $p < 0.001$). 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 ($\chi^2 = 38.44$; $df = 10$; $N = 909$; $p < 0.001$), and the situation (No 31) in which a customs official simply takes more shoes than are required to verify the transport licence results ($\chi^2 = 50.76$; $df = 10$; $N = 910$; $p < 0.001$), 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 ($\chi^2 = 35.09$; $df = 10$; $N = 908$; $p < 0.001$). 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) ($\chi^2 = 57.59$; $df = 10$; $N = 907$; $p < 0.001$) or for his sister (No 28) ($\chi^2 = 20.49$; $df = 10$; $N = 907$; $p < 0.05$) 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) ($\chi^2 = 32.03$; $df = 10$; $N = 904$; $p < 0.001$).

2.4.1.3. Grand corruption perceived 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 ($\chi^2 = 19.24$; $df = 10$; $N = 902$; $p < 0.05$). 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.

2.4.2. Perceptions of specialised anti-corruption officers compared with 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.

Table 8: differences in the perception of corruption within the occupational 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	<i>...the mayor is invited to the Brussels establishment of the building company? **</i>			
	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	<i>...that a local company purchases entrance tickets for the mayor's ball for a total amount of 1,000 euro? *</i>			
	not corrupt	82,4 (103)	62,5 (20)	83,0 (161)
	corrupt	17,6 (22)	37,5 (12)	17,0 (33)
39	<i>...that a company located in another city purchase entrance tickets for the mayor's ball for a total amount of 1,000 euro? **</i>			
	not corrupt	80,8 (101)	53,1 (17)	79,4 (154)
	corrupt	19,2 (24)	46,9 (15)	20,6 (40)
40	<i>...that a company in Germany purchases entrance tickets for the mayor's ball for a total amount of 1,000 euro? **</i>			
	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	<i>...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? **</i>			
	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	<i>...rewards Bart with a holiday after Bart has improved the production process resulting in a higher airbag productivity? *</i>			
	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 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 official 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: $p < 0.05$ = $p < 0.01$ ** = $p < 0.001$ ***

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) ($\chi^2 = 9.94$; $df = 2$; $N = 351$; $p < 0.01$). 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) ($\chi^2 = 7.75$; $df = 2$; $N = 351$; $p < 0.05$), and the same is true when this company is located in another city (No 39) ($\chi^2 = 12.08$; $df = 2$; $N = 351$; $p < 0.01$) or in Germany (No 40) ($\chi^2 = 9.19$; $df = 2$; $N = 351$; $p = 0.01$). 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) ($\chi^2 = 9.95$; $df = 2$; $N = 351$; $p < 0.01$), 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) ($\chi^2 = 10.53$; $df = 2$; $N = 350$; $p < 0.01$). 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 CORC officers. Local police officers were also most severe in judging the situation of a MP who provides his contacts to his daughter free of charge (No 44) ($\chi^2 = 9.09$; $df = 2$; $N = 348$; $p < 0.05$).

2.5. 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 & Matza, 1957; Coleman 1987; Bandura, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, 1996; Anand, Ashforth & Joshi 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 & Vande Walle, 2010; Vande Walle & 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, Barbaranelli, Caprara & Pastorelli, 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 & 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 & Smith, 1996; Redlawsk & 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 (1966), 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 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.

2.6. 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.

3. Does the process of differential association causes different perceptions of corruption?

The quantitative results of the present PhD study tend to support the thesis that differential occupational association influences people's perceptions of corruption. Respondents with a low occupational status are more tolerant in judging situations of petty corruption, while high occupational status respondents have more affinity with grand forms of corruption. Police respondents, especially specialised anti-corruption officers, are the least tolerant group. Although these findings are consistent with the theoretical hypotheses which are based on Sutherland's differential association theory we acknowledge a missing link. In the next section we address the question how differences between groups can be explained. This analysis is based on the qualitative data gathered through the organisation of the focus groups.

3.1. Normative conflict

During the course of the focus groups we had the opportunity to observe the dynamics of the concept of normative conflict. There exists a general agreement within the focus groups that inequality between groups affects the perception of corruption. Some groups in society are excluded from benefiting from social and economic advantages while other groups are in a more privileged position. This exclusion or inclusion of groups affects the discussion of what is perceived as appropriate behaviour and what is perceived as a violation of norms. A dominant argument raised by the participants was the fact that the advantage rendered by the public servant was not available to all citizens. Only a privileged network of friends could enjoy this favour. If the scenario had stated that *'everyone had access to service to complete the tax declaration, I do not think that most people would perceive this corrupt. But now it's elitist, who knows who, so only a limited network access is available here. This is not acceptable...'* (P3 focus group, December 6, 2013). The statement *'it is always the same group who tries to evade taxes as much as possible'* (P5 focus group, December 6, 2013) underlines the conflict about appropriate behaviour.

Additionally, it is argued that the fact that people have to pay for the service results in class-based differences in their perception: *'only those who have money can afford to get advice'* (P5 focus group, December 6, 2013). *'...I think most people will say yes, that's corruption, because they cannot make use of those facilities that are included in the scenario. So those people who do use it will say: no, no, that's okay, I give fifty euro and my taxes are fine. But those who cannot make use of this will say: I think this is corruption. And I think that group is larger...'* (P10 focus group, January 7, 2014).

The question of whether some groups in society would be more tolerant toward this situation resulted in even more varied arguments which articulated societal differences between groups in terms of the ‘rich and poor’ and the ‘upper and lower class’. This is interesting because it allows varying values and norms to be observed within the different occupational status groups expressed by the police respondents. The following statements express a normative context present within the lower status groups: *‘I will focus more on a certain class; for example, the middle working class works hard for his living, and you won’t find anyone in that class who uses it or get back taxes or have a fair knowledge [...] the middle class who earns a little more and therefore have to pay more taxes will compare themselves with someone who is in the highest status group. They will find it difficult to accept that this elite class, which already has many advantages, now pays less taxes...’* (P8 focus group, January 7, 2014). An opposite point of view is that a member of a higher social class will disapprove of this situation: *‘their knowledge of the legislation is equal to the tax official...and they are more aware about the legislation than the other groups...so, they will actually fill in their tax declaration themselves, and, they know that what the tax adviser is doing after his hours is really wrong [...] a member of the high occupational status group will certainly perceive this as corrupt’* (P6 focus group, December 6, 2013).

An interesting remark made during one focus group is that rural areas, for example, are characterised by stronger and closer networks than urbanised areas. These regions are less segmented compared to urbanised regions. The normative conflict seems to be less prominent and members of rural communities will probably share more comparable perceptions of corruption. *‘So the network in which you act, the networks in rural areas, are composed in a different way and are much closer. People of all levels of education, go to the same village pub. In urban areas you have a lot more grouping together of people of the same social class. So, I think we will find more difference in perceptions there’* (P3 focus group, December 6, 2013).

3.2. Differential association

Participants who consider that citizens will perceive the situation corrupt used a different kind of language to motivate their viewpoint compared to those who believed that it is not perceived as such. The first group of participants used negative phrases to describe the moral reasoning of citizens, which might be an indication of unfavourable definitions of the behaviour. The discourse of participants who believed that the situation is not perceived as corrupt is characterised by a more neutral language. The paraphrases below illustrate that a more neutral language is used to support their position that some citizens will not perceive the situation as corrupt.

Police officers who are convinced that citizens are less tolerant toward the tax official express unfavourable definitions. It is called dishonest, corrupt or extortion. *‘Uh, the high status group, I think, uh, will see it more from the standpoint of integrity. He is a public servant. He should just do it, that’s his job. And what he does to earn something more shows a complete lack of integrity That is not acceptable. [...] a public servant has chosen to work for the government and must do his job from his, uh, office, providing free advice. So, uh, paying an official, that is absolutely not done. I think those people [high occupational status groups] will argue the same.’* (P3 focus group, December 6, 2013). *‘It is corrupt– if they do not pay they are treated disadvantageously’* or *‘Citizens still accept that a public servant serves people and that they should not have to be paid extra. I think that, anyway, uh ... people will be disgusted... ’* (P11 focus group, January 10, 2014). *‘I think most people do not distinguish between tax avoidance and tax evasion. And I think that the public will perceive searching for the most advantageous tax declaration, that they will associate as fiddling. Yes, tax evasion, yes, it is, in fact, yes, that is criminal, that is deliberately against the law. Facing tax avoidance, which is to find the most economical way [of paying tax]– that is allowed in Belgium. But I think, yes – even in group three –they do not really make the distinction between tax avoidance and tax evasion. It is an offence’* (P11 focus group, January 10, 2014).

More favourable definitions are expressed by respondents who are of the opinion that citizens will not perceive the situation of the tax official corrupt. The situation is, for example, described as ‘it is a tradition’, ‘it just someone working after office hours’, ‘it is a business transaction’. Such descriptions discard the situation of negative values and make the behaviour more acceptable. Different definitions were used depending on which status group’s reasoning was made. Some of these arguments are closer to a higher occupational status group: *‘It is just a person [tax officer] who, after his work hours makes a little bit of extra money, and fills in tax returns against payment as favourably as possible, ..., it is a service in return for payment, yes, that is a normal business activity, so I do not think that citizens will find this corrupt’* (P4 focus group, December 6, 2013). Other descriptions are more related to lower occupational status groups: *‘things you read on the Internet and what people say really proves that the general trend in Belgium is still exactly that, which operate in the black and the black fiddling and the one that paid to the other, that’s all right, just not all that bad, as long as your own bags which fills some.’* A comparable way of phrasing this situation is: *‘in the past the folks in the street were used to a tax official filling in tax declarations after office hours and I think the average citizen didn’t have a problem with that’* (P6 focus group, December 6, 2013).

3.3. Differential social organisation

The discussions on the question of whether most police officers perceived the situation corrupt and to what extent perceptions vary between the different police organisations yield empirical arguments that the concept of differential social organisation affects perceptions of corruption. Police officers are in general, as they say, less tolerant in judging the situation of the tax official. The respondents were convinced that more police respondents perceived the situation as corrupt.

The specialised officers declared that their intolerance for corruption is the result of an interaction between their personal moral beliefs at the time of their recruitment to the specialised unit and a socialisation process which is continued afterwards. They are not only more exposed to negative definitions of corruption and confronted with the damage of corruption. They also share more negative values and norms towards corrupt behaviour. A viewpoint from a specialised officer: *'..our investigations discover numerous abuses that create a major aversion within our group to corruption... this make us think "How are such things even possible?" This also creates a certain revulsion and makes us morally say certain things, certain things have to be stopped. It is a slippery slope, specialised officers become less tolerant toward corruption... this perpetuates our moral attitudes. We would never have worked for the specialised unit otherwise.'* (P11 focus group, January 10, 2014). This account suggests that police officers working for anti-corruption units will become less tolerant toward corruption as a result of differential social organisation.

The difference between specialised and non-specialised officers was confirmed within each focus group. *'Well, I think there is, that there is indeed a difference [between police departments]. I think that, uh, depending on the degree of specialisation, there is, actually ... Officers with a specialisation for financial and economic crimes will have a more severe perception of corruption. Officers that are engaged in purely family quarrels and other similar problems do not lie awake at night because of corruption, I think ...'* (P3 focus group, December 6, 2013). Another participant believes that: *'I think that it is not only an opinion. Very few cases of corruption are reported by local police organisations. Corruption is not an issue for them, and maybe they do not recognise corruption or do not perceive it as such'* (P4 focus group, December 6, 2013). From their side, local police officers share the same opinion: *'I think most police officers do not lie awake because of corruption. Now, supposing we are notified by someone, without it being an official complaint: "Look, that public servant does that," – there are only a few officers who will react because, our workload dictates that we deal with other matters.'* (P3 focus group, January 10, 2014). Only one officer – who was not a specialist in corruption – thought that most police officers would perceive this situation as corrupt: *'from the position of a police officer, [...] Because, in fact, public and private interest come into conflict with each other.'*

Normally, a public servant has to do everything for the public interest. And now he is in fact acting in favour of his private interests, so as a police officer I say, okay, this is in some way corrupt. Because public servants should not be paid extra for just doing their job.’ (P4 focus group, January 07, 2014).

Specialised officers are also more focused on situational characteristics and elements that allow for a criminal qualification of the behaviour as corrupt. *‘They [local police] think otherwise... tax fraud and corruption, what is actually corruption? We know what it is from a legal point of view, but for many police officers, they really don’t know about corruption, and I do not think that they perceive it as corrupt.’ (P13 focus group, January 10, 2014).* Local police officers seemed to be more tolerant in the sense that they are primarily focused on the context and situation of a citizen and take into account the background of a potential offender. *‘So those people, really the federal judicial police, lean more towards the government than we [local police] do. A federal officer work, for example, for the office of public prosecutor or an investigating judge. The local police work for and within the community. So, I think that people do have a different view of the facts; let us say there is a difference between the organisation. [...] If we [local police], have to take a decision to act against a suspect of corruption... we will come in contact with the citizen. They [federal officers] read the file from their desk, but we are going to take into account who the suspect is, what his background is,... But the federal police won’t do this. They simply look at the facts. That’s it. [...] For them it is a stroke of the pen, but we see those people.’ (P3 focus group, January 07, 2014).*

3.4. Conclusion

The discussions during the focus group revealed that both kinds of definitions are present within different occupational status groups. This finding implies that there is no homogeneous culture of corruption in the Belgian region of Flanders. Depending on the situation and the culture of an occupational status group, favourable or unfavourable definitions of corruption seem to affect persons’ perceptions. This perception seems to correspond with more or less tolerance toward corruption. This finding renders empirical support for Sutherland’s theory of differential association. The qualitative data suggest that definitions are learned within groups that share the same values and norms. Police officers are, as a result of differential socialisation, less tolerant toward corruption. In particular, the specialist anti-corruption officers exhibit negative definitions of corruption. This observation empirically supports our quantitative finding that the process of differential social organisation is crime-specific. Finally, police officers’ reasoning regarding citizens’ perceptions of corruption suggest that more tolerant groups acquire more neutral definitions in favour of corrupt behaviour.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUDING REFLECTIONS

In this final chapter we discuss the research findings in relation to the theoretical and societal relevance of the present research. A general summary of our research findings is presented in the first section. Our theoretical reflections are discussed in the second section which also allows to present avenues for future research. The societal relevance of our findings are discussed in the third and final section of this chapter.

1. General summary

The perception of corruption influences the societal response to corrupt behaviour. As corruption is a negative phenomenon, calling something corrupt means that people (morally) disapprove of the situation. The way in which citizens perceive corruption influences institutional reactions such as prevention and prosecution policies. In other words, whether and the extent to which members of a society perceive certain acts as forms of corruption are important in terms of exposing corruption, inducing an institutionalised reaction and creating more substantial and effective preventive policies. Corruption is however not a clear-cut offence like, for example, theft or murder. There exist significant differences in the way people perceive corruption. What is called corrupt by (some) citizens is perceived as ‘doing’ politics by politicians (Jackson & Smith, 1996). Business people refer to their prevailing business culture and use other labels for bribery (Jacobsson, 2012). This variation between groups in their perceptions of corruption is the central theme of our study.

The theoretical framework is based on Sutherland’s differential association theory (1939). This differential association theory consists of three interrelated concepts. The first concept is that crime in society is caused by a normative conflict. Modern and industrial society is segmented into different groups which conflict on what behaviour is lawful and what is not. The second concept, differential association, refers to the learning process of skills and definitions favourable to crime within intimate groups. The third concept, differential social organisation, implies that people will be exposed to various competing definitions of corruption and learn different skills depending on their distinct group membership. Members of a group organised in favour of corruption will be exposed to various competing definitions of corruption.

Our study applied a mixed-method construction and analyses citizens’ and police officers’ perceptions of corruption in direct comparison. Both quantitative as well as qualitative methods were used. The quantitative study relies on a large-scale population study. A scenario-based questionnaire was distributed amongst a random sample of 2,256 Flemish citizens. In conjunction with that, 34 specialised anti-corruption officers (CORC), 193 federal judicial officers (FJP) and 125 local police

officers (LP) participated in our research. This quantitative data revealed which kinds of situations are perceived as corrupt and to what extent distinct groups have different perceptions of corruption. Supplementary to the quantitative survey we organised three focus groups with police respondents. During the focus group discussions we addressed the question how differences between groups can be explained and to what extent police officers their perceptions influence their behaviour in the field.

The key findings of our study are summarised below.

1. The outcome of our population survey empirically supports the theoretical scheme introduced by Peters and Welch (1978). They suggested that any corrupt act is judged according to situational characteristics into following four dimensions: the public official involved, the favour provided by the public official, the payoff gained by the official and the donor of the payoff. However, our study results demonstrate that the use of situational characteristics alone cannot give us an explanation for variations in perception.

2. The results of our study show that the process of differential occupational association influences people's perceptions of corruption. Substantial differences in the way occupational status groups perceive corruption were identified. The most important differences are:

- Low occupational status groups are more tolerant of petty corruption.
- High occupational status groups are more tolerant of grand corruption.
- Police officers are the least tolerant group.
- Police officers tend to be more tolerant of grand corruption.
- Police officers are, however, divided in their perception of corruption. Specialised anti-corruption officers are less tolerant of corruption.
- CORC officers tend to be more selective in their perceptions of corruption. A possible explanation for this observation is that the actions that are described are not corrupt from a criminal law perspective.
- High occupational status respondents and police officers have more perception of corruption in common. These groups are more positive towards forms of grand corruption while they are harsher in judging forms of petty corruption.

3. Our data not only indicates that the process of differential social organisation results in occupational status groups being more tolerant for 'their' kind of corruption. The police force – which is an organisation working against crime, which also includes corruption – is not equally' less tolerant of corruption. The results show that the process of differential social organisation is crime-specific. Even

within the occupational group of the police we observed meaningful differences in the perception of corruption. Specialised anti-corruption officers tend to encounter specific processes of differential organisation and become more severe in judging corrupt situations compared to colleagues who are active in the enforcement of other crimes.

4. Our research made clear that the perception of corruption is not only about what is legal and what is not, but also what is considered as acceptable. The quantitative as well as the qualitative data refute the idea of a homogeneous perception of corruption within society. Corruption is a continuum from rather accepted forms of corrupt behaviour to condemnable corrupt acts.

In what follows we will discuss these results in more depth.

2. Theoretical reflections

In this section on theoretical reflections we will in the first place discuss what the concept of corruption means in society. How the theoretical model of Peters and Welch (1978) can be integrated into our theoretical framework is discussed in the second section. This theoretical integration results in a design for studying the interaction between personal (such as occupational status, social networks, family ties) and situational characteristics (such as payoff, undue advantage, public-private position) and to what extent it affects perceptions of corruption. The third and final section is dedicated to the question of the extent to which perceptions of corruption influence the corruptibility of persons. Are people who are tolerant toward corruption and believe that corruption is widespread in their social environment also more likely to engage in corrupt behaviour?

2.1. The corruption continuum

Our research made clear that the perception of corruption is not only about what is legal and what is not, but also what is considered as acceptable. The quantitative as well as the qualitative data refute the idea of a homogeneous perception of corruption within society. This insight will be explained in what follows.

A simple rank ordering of the scenarios (see Appendix 3) shows at the one end of the continuum situations which are judged corrupt by almost all citizens, and at the other, a cluster of situations which are perceived corrupt by a minority of citizens.

A factor analysis revealed that the concept of corruption, measured with the scenario-based questionnaire is not one-dimensional (see Table 9). The factorability of all items of the scenario-based questionnaire were examined in a first step. Because of the large number of items and in absence of a

theoretically supported scale we started with a principal component analysis. This allowed us to select those items with a high communality (0.45 or higher) and to omit items that did not contribute to a simple factor structure because they scored on different components. In a second step a principal factor analysis was used with a Varimax rotation.

The results show that corruption is a continuum from rather accepted forms of corrupt behaviour to condemnable corrupt acts. The first factor is composed out of a group of situations that are judged corrupt by a minority of the respondents, whereas a small group of respondents clearly thinks these situations are corrupt. The second factor groups more ambiguous situations. Some respondents perceive these situations as not corrupt while other respondents perceive them as being corrupt. The third factor is composed out of situations that get a very corrupt score. Hereby we find little disharmony amongst the respondents: almost all respondents assess the situations as being very corrupt.

The outcome of our study renders empirical support for the ‘black-white-grey’ typology of corruption introduced by Heidenheimer (1970). Factor 1 in our study is consistent with the concept of white corruption: some actions are considered as a little corrupt and do not invoke any institutional reaction and thus go ‘unpunished’. Factor 2 is in line with the term ‘grey corruption’, which includes situations that some people, but not everyone, find corrupt. Moreover, there is no consensus on whether or not this behaviour should be punished. Factor 3 groups situations which belong to the label ‘black corruption, – behaviour which is given the social label of ‘corrupt’ and clearly requires a (legal) reaction, is classified as ‘black corruption’.

Table 9: Corruption continuum

	items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3
SCALE CONSTRUCT				
5-point scale (totally corrupt to totally not corrupt)				
CORRUPTION				
Factor 1: ‘white corruption’	Do you think it is corrupt that John rents a luxurious flat at a regular rental price, the flat being owned by a real estate agent who executes large building assignments for the city?	,622		
	Do you think it is corrupt that the lawyer sends this survey to secretariats of minister offices to apply for support to get more assignments?	,612		
	Do you think it is corrupt that this MP gives his contacts to fellow entrepreneurs? By doing so he can acquire real estate contracts.	,450		

	Do you think it is corrupt that a company in Germany purchases entrance tickets for the mayor's ball for a total amount of 1,000 euro?	,307
Factor 2: 'grey corruption'	Imagine John is a governmental official. Do you think it is corrupt for John to ask companies that want to do maintenance work for the government to give him business-class football tickets?	,655
	Do you think it is corrupt that the mayor discusses a file to speed up the regularisation of his own estate?	,466
	Do you think it is corrupt that the alderman, before he purchases computers for the city, asks for a discount for the purchase of a computer for his daughter?	,404
	Do you think it is corrupt that the official completes the tax return in return for payment in order to submit the best possible return in his district?	,306
	Do you think it is corrupt that this contractor sponsors the election brochures of the alderman of public works and pays the invoice amounting to 1,000 euro?	,303
Factor 3: 'black corruption'	Do you think it is corrupt that the pharmaceutical company producing this medicine offers to organise this informative day in Mallorca, and also invites their families at the the company's expense?	,765
	Do you think it is corrupt that the mayor visits the head office in Italy and combines that with a number of cultural visits, all at the building company's expense ?	,490

Cronbach's Alpha = .721
Items11

An interesting observation is that the different occupational status groups perceive the first and the second factor differently (see Table 10). Respondents with a high occupational status are more tolerant of factor 1 than respondents with a lower occupational status. Respondents with a lower occupational status are then again more tolerant for factor 2. In other words, our results show that corruption means something different for respondents with a low occupational status than for higher occupational status groups. These differences can be explained by the theoretical perspective of differential organisation. Different group membership results not only in different opportunities but also in a differential learning process, which is crucial for internalisation of favourable definitions for corruption.

Table 10: Cross-table corruption continuum and occupational status

FACTOR 1: WHITE CORRUPTION				
	Low status unemployed	Low status employed	Middle status	High status
<i>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 John rents a luxurious flat at a regular rental price, the flat being owned by a real estate agent who executes large building assignments for the city?</i>				
not corrupt	65.1 (151)	67.4 (60)	70.8 (80)	79.5 (31)**
corrupt	24.6 (57)	16.9 (15)	19.5 (22)	10.3 (4)**
neither corrupt – not corrupt	10.3 (24)	15.7 (14)	9.7 (11)	10.3 (4)

<i>A lawyer tries to get as many public contracts as possible. Therefore he makes a survey of the assignments he already has 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 secretariats of ministerial offices to apply for support to get more assignments?</i>				
not corrupt	48.7 (112)	56.3 (49)	46.4 (52)	71.1 (27) ***
corrupt	28.3 (65)	20.7 (18)	17.0 (19)	26.3 (10)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	23.0 (53)	23.0 (20)	36.6 (41)	2.6 (1)
<i>An MP has very good contacts in the real estate market. Do you think it is corrupt that this MP gives his contacts to fellow entrepreneurs? By doing so he can acquire real estate contracts.</i>				
not corrupt	18.9 (43)	22.5 (20)	28.8 (32)	33.3 (13) ***
corrupt	55.7 (127)	49.4 (44)	51.4 (57)	46.2 (18)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	25.4 (58)	28.1 (25)	19.8 (22)	20.5 (8)
<i>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 that a company in Germany purchases entrance tickets for the mayor's ball for a total amount of 1,000 euro? **</i>				
not corrupt	38.8 (118)	37.0 (27)	41.4 (36)	46.9 (15)
corrupt	17.4 (53)	21.9 (16)	24.1 (21)	21.9 (7)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	43.8 (133)	41.1 (30)	34.5 (30)	31.3 (10)
FACTOR 2: GREY CORRUPTION				
<i>John is responsible for the maintenance and renovation of the office buildings. Imagine John being a governmental official. Do you think it is corrupt of John to ask companies that want to do maintenance work for the government to give him business-class football tickets?*</i>				
not corrupt	12.7 (29)	11.1 (10)	11.7 (13)	0.0 (0)
corrupt	74.1 (169)	70.0 (63)	78.4 (87)	94.7 (36)*
neither corrupt – not corrupt	13.2 (30)	18.9 (17)	9.9 (11)	5.3 (2)
<i>A mayor visits the ministry office of a political associate to promote the finalisation of a building file. Do you think it is corrupt that the mayor discusses a file to speed up the regularisation of his own estate? **</i>				
not corrupt	12.0 (28)	2.2 (2)**	8.0 (9)	10.5 (4)
corrupt	78.5 (183)	82.0 (73)	81.4 (92)	81.6 (31)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	9.4 (22)	15.7 (14)	10.6 (12)	7.9 (3)
<i>An alderman purchases computers for his city service at a chain store. Do you think it is corrupt that the alderman, before he purchases computers for the city, asks for a discount for the purchase of a computer for his daughter? ***</i>				
not corrupt	28.7 (87)	23.6 (17)	29.4 (25)	31.2 (10)***
corrupt	16.5 (50)	11.1 (8)***	17.6 (15)	15.6 (5)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	54.8 (166)	65.3 (47)	52.9 (45)	53.1 (17)
<i>A tax official works in an audit office and treats the tax returns of his district. Do you think it is corrupt that the official completes the tax return against payment in order to submit the best possible return in his district? ***</i>				
not corrupt	23.0 (53)***	22.7 (20)***	39.3 (44)	36.8 (14)
corrupt	56.5 (130)	64.8 (57)	34.8 (39)	52.6 (20)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	20.4 (47)	12.5 (11)	25.9 (29)	10.5 (4)
<i>A contractor regularly executes large assignments for a city. Do you think it is corrupt that this contractor sponsors the election brochures of the alderman of public works and pays the invoice amounting to 1,000 euro? ***</i>				
not corrupt	21.6 (50)	18.9 (17)	13.3 (15)***	0.0 (0)***
corrupt	65.8 (152)	74.4 (67)	70.8 (80)	73.0 (27)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	12.6 (229)	6.7 (6)	15.9 (18)	27.0 (10)
FACTOR 3: BLACK CORRUPTION				
<i>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 to organise this informative day in Mallorca, and also invites their families at the company's expenses?*</i>				
not corrupt	13.1 (30)	18.0 (16)	9.9 (11)	15.4 (6)
corrupt	74.2 (170)	66.3 (59)	69.4 (77)	74.4 (29)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	12.7 (29)	15.7 (14)	20.7 (23)*	10.3 (4)
<i>A building company is one of the candidates for renovating 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 the mayor visits the head office in Italy and combines that with a number of cultural visits, all at the building company's expenses?</i>				
not corrupt	7.2 (22)	6.8 (5)	9.3 (8)	6.2 (2)
corrupt	6.9 (21)	4.1 (3)	8.1 (7)	12.5 (4)
neither corrupt – not corrupt	85.9 (261)	89.0 (65) **	82.6 (71)	81.2 (26)

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

2.2. The interaction between personal and situational characteristics

This study revealed that occupational status influences perceptions of corruption. This finding is the result of a theoretical perspective inspired by Sutherland's differential association theory. Both the quantitative and qualitative data tend to indicate that citizens' and police officers' perceptions of corruption are influenced by the process of differential association. Perceptions of corruption are significantly influenced by occupational job status via a social learning process within a group of like-minded people. High status groups are significantly more tolerant toward situations describing conflicts of interest or exploiting political and economic networks when doing business. On the other hand, members of low status groups are more lenient toward petty corruption.

An alternative explanatory model to explain perceptions of corruption is based on Peters and Welch's (1978) four-fold analyse scheme to identify the essential elements of a corrupt act. The outcome of our population survey empirically supports the theoretical scheme introduced by Peters and Welch (see Dormaels, 2012). A large payoff appears to coincide with a situation that is perceived more corrupt. Yet, it was demonstrated that the size of the payoff alone does not decide on how corrupt a situation is assessed. Not so much the size of the payoff but also the 'directness' of the payoff has a significant effect in the assessment of this scenario. A 1,000 euro donation to the alderman's bank account is perceived as more corrupt than the deposit of a much higher amount such as 10,000 euro in the bank account of his political party. Also, the actual beneficiary of the advantage influences the decision of whether an action is perceived as corrupt or not. Private versus public interest seems to play an important role at this point. Take for example a politician discussing a file in the office of a political associate. The situation in which a favour in return serves the general interest, for example the building of home for the elderly, has a 'low corrupt' score. The situation in which the mayor visits the office of a political associate in order to accelerate the construction of his estate, is considered as 'highly corrupt'. These 'soothing' and 'aggravating' characteristics (Johnston, 1986) result in a highly varied assessment of the scenarios. However, it appeared that it was difficult to discriminate corrupt from not corrupt situations on the basis of situational characteristics alone.

Our empirical results within both theoretical perspectives –Sutherland (1939), Peters and Welch (1978) – provide the opportunity to elaborate a more integrated theoretical model in order to investigate to what extent the individual personal characteristics result in different appreciation of situational characteristics. This line of reasoning leads us to the following avenue for further research. Are persons with a lower occupational status more sensitive, for example, to the value of a payoff whereas members of a high occupational status group are more influenced by the characteristics such

as the general interest or a direct payoff?³¹ This interpretation has already been suggested by Peters and Welch as one possible explanation of the observed ambiguity of respondents not judging situations as corrupt despite the presence of salient characteristics. Further research might explore to what extent both theoretical perspectives are interrelated. This offers a possible modification of Peters and Welch's (1978) four-fold analysis scheme to identify the essential elements of a corrupt act. This could be done by including, alongside the situational characteristics within the dimensions of the payoff, the position, favour and relationship between the actors involved the occupational status of the person judging the scenarios. The effects of the differential association process are measured in our study via the occupational status. A possible extended analysis scheme is presented in Table 11 below. This table allows the extent to which situational characteristics and differential association influence peoples' perception to be analysed.

Table 11: Components of a potentially corrupt act and some illustrations of situational and personal characteristics

	Low occupational status	Middle occupational status	High occupational status
Payoff			
<i>Small</i>	20 euro*	20 euro*	20 euro***
<i>Large</i>	10,000 euro***	10,000 euro***	10,000 euro**
<i>Direct</i>	Cash money***	Cash money***	Cash money**
<i>Indirect</i>	Sponsoring*	Sponsoring*	Sponsoring
...			
Position			
<i>Public</i>	Public servant receives/asks for a bribe*	Public servant receives/asks for a bribe*	Public servant receives/asks for a bribe**
<i>Private</i>	Citizen pays or asks a favour	Citizen pays or asks for a favour*	Citizen pays or asks for a favour**
<i>Economic</i>	Facilitates payments **	Facilitates payments *	Facilitates payments
...			
Favour			
<i>Private interest</i>	Serves only the private interest of a privileged person of group*	Serves only the private interest of a privileged person of group**	Serves only the private interest of a privileged person of group**
<i>General interest</i>	Serves e.g. a community*	Serves e.g. a community	Serves e.g. a community
...			
Relationship			
<i>Sibling</i>	Corrupt relationship between relatives	Corrupt relationship between relatives**	Corrupt relationship between relatives**
<i>Friendship</i>	Corrupt relationship between friends	Corrupt relationship between friends**	Corrupt relationship between friends**
<i>Economic</i>	Corrupt behaviour within corporate transactions***	Corrupt behaviour within corporate transactions***	Corrupt behaviour within corporate transactions
<i>Political</i>	Corrupt behaviour involving politicians***	Corrupt behaviour involving politicians***	Corrupt behaviour involving politicians
...			

* few corrupt characteristics, ** medium corrupt characteristics, ***very corrupt characteristics.

³¹ I would like to thank Madelijne Gorsira and Nicole Haas for their favourable comments and suggestions in this respect during the Workshop on Organisational Crime, Dutch Society of Criminology, Leiden, 13 & 14 June 2013.

The outcome of such a study is relevant in view of adjusting anti-corruption programmes. Our results show that corruption means something different for different subgroups; therefore general anti-corruption measures are not successful instruments for preventing corruption. This is not to imply that the instruments are wrong, but rather that they are not applied to the situation for which they are designed (Vande Walle & Dormaels, 2010, p. 68). By means of the scheme above, it is possible to bring into focus whether certain subgroups are more tolerant toward particular types of corruption. This could result in tailor-made prevention programmes. People have to become attentive to potential corrupt situations or need to learn how to recognise them. Examples of the practical implementation of this suggestion might be ‘Watch out for to gift giving during Christmas’, ‘Stop bribery in education’, or ‘Independent clinical research is not funded by free holidays’. These headlines say more than a general slogan ‘Say no to corruption’. These examples address different contexts and subgroups, whereby they would not capture the imagination of all the subgroups. The intended effect is to encourage people to recognise potential risks or corrupt situations. Moreover, a successful anti-corruption policy must commit to a more proactive approach. This is necessary to help discover suspicious cases that can lead to corruption investigations. Raising the awareness of the public should be an integral part of this policy since the public is a valuable source for reporting corruption.

2.3. Further avenues to study the concept of differential organisation

2.3.1. Cross cultural research on the influence of occupational differential association on perceptions of corruption

Sutherland did not clearly explain how the concept of differential organisation is linked to differential socialisation. Likewise he did not elaborate his thoughts on the concept of differential organisations as he did for the concept of differential association. It remains, for example, unclear how organisation for and against criminality should be understood (Triplett, 2014, p. 1076). His theory has been challenged and criticised in view of this lack of clarity (Cortes & Gattiso, 1972, p. 168; Kornhauser, 1978: 195).

Our study on perceptions of corruption resulted in empirical data that allows the interrelationship between the concept of differential association and differential organisation to be explored in more depth. A direct comparison between different occupational status groups – which are potential subgroups where tolerance for corruption is learned – and the police organisation working against crime provide genuine empirical data. Our contrasting analysis of perceptions of corruption within these groups empirically illustrates the interrelationship between differential association and differential organisation. In what follows we will demonstrate our findings.

Firstly, our data indicated that the process of differential occupational association influences people's perceptions of corruption. Substantial differences in the way occupational status groups perceive corruption were identified by the large scale population survey and emerged during our focus groups. Varying definitions circulate within different occupational status groups. 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. Respondents with a high occupational status turned out to be more tolerant of grand forms of corruption. Next to that, high occupational status respondents and police officers have more perceptions of corruption in common. More specifically, it seems that these groups are more positive towards forms of grand corruption while they are harsher in judging forms of petty corruption.

Although this is speculative, it is plausible that respondents within these groups have more personal characteristics – such as education, living conditions, family, schools or networks – in common than they do with members of the other groups. These structural and/or cultural consistencies between individuals affect the differential association process indirectly by affecting the probability of learning the definitions that are either favourable or unfavourable to corruption. More crucial is that the structural/or cultural consistencies results in different opportunity structures and results finally in different subgroups (Cloward & Ohlin, 1961). This creates different settings for learning and affects the nature of the learning process which is defined by Sutherland as differential organisation. These consistencies might explain how the process of differential organisation evolves and how the interrelationship with differential association should be understood.

Our findings are illustrated by the surprisingly large differences between the different groups involved in our research. The outcome of our data not only indicates that the process of differential social organisation results in occupational status groups being more tolerant for 'their' kind of corruption. The police force – which is an organisation working against crime, which also includes corruption – is not equally' less tolerant of corruption. The results show that the process of differential social organisation is crime-specific. Even within the occupational group of the police we observed meaningful differences in the perception of corruption. Specialised anti-corruption officers tend to encounter specific processes of differential organisation and become more severe in judging corrupt situations compared to colleagues who are active in the enforcement of other crimes.

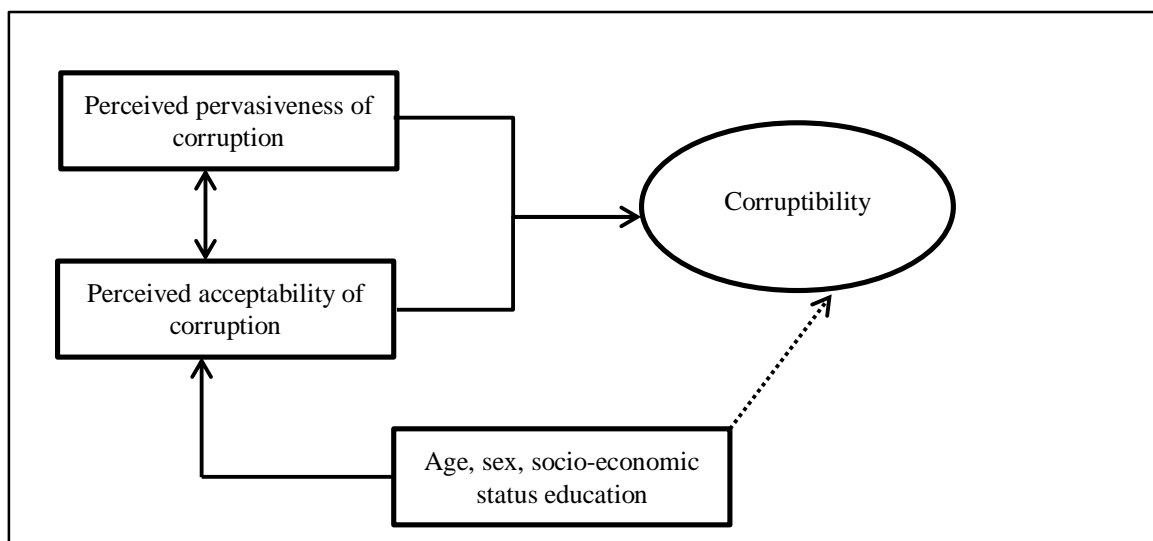
Cross-cultural research using our constructed questionnaire could explore the relationship between different subgroups and organisations in different cultural contexts. This could explore to what extent the key process of our study – tolerance towards different forms of corrupt behaviour is learned through repeated contact within subgroups – which is based on the differential association theory, is generalizable to other subgroups and other regions.

2.3.2. *Corruptibility of persons*

In our research we have studied, in depth, variations in the perceptions of corruption in relation to occupational status. The results of this study provide the opportunity to investigate to what extent the process of differential association results in more or less ‘corruptibility’. Corruptibility is the likelihood that somebody acknowledges that (s)he would give bribes (if asked) or accept bribes (if offered).

In what follows we introduce a model to study empirically whether the process of differential association affects the perceived corruptibility of persons. This model allows us to test whether the concepts of differential association and differential socialisation correlate with corruptibility. The dependent variable of the differential association process is, in this case, the probability that people engage in corrupt behaviour. The independent variables are the concept of differential association and the concept of differential socialisation. In the figure below we have integrated the concepts of the differential association theory into a model with a view to predicting the corruptibility of persons. This scheme is inspired by the work of Tavits (2010).

Figure 3: Model to test influence of differential association process on the corruptibility of persons



The first variable in the model is the concept of differential association. This concept of differential association will affect the probability that people learn definitions that are in favour of corruption. The extent to which respondents are more or less tolerant in judging the scenario-based questionnaire is in that sense an indication of someone’s ‘perceived acceptability of corruption’. Note that personal characteristics such as gender, sex or education influence indirectly the learning process by affecting the probability of learning either favourable or unfavourable definitions of corruption. This variable of ‘perceived acceptability’ is captured within our research by means of the scenario-based questionnaire.

The second variable in the model is the concept of differential socialisation. This concept will influence the perceived pervasiveness of corruption. Members of a more tolerant group towards corruption are more likely to agree that corruption is more widespread within their social environment (Dušek, Ortmann, & Lízal, 2005). This 'pervasiveness of corruption' is measurable by asking respondents to indicate to what extent they believe their relatives, friends, acquaintances or colleagues would engage in different kinds of corrupt behaviour.

Applying the differential association theory it is expected that the concepts of differential association and socialisation are indicators for the variable corruptibility. This 'corruptibility' is measurable by presenting respondents a set of scenarios describing corrupt behaviour such as: 'give a public official money to approve a building permit more quickly' or 'use a personal connection to get a job at the municipality'. For each scenario respondents can indicate the probability that they would engage in such corrupt behaviour if this opportunity arises. In line with the theoretical framework based on the work of Sutherland we put forward following hypothesis: the corruptibility of respondents will correlate with more tolerant definitions of corruption (differential association) and membership of groups of which corrupt behaviour is perceived to be widespread (differential socialisation). Also, Miller (2006) found that values and norms retained a statistically significant independent factor on corruptibility alongside the perceived pervasiveness. A high score on items measuring pervasiveness and a high score on items measuring acceptability should thus correlate with a stronger corruptibility.

3. Societal reflections

In the first part here we will address some challenges in the measurement of corruption which arise in light of our research findings. More specifically our results produced some questions in relation to the validity of corruption indices such as Transparency International. Additionally, our results suggest that the problem of corruption is seriously underestimated.

In the second part of this section we will discuss the effects of perceptions of corruption on the behaviour of police in the field. This addresses questions in relation to the broader umbrella of discretionary powers of police officers in the field and democratic policing.

3.1. Contribution to *measure* corruption in society

3.1.1. Accuracy of perception indices

Belgium receives an average score in comparative studies on the perception of corruption. On a European scale it performs better than South European countries such as France and Spain. Northern European countries such as The Netherlands and Norway are perceived as less corrupt than Belgium. On a global scale, Belgium stays just inside the top 15 (Transparency International, 2013). Whether this actually means that there is less corruption in Belgium cannot be deduced from these perception indices.

A caveat of perception-based indices is that corruption itself is not well defined and a clear yardstick is missing (Philp, 2006). In this respect, the results of our study indicate that corruption perception indices have to be interpreted carefully. Corruption turns out to mean different things for distinct groups in our society and perceptions about what kind of acts are considered as corrupt vary substantially. Most perception-based indices are based on expert perception. The methodology to calculate the Transparency Index, for example, comprises 13 different sources. These data sources, however, do not include the perceived corruptness of the lower occupational status groups in the calculation of the index (Thompson & Shah, 2005). The data sources which are used to calculate perception-based indices are, in this respect, limited. The reliability is not the main problem of these indices. These sources are statistically consistent and measure the perceived level of corruption in the public sector (Saisana & Saltelli, 2012). Huberts (2006, p. 273) described that although different indexes use different types of data the results are more or less the same. We want to raise awareness regarding the validity of the indexes. The question is whose perception this kind of research measures as it only includes expert assessments and surveys of businesspeople. The interpretation of perception indices might, therefore, be biased in different ways.

One misinterpretation is related to the nature of corruption. An important problem is the question of the extent to which experts' perceptions are generalizable. Our study revealed that 'corruption' means something different to high status groups than to lower status groups (see Chapter IV). The level of perceived corruption expressed by experts and elites – who, according to our findings, turned out to be more sensitive toward petty corruption – may account for corruption seen in lower levels of society, which is manifested in petty corruption. There is a fundamental difference between people who bribe a frontline public servant and elites who are engaged in arranging economic and political transactions. It is unclear whether the data used to calculate perception indices grasp corruption in all its forms. The

outcome of our study recommends caution in formulating generalised statements on the occurrence of corruption in a society.

A second bias in the interpretation is that these indices are used to estimate the level to which a society is corrupt. Different studies point to a discrepancy between perceptions of corruption and the registered levels of corruption. This is, for example, illustrated by the absence of a relationship between perceptions of corruption and ‘real’ experiences with corruption. Regions with a bad score on perception-based indices do not always show high levels of experience in paying bribes (European Commission, 2014a; Kis-Katos & Schulze, 2013; Ko & Samajdar, 2010; Mocan, 2008). This discrepancy can be explained as follows on the basis of our results. Questions measuring personal experience of corruption are more often based on a narrow concept of corruption by asking whether someone has already paid a bribe. A more general question – ‘to what extent do you think corruption is a widespread problem in your country?’ – refers, according to our research findings, to a broader concept. According to our research findings the concept of corruption is not only limited to the paying of bribes. People differentiate, depending on their occupational status, between a variety of acts that they call corrupt. Perception indices of corruption partially represent a sense of injustice which is expressed by using the word ‘corruption’.

3.1.2. Underestimation of the scale of corruption

Corruption is a secret crime hidden in full view. Those involved in it have no interest in reporting it and the risk of getting caught is very small. The results of the present study are daunting in that sense. Citizens are especially tolerant of those situations that are part of their social status. Take, for example, high occupational status groups that are very tolerant of an MP selling his contacts for 10,000 euro, or the middle-class groups being more tolerant toward paying a tax official outside his official duties. Such behaviour is seen as less of a violation of social norms by the respective groups. Gorta and Forell (1995) found that what employees perceive as corrupt plays an important role in their willingness to take action against it. Consequently, it is less probable that insiders will report such corrupt situations. Secondly, corruption is a victimless crime in the sense that there is no direct contact between the offender and the victim. In addition, our results tend to indicate that citizens are reluctant to judge a situation as corrupt. Consequently, victims will rarely bring the facts to the attention of the police.

Likewise, finding the real/hidden number of incidents (of corruption) is especially difficult regarding corruption and it is, as a consequence thereof, difficult to estimate the scale of corruption. Approximately 30 offenders were convicted in 2010 for the bribing of a public official and four

offenders were convicted for private corruption.³² Although the number of convictions for corruption remains low, it is difficult to interpret these official statistics from the police and judiciary on prosecutions and convictions (Andvig, Fjeldstad, Amundsen, Sissener, & Søreide, 2001). There are registration problems because corrupt cases are often prosecuted for less technical violations, such as fraud (Heimann e.a., 2013; Maesschalck, Vander Beken, Dantinne, & Stinckens, 2012). The burden of proof is very heavy and the evidence of such crimes is often very difficult to attain. Policing corruption is a very technical subject and perpetrators use a variety of means to disguise the origin of payoffs or other transaction. It is, in other words, difficult to conclude that the level of corruption is low.

3.2. Linking perceptions of corruption to behaviour of police in the field

3.2.1. Context, perceptions and decisions of officers in the field

The present study revealed that there exists a significant difference between police departments in the perception of corruption. Specialised anti-corruption officers are more severe but also more selective in judging the situations. An interesting question is to what extent the perceptions of police officers influence their practice in the suppression of corruption. This question is relevant for different reasons. Police make decisions in a context of low visibility and have a great discretionary power over who will be subject of state intervention (Douglas & Christy, 1981; Turk, 1966).

The way in which respondents link their perceptions of corruption to their behaviour in the field was discussed during the focus groups. Representatives of the police also took into account of the link between perceptions of other police officers and the behaviour of those police officers. Police officers admitted that although their perceptions of corruption might be relatively stable over time, the societal context as well as individual elements determine their reaction. Personal elements which affect police officers' decisions are diverse. *'Everyone has a bad day once. I think, for me personally, I remain as neutral as possible. ... But that varies from person to person. I know colleagues who have, for example, problems at home, and take it out on their job..., for example a drunk person along the street, you can drop him off at home or put him in the cell for one night....'* (P10, January 7, 2014).

Three meaningful societal trends emerged during the focus groups that affect the enforcement of anti-corruption laws: corruption is not a priority for the Belgian government, the contemporary prosecution

³² Information that has been requested from the Service for Criminal Policy (Dienst Strafrechtelijk Beleid (DSB), accessed September 3, 2012).

policy is perceived as ineffective and contemporary discussion on the reorganisation of the federal police structure creates uncertain perspectives for the Central Office for the Repression of Corruption.

Corruption is not included as a priority in the Coalition Agreement of December 2011. Not only is corruption not on the political agenda, it is no longer a priority for the Belgian police as it is not included in the National Security Plan 2012-2015.³³ As a consequence thereof less resources are allocated toward the fight against corruption.³⁴ This was also mentioned during the focus groups. *‘The perception of corruption by the citizens is reflected in the policy. And by that I mean, until two or three years ago corruption was a priority for police and justice departments while that is no longer the case. ... Nowadays, corruption investigations are on the back-burner while in a previous National Security Plan it was a priority... The police organisation is no longer focused on the suppression of corruption. Local police forces are not any more engaged in tackling corruption, also judicial police departments spend less resources on corruption investigations... I have a concrete example that I don’t like to confess ... but once, our anti-corruption cell took over a number of corruption investigations from the local police, who didn’t want to invest any more time into corruption... It was very clear that it involved corruption, but, it was no longer a priority for the local police and therefore there was no available staff to deal with the case [...] in consultation with the prosecutor’s office, we took over these cases’* (P4, December 6, 2013). Moreover, this phenomenon is not translated into specific targeted actions integrating police, judiciary and other administrative services in an integrated policy. As a result thereof substantial cases of corruption stay unknown to the justice and police departments.

An essential matter during the focus groups was the absence of an integrated prosecution policy. Efforts by the police do not always result in an effective prosecution. This fosters the idea that justice is inefficient in the suppression of corruption. It emerged during the focus groups that this has a discouraging effect on their decision to report cases: *‘Anyway, every one of us knows that corruption is wrong, but what can we do about it? And then it’s a personal decision whether to report a case or not or you can just close your eyes because it makes no sense. The prosecutor’s office will never follow up my file because he has to follow up too many other cases’* (P9, January 7, 2014). Another officers quoted: *‘I speak personally and not as a police officer, but when you read that the government makes deals³⁵ with companies for millions what do you think the effect is on people, personally – why should we make a case against a citizen paying 50 euro to a tax official?’* (P10, January 7, 2014).

³³ See Nationaal Veiligheidsplan 2012–2015. Available from: www.polfedfedpol.be/pub/pdf/NVP2012-2015.pdf

³⁴ For example, the CORC is seriously understaffed and resources are inadequate. This office currently has only 19 Dutch investigators, which is less than half of the planned total staff in the organisation chart (Bové, 2013; European Commission, 2014b; Vanhecke, 2013).

³⁵ This settlement is possible by an extension of the *afkoopwet* (redemption law) pursuant to the Law of 14 April 2011 (*Belgian Official Journal* May 6, 2011). This Act provides for the amendment of Article 216bis of the

Finally, the future of the specialised service CORC is currently very unclear due to the current discussion on the optimisation of the structure of the Belgian federal police. One of the recommendations formulated within an audit report on the organisation of the federal police, ordered by the Minister of Home Affairs, calls for the dismantling of this service. Personnel might be transferred to the future regional judicial districts (Delepierre, 2013). As a result, not only will the technical expertise of investigating cases be lost, but the dynamics of the differential socialisation process driven by the intense occupational contacts within the centralised unit will also disappear. These specialised officers share negative attitudes and definitions towards corruption, learn specialised skills to lead criminal investigations and are confronted with the impact of corruption. This makes this group, despite the structural reorganisation and the unsure future of the CORC, an essential anti-corruption watchdog.

3.2.2. *Who's norms are enforced?*

An interesting finding which arose during the focus groups is that not only citizens but also police respondents do not make a clear distinction between corrupt behaviour that falls within the criminal law definition and reprehensible behaviour that is a sociological concept of corruption. In that sense corruption is broadly interpreted as a 'perversion of power' (see for example Brasz, 1970). A topical example is the practice of dual mandates in which politicians and public officials serve different positions simultaneously. Although this is today not an offence it evokes a sense of injustice and people call it corrupt (Van Damme, 2014).

The police force is the most central public service for enforcing the law (Newburn & Smith, 1996). Therefore it is thought-provoking that their perceptions of corruption do not fully match the criminal law concept. One of the central tasks of police in Western democratic regions is to protect fundamental freedoms and rights of citizens. Bayley's work on police and their relation to political systems refers in that sense to the '*function of regulating social conduct within a community through the use of physical force authorised in the name of the community.*' (1971, p. 92). This unique relationship between police and community gives rise to fundamental principles such as democratic

Code of Criminal Procedure. This extension means that settlements can be concluded between the defendant or suspect and the Belgian authorities in cases that are before the judge of investigation and during the criminal court proceedings. Previously the law was applicable only during the public prosecutor's investigations. The settlement could be either a financial payment or the handing over of goods. See also: '*Gemeenschappelijke Omzendbrief nr./2012 van de Minister van Justitie, het College van Procureurs-Generaal bij de Hoven van Beroep betreffende Toepassing van artikel 216 bis Sv., in het bijzonder m.b.t. het verruimd verval van de strafvordering tegen betaling van een geldsom (VVSBG) OEP, 1 April 2012*', (translation in English: Common Circular of the Minister of Justice nr./2012, the Board of Procurators-General of the Courts of Appeal concerning Application of Article 216 bis Sv., especially regarding the extended discontinuance against payment of a sum of money), Available from: www.static.tijd.be/pdf/afkopen.pdf.

policing or the legitimacy of the police. A minimalistic view of democratic policing refers to the principle that the police have to act to enforce law (Aitchison & Blaustein, 2013). The viewpoint of Alexandra and Miller (2010) that police officers hold more to the notion that corruption should be understood as a form of illegal behaviour is consistent with this minimalistic view.

Our research findings, however, do suggest that the fundamental principle that the police have to act, if conditions are given and actions are based on law, is apparently not that clear-cut in the case of corruption. Officers explained that the criminal law definition is not clear to many officers. According to the participants of the focus groups, police officers in the field distinguish 'legal' favours from 'illegal' and undue advantages. One of the participants of the focus groups suggested that the case of the tax official was not corrupt because public servants are not expected to work every hour of the day. If they work outside office hours it is normal that they ask for money for their service (P11, January 7, 2014). Our findings are consistent with the work of Jacobsson (2007, p. 1012). During interviews with public prosecutors and police officers it became apparent that they differentiate between 'real corruption' and less culpable action. Police and justice authorities motivated their decisions by constructing a continuum from 'real' corruption to condemnable gifts.

Our results empirically highlight the issue of accountability in relation to the enforcement of corruption. This again is an important argument for retaining an independent and specialised anti-corruption body to ensure not only a strong but also a fair anti-corruption policy. Police organisations are very influential in the initial stages of the registration process (Turk, 1966). Our research shows clearly that different departments of the police perceive corruption differently and it emerged during the focus groups that our respondents believe that their perception as well as those of their colleagues affect their actions in the field. In other words, there is a risk that depending on where a complaint is first received treatment will substantially differ. A relevant question is to what extent recent whistleblowing systems contribute substantially to the fight against corruption. In line with our results it is likely that specialised anti-corruption officers will be more keen to follow up a corruption file than not specialised police services.

The latter observation draws our attention to a fundamental question in respect to the legitimacy of the police. Do the police act in the interest of society as a whole? The statistical results show that police officers share more perceptions with higher occupational status groups. Account was also made during the focus groups of the fact that complex cases of corruption are sometimes left outside of consideration, and related – less complex – offences are policed. At the very end the risk exists that forms of petty corruption are more prominent in the eyes of the police than complex cases of corruption committed by elites. Petty corruption is more easily dealt with and thus more enforceable than grand forms of corruption. This results in social inequality in the enforcement of corruption.

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Appendix 1: Scenario based questionnaire



Geachte mevrouw, mijnheer,

Hartelijk bedankt dat u de vragenlijst wilt invullen.

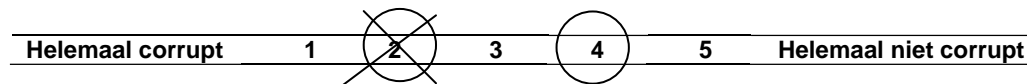
Het is de bedoeling dat **de jongste persoon in het gezin van 18 jaar of ouder** de vragen beantwoordt. De antwoorden vertegenwoordigen enkel de mening van hem of haar, niet die van het hele gezin.

Deze bevraging verloopt volgens de regels van de wet op de privacy. Al uw antwoorden zijn **strikt vertrouwelijk** en worden **anoniem** verwerkt door het onafhankelijke onderzoeksbureau M.A.S.

Instructies

In dit onderzoek vragen wij niet of u in het verleden al corrupt gedrag heeft gesteld. Wij zijn enkel geïnteresseerd welke situaties u corrupt vindt. De vragenlijst bestaat uit een aantal korte scenario's. Bij elk scenario worden nadien een aantal vragen gesteld.

U beantwoordt de vragen op een schaal van 1 tot 5. Antwoord 1 wil zeggen dat u de situatie helemaal corrupt vindt, antwoord 5 wil zeggen dat u de situatie helemaal niet corrupt vindt. U kan antwoorden door een cirkel te trekken rond het cijfer dat het best uw mening weergeeft. U kan uw antwoord altijd wijzigen. Dit doet u door een duidelijk kruis te trekken over het fout antwoord en een cirkel te trekken rond het cijfer dat u wilt aangeven.



Het is zeer belangrijk dat u steeds **UW persoonlijke mening** geeft. Er is geen juist of fout antwoord, ze gaan over wat u persoonlijk denkt. Er wordt u ook niet gevraagd of u denkt dat de situatie een overtreding van de wet is. Alleen uw persoonlijke mening telt.

Mogen wij u nogmaals danken voor uw medewerking want zonder u is dit onderzoek onmogelijk.

Vragen, klachten en opmerkingen kan u steeds kwijt bij **Arne Dormaels** op het nummer **09/243.24.90** of via volgend emailadres: arne.dormaels@hogent.be. Indien u vragen heeft of hulp nodig heeft met het invullen van de online vragenlijst, kan u steeds terecht bij **Joris Smet** van het studiebureau M.A.S. op het nummer 016/22.69.67.

DEEL I : WAT VINDT U CORRUPT ?

Scenario 1: Een bouwfirm is één van de kandidaten om een politiecommissariaat te renoveren. De firma kan hiermee 500.000 euro verdienen en probeert de burgemeester te overtuigen om de opdracht aan hem te gunnen.

1.1. Vindt u het corrupt dat de burgemeester door de bouwfirm wordt ontvangen in haar filiaal in Brussel?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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1.2. Vindt u het corrupt dat de burgemeester op kosten van de bouwfirm een bezoek brengt aan de hoofdzetel in Italië?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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1.3. Vindt u het corrupt dat de burgemeester op kosten van de bouwfirm zowel een bezoek brengt aan de hoofdzetel in Italië als een aantal culturele uitstappen maakt?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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Scenario 2: Elk jaar vindt het bal van de burgemeester plaats. Toegangskarten voor het diner en het bal kosten 50 euro.

2.1. Vindt u het corrupt dat een lokaal bedrijf voor 1.000 euro toegangskarten koopt voor het bal van de burgemeester?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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2.2. Vindt u het corrupt dat een bedrijf uit een andere stad voor 1.000 euro toegangskarten koopt voor het bal van de burgemeester?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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2.3. Vindt u het corrupt dat een bedrijf uit Duitsland voor 1.000 euro toegangskarten koopt voor het bal van de burgemeester?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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Scenario 3: Jan werkt als adviseur op een kabinet en is verantwoordelijk voor het opvolgen van bouwdoossiers die in opdracht van de stad worden uitgevoerd.

3.1. Vindt u het corrupt dat Jan tegen de gangbare huurprijzen een luxeflat huurt die eigendom is van een vastgoedmakelaar die grote bouwopdrachten uitvoert voor de stad?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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3.2. Vindt u het corrupt dat Jan aan een voordelig tarief een luxeflat huurt die eigendom is van een vastgoedmakelaar die grote bouwopdrachten uitvoert voor de stad?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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3.3. Vindt u het corrupt dat **de zus** van Jan aan een voordelig tarief een luxeflat huurt die eigendom is van een vastgoedmakelaar die grote bouwopdrachten uitvoert voor de stad?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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3.4. Vindt u het corrupt dat Jan gratis woont in een luxeflat die eigendom is van een vastgoedmakelaar die grote bouwopdrachten uitvoert voor de stad?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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Scenario 4: Bart is ingenieur en verantwoordelijk voor het onderhoud van een productieband in een autofabriek.

4.1. Vindt u het corrupt dat een toeleverancier van airbags Bart beloont met een vakantiereis nadat Bart het productieproces verbeterde waardoor de leverancier meer airbags kan leveren?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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4.2. Vindt u het corrupt dat een toeleverancier van airbags Bart een vakantiereis schenkt om er voor te zorgen dat hij het productieproces zou verbeteren waardoor de leverancier meer airbags kan leveren?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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4.3. Vindt u het corrupt dat een toeleverancier van airbags Bart beloont met een vakantiereis nadat hij opzettelijk fouten maakte waardoor de leverancier meer airbags kan leveren?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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4.4. Vindt u het corrupt dat een toeleverancier van airbags Bart een vakantiereis aanbiedt om er voor te zorgen dat hij opzettelijk fouten zou maken waardoor de leverancier meer onderdelen kan leveren?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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Scenario 5: Een artsenvereniging organiseert een informatiedag over de toepassing van een nieuw geneesmiddel.

5.1. Vindt u het corrupt dat het farmaceutisch bedrijf dat dit geneesmiddel produceert de artsenvereniging gratis een congresruimte aanbiedt in Brussel om hun bijeenkomst te organiseren?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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5.2. Vindt u het corrupt dat het farmaceutisch bedrijf dat dit geneesmiddel produceert de artsenvereniging gratis een congresruimte aanbiedt in Brussel en de factuur betaalt voor het diner?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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5.3. Vindt u het corrupt dat het farmaceutisch bedrijf dat dit geneesmiddel produceert de artsenvereniging aanbiedt om deze informatiedag op kosten van het bedrijf te organiseren in Mallorca?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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5.4. Vindt u het corrupt dat het farmaceutisch bedrijf dat dit geneesmiddel produceert de groep artsen aanbiedt om deze informatiedag op kosten van het bedrijf te organiseren in Mallorca waar ook hun gezin welkom is?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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Scenario 6: Een bouwondernemer voert regelmatig grote opdrachten uit voor een stad.

6.1. Vindt u het corrupt dat deze ondernemer de verkiezingsfolders van de schepen van openbare werken sponsort en de factuur van 1.000 euro betaalt?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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6.2. Vindt u het corrupt dat deze ondernemer 1.000 euro stort op de persoonlijke bankrekening van de schepen van openbare werken om zijn verkiezingsfolder te sponsoren?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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6.3. Vindt u het corrupt dat deze ondernemer 1.000 euro stort op de bankrekening van de politieke partij waar de schepen van openbare werken lid van is om de verkiezingsfolder te sponsoren?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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6.4. Vindt u het corrupt dat deze ondernemer 10.000 euro stort op de bankrekening van de politieke partij waar de schepen van openbare werken lid van is om de verkiezingsfolder te sponsoren?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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Scenario 7: Jan is verantwoordelijk voor het onderhoud en renovatie van de kantoorgebouwen.

7.1. Stel dat Jan een manager is bij een bedrijf. Vindt u het dan corrupt dat Jan businessklas voetbaltickets ontvangt van firma's die onderhoudswerken willen uitvoeren voor het bedrijf waar hij voor werkt?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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7.2. Stel dat Jan een manager is bij een bedrijf. Vindt u dan corrupt dat Jan businessklas voetbaltickets vraagt aan de firma's die onderhoudswerken willen uitvoeren voor het bedrijf waar hij voor werkt?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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7.3. Stel dat Jan als ambtenaar werkt voor de overheid. Vindt u dan corrupt dat Jan businessklas voetbaltickets ontvangt van firma's die onderhoudswerken willen uitvoeren voor de overheid?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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7.4. Stel dat Jan als ambtenaar werkt voor de overheid. Vindt u dan corrupt dat Jan businessklas voetbaltickets vraagt aan de firma's die onderhoudswerken willen uitvoeren voor de overheid?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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Scenario 8: Een schepen koopt bij een winkelketen computers aan voor zijn stadsdienst.

8.1. Vindt u het corrupt dat de schepen voordat hij computers voor de stad koopt een korting vraagt voor de aankoop van een computer voor zijn dochter?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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8.2. Vindt u het corrupt dat de winkelketen de schepen voordat hij computers voor de stad koopt ongevraagd een korting geeft voor de aankoop van een computer voor zijn dochter?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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8.3. Vindt u het corrupt dat de schepen nadat hij computers kocht voor de stad een korting vraagt bij de winkelketen voor de aankoop van een computer voor zijn dochter?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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8.4. Vindt u het corrupt dat de schepen nadat hij computers kocht voor de stad ongevraagd een korting krijgt bij de winkelketen voor de aankoop van een computer voor zijn dochter?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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4

Scenario 9: Een milieu-inspecteur Tom stelt vast dat een grootwarenhuis zijn deuren opende zonder milieuvergunning.

9.1. Vindt u het corrupt dat de eigenaar van het grootwarenhuis Tom voorstelt korting te geven voor zijn privéaankopen? In ruil daarvoor zou Tom **geen PV** opmaken.

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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9.2. Vindt u het corrupt dat de eigenaar van het grootwarenhuis Tom voorstelt korting te geven op zijn privéaankopen? In ruil daarvoor zou Tom **slechts een waarschuwing** geven.

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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9.3. Vindt u het corrupt dat **Tom zelf** voorstelt **slechts een waarschuwing** te geven in ruil voor korting op zijn privéaankopen?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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9.4. Vindt u het corrupt dat **Tom zelf** voorstelt **geen PV** op te maken in ruil voor korting op zijn privéaankopen?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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Scenario 10: Een parlamentslid heeft zeer goede handelscontacten in de vastgoedsector.

10.1. Vindt u het corrupt dat het parlamentslid zijn contacten doorgeeft **aan zijn dochter** zodat zij vastgoedcontracten kan binnenhalen? Zijn dochter werkt voor een vastgoedkantoor.

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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10.2. Vindt u het corrupt dat het parlamentslid zijn contacten gratis doorgeeft **aan bevriende ondernemers** zodat hij vastgoedcontracten kan binnenhalen?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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10.3. Vindt u het corrupt dat het parlamentslid zijn contacten **verkoopt voor 10.000 euro aan bevriende ondernemers** zodat zij vastgoedcontracten kunnen binnenhalen?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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Scenario 11: Een restaurant moet 500.000 euro achterstallige BTW betalen. De BTW-ontvanger Emma is een trouwe klant van het restaurant.

11.1. Vindt u het corrupt dat Emma de inning van de BTW-schuld op de lange baan schuift?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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11.2. Vindt u het corrupt dat Emma er niet alles aan doet om de BTW-schuld te ontvangen waardoor er minder BTW wordt betaald?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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11.3. Vindt u het corrupt dat Emma de BTW-schuld zonder gevolg klasseert zodat de restauranthouder niet moet betalen?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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11.4. Vindt u het corrupt dat Emma de restauranthouder adviseert om failliet te gaan om zo zijn schulden niet te moeten betalen?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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Scenario 12: Een advocaat probeert zo veel mogelijk overheidsopdrachten te krijgen. Daarom stuurt hij een overzicht van welke opdrachten hij al ontving en welke opdrachten hij nog graag zou ontvangen naar een aantal contacten.

12.1. Vindt u het corrupt dat de advocaat zijn overzicht opstuurt naar secretariaten van verschillende kabinetten om steun te vragen om meer opdrachten te ontvangen?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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12.2. Vindt u het corrupt dat de advocaat zijn overzicht opstuurt naar de politieke partij waar hij lid van is om zo meer opdrachten te ontvangen?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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12.3. Vindt u het corrupt dat de advocaat zijn overzicht opstuurt naar een bevriende minister om zo meer opdrachten te ontvangen?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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12.4. Vindt u het corrupt dat de advocaat zijn overzicht opstuurt naar zijn echtgenote die minister is om zo meer opdrachten te ontvangen?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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Scenario 13: Een belastingambtenaar werkt op een controlekantoor en behandelt er de belastingsaangiftes van zijn district.

13.1. Vindt u het corrupt dat de adviseur **gratis** advies verleent aan kennissen om een zo gunstig mogelijk aangifte in te dienen in zijn controledistrict?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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13.2. Vindt u het corrupt dat de adviseur na zijn uren **tegen betaling** advies verleent aan kennissen om een zo gunstig mogelijk aangifte in te dienen in zijn controledistrict?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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13.3. Vindt u het corrupt dat de adviseur na zijn uren **tegen betaling** de belastingsaangiften zo gunstig mogelijk **invult** voor kennissen uit zijn controledistrict?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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Scenario 14: Een douanier controleert een lading sportschoenen die bij een internationaal transport worden aangegeven. Hij twijfelt eraan of de lading schoenen overeenstemt met de uitvoervergunning. Daarom neemt hij stalen van de lading om een materiële controle van de schoenen uit te voeren.

14.1. Vindt u het corrupt dat **de douanier** meer schoenen **neemt** dan dat hij nodig heeft voor zijn controle? Op die manier houdt hij een paar sportschoenen over voor zichzelf zonder dat de exportfirma het weet.

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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14.2. Vindt u het corrupt dat **de douanier** meer schoenen **neemt** dan dat hij nodig heeft voor zijn controle? Op die manier houdt hij een paar sportschoenen over voor zichzelf wetende dat het **exportbedrijf een oogje toekniijpt** omdat zij anders vreest de uitvoerdocumenten niet op tijd te ontvangen.

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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14.3. Vindt u het corrupt dat het **exportbedrijf** aan de douanier **voorstelt** om meer schoenen te nemen dan nodig is omdat zij anders vreest de uitvoerdocumenten **niet op tijd** te ontvangen? Op die manier houdt de douanier een paar sportschoenen over voor zichzelf.

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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14.4. Vindt u het corrupt dat het **exportbedrijf** aan de douanier **voorstelt** om meer schoenen te nemen dan nodig is om **sneller** de uitvoerdocumenten te ontvangen? Op die manier houdt de douanier een paar sportschoenen over voor zichzelf.

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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Scenario 15: Een burgemeester gaat langs op het ministerieel kabinet van een partijgenoot om de afhandeling van een bouwdoosier te bevorderen.

15.1. Vindt u het corrupt dat de burgemeester een dossier bespreekt om de bouw van **een rusthuis** in zijn gemeente te bespoedigen?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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15.2. Vindt u het corrupt dat de burgemeester een dossier bespreekt om de bouw van **een bedrijventerrein** in zijn gemeente te bespoedigen?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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15.3. Vindt u het corrupt dat de burgemeester een dossier bespreekt om de bouw van **een golfterrein** in zijn gemeente te bespoedigen?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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15.4. Vindt u het corrupt dat de burgemeester een dossier bespreekt om de regularisering van **zijn eigen hoeve** te bespoedigen?

Helemaal corrupt	1	2	3	4	5	Helemaal niet corrupt
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DEEL II : CORRUPTIE

Er wordt vaak gezegd dat je in België gemakkelijker zaken kan regelen indien je over een “lange arm” beschikt of dat er in België altijd wel iets te regelen valt.

Hoe groot is de kans dat U ZELF een van de volgende handelingen zou stellen?

Kruis het vakje aan dat het beste bij u past.

		Heel klein	Klein	Groot	Heel groot
		1	2	3	4
A	Gebruik maken van een lange arm om een job bij de gemeente te bekomen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	Een lange arm gebruiken om een bouwvergunning te regelen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	Een politie-agent(e) een gift aanbieden om op die manier geen proces-verbaal te krijgen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D	Een ambtenaar geld geven om sneller een bouwvergunning te ontvangen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E	Een garagist geld geven om de schade aan de auto hoger in te schatten? Op die manier ontvangt u een hoger schadebedrag.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Hoe groot is volgens u de kans dat mensen uit uw NABIJE VRIENDENKRING een van de volgende handelingen zouden stellen?

		Heel klein	Klein	Groot	Heel groot
		1	2	3	4
A	Gebruik maken van een lange arm om een job bij de gemeente te bekomen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
B	Een lange arm gebruiken om een bouwvergunning te regelen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
C	Een politie-agent(e) een gift aanbieden om op die manier geen proces-verbaal te krijgen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
D	Een ambtenaar geld geven om sneller een bouwvergunning te ontvangen?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
E	Een garagist geld geven om de schade aan de auto hoger in te schatten? Op die manier ontvangt u een hoger schadebedrag.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

DEEL III : ACHTERGRONDKENMERKEN

3.1. Wat is uw geslacht ?

- A Man
- B Vrouw

3.2. Wat is uw geboortejaar ?

/ _1_ / _9_ / __ / __ /

3.3. Wat is uw postcode ?

/ __ / __ / __ / __ /

3.4. Wat is uw hoogst behaalde diploma ?

- A Geen diploma
- B Lager onderwijs
- C Lager middelbaar beroepsonderwijs
- D Lager middelbaar technisch onderwijs (A3)
- E Lager middelbaar algemeen vormend onderwijs
- F Hoger middelbaar technisch onderwijs (A2)
- G Hoger middelbaar algemeen vormend onderwijs
- H Hoger niet universitair onderwijs van het korte of lange type / professionele bachelor
- I Universitair onderwijs / master
- J Weet niet

3.5. Wat is uw statuut ?

- A Ik oefen een betaalde job uit → **ga naar vraag 3.6**
- B Gepensioneerd (ook brugpensioen)
- C Werkloos
- D Arbeidsongeschikt (ziekte, invaliditeit)
- E Scholier / student
- F Huisman, huisvrouw
- G Andere : (specificeer, bv. loopbaanonderbreking)
- H Weet niet

3.6. Werkt u in loondienst voor ... ?

1 De overheid

→ Indien dit het geval is, op welk niveau werkt u?

A Niveau A

B Niveau B

C Niveau C

D Niveau D

E Weet niet

→ Voor welke overheidsdienst werkt u?

.....

(specificeer, bv. onderwijs, politie, brandweer, gemeente, douane, ...)

2 De privésector

→ Indien dit het geval is, onder welk statuut ?

A Ongeschoolde arbeider

B Geschoolde arbeider

C Bediende lager kader

D Bediende middenkader

E Bediende hoger kader

F Bediende directiepersoneel

G Andere : (specificeer)

H Weet niet

3 Ik werk als zelfstandige

→ Indien dit het geval is, onder welk statuut ?

A Kleine zelfstandige

B Landbouwer, visser, ...

C Aannemer, groothandelaar

D Vrij beroep

E Andere : (specificeer)

F Weet niet

3.7. Hoe zou u uw woning omschrijven?

- A Eéngeswoning (rijhuis, half open of open bebouwing)
- B Appartement
- C Gemeubelde kamer of studio
- D Home, rusthuis
- E Serviceflat voor ouderen
- F Andere

3.8. Is uw gezin eigenaar of huurder van uw woning?

- A Eigenaar
- B Huurder van een privé-woning
- C Huurder van een sociale woning

Denkt u dat de meeste mensen deze vragenlijst eerlijk zullen invullen? Ja Neen

Heeft u zelf deze vragenlijst eerlijk ingevuld? Ja Neen

BEDANKT VOOR UW MEDEWERKING !

HOE TERUGBEZORGEN ?

- Gelieve deze vragenlijst na het invullen zo snel mogelijk terug te bezorgen.
- U doet dit door de vragenlijst in de bijgevoegde enveloppe te steken en op de post te doen.
- U heeft geen postzegel te kleven.

Appendix 2: overview sample and response rate police

	Sample	Netto Sample	Response rate
Flemish citizen	N = 2,256	607	26.91
CORC	N = 57	34	59.65
FJP	N = 240	193	80.42
Hasselt	6	6	
Turnhout	20	9	
Asse	16	16	
Oudenaarde	22	25	
Mechelen	20	20	
Veurne	10	15	
Dendermonde	10	10	
Tongeren	10	20	
Gent	40	28	
Leuven	10	20	
Kortrijk	10	1	
Antwerpen	non respons	non respons	
Ieper	3	3	
Brugge	12	20	
Local Police	N = 250	125	50.00
LP Antwerpen	25	non respons	
LP Gent	15	non respons	
LP GAOZ	7	non respons	
LP Sint-Niklaas	7	non respons	
LP Oostende	13	13	
LP RIHO	7	14	
LP Brasschaat	5	9	
LP Neteland	8	non respons	
LP Tongeren-Herstappe	5	10	
LP Dilbeek	6	12	
LP Halle	5	non respons	
LP Deinze-Zulte	5	5	
LP Vlaamse Ardennen	8	12	
LP Gavers	5	1	
LP Zwijndrecht	4	non respons	
LP Klein Brabant	5	8	
LP Berlaar-Nijlen	4	8	
LP Beringen/Ham/Tessenderlo	7	6	
LP Heusden-Zolder	4	non respons	
LP Maasland	5	7	
LP Beveren	6	non respons	
LP Berlare/Zele	4	non respons	
LP Grensleie	10	non respons	
LP Houthalen-helchteren	4	non respons	
LP Kastze	5	8	
LP Sint-Gillis-Waas/Stekene	4	non respons	
LP Het Houtsche	6	12	

Appendix 3: rank ordering scenario's

Used items Nominale scale (corrupt – not corrupt)	% scores item corrupt
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 offers Bart a holiday to make sure he would deliberately make mistakes so the supplier can deliver more spare parts?	98,1
Environmental inspector Tom states that a supermarket has opened its doors without environmental licence. Do you think it is corrupt that Tom suggests himself not to draw up an official report in exchange for a discount on his personal purchases?	97,2
Environmental inspector Tom states that a supermarket has opened its doors without environmental licence. Do you think it is corrupt that Tom suggests himself to only give a warning in exchange for a discount on his personal purchases?	96,8
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 rewards Bart with a holiday after he has deliberately made mistakes so the supplier can deliver more airbags?	96,6
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 Emma simply classifies the VAT debt so the restaurant owner does not have to pay it?	95,8
Environmental inspector Tom states that a supermarket has opened its doors without environmental licence. 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 not to draw up an official report.	95,4
Environmental inspector Tom states that a supermarket has opened its doors without environmental licence. 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.	93,3
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 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?	93,0
A Member of Parliament has very good contacts in the real estate market. Do you think it is corrupt that this MP gives his contacts to his daughter who works for a real estate agency. Doing so, she can acquire more real estate contracts.	92,2
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 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?	89,1
A contractor regularly executes large assignments for a city. Do you think it is corrupt that this contractor deposits 1,000 euro on the personal bank account of the alderman of public works to sponsor his election brochure?	88,9
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 the export company suggests the customs official to take more shoes than necessary in order to receive the export documents much quicker?	88,9
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 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?	86,8
A contractor regularly executes large assignments for a city. Do you think it is corrupt that this contractor deposits 10,000 euro on the bank account of the political party to which the alderman of public works belongs, to sponsor the election brochures?	85,8
A building company is one of the candidates to renovate police offices. The company can earn	84,7

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 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?	
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 group of doctors to organise this informative day on Mallorca, and also invites their family?	84,3
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 Emma does not everything it takes to collect the VAT debt, so less VAT is paid?	82,3
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 regularization of his own estate?	80,0
A customs official 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. Do you think it is corrupt that the customs official simply takes more shoes than required for the verification?	79,8
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 Emma advises the restaurant owner to go bankrupt so he does not have to settle his debts?	78,5
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 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?	76,7
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 to ask companies that want to do maintenance work for the government to give him business class football tickets?	75,3
A contractor regularly executes large assignments for a city. Do you think it is corrupt that 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?	73,6
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 Emma postpones the collection of the VAT debt?	71,4
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 to organise this informative day on Mallorca, at the expenses of the company?	69,7
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 gives Bart a holiday to make sure he will improve the production process so it would result in a higher airbag productivity?	66,2
A contractor regularly executes large assignments for a city. Do you think it is corrupt that this contractor sponsors the election brochures of the alderman of public works and pays the invoice amounting to 1,000 euro?	66,1
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 his survey to his wife who is a minister, to get more assignments?	65,9
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 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?	63,3
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 the mayor visits the head office in Italy, at the expenses of the building company?	61,1
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 ask companies that want to do maintenance work for the company he works at to give him business class football tickets?	60,9
An alderman purchases computers for his city service at a chain store. 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?	56,9

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 to receive business class football tickets from companies that want to do maintenance work for the government?	56,7
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 completes the tax return against payment in order to submit the best possible return in his district?	53,9
An alderman purchases computers for his city service at a chain store. Do you think it is corrupt that the alderman, after he purchased computers for the city, asks the chain store to get a discount for the purchase of a computer for his daughter?	52,2
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 his survey to a minister friend to get more assignments?	50,2
A Member of Parliament has very good contacts in the real estate market. Do you think it is corrupt that this MP gives his contacts to fellow entrepreneurs. Doing so he can acquire real estate contracts.	50,0
An alderman purchases computers for his city service at a chain store. Do you think it is corrupt that the chain store grants the alderman, before he purchases computers for the city, a discount for the purchase of a computer for his daughter, without him asking?	46,0
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 provides against payment advice to friends in order to submit the best possible tax return in his district?	45,5
A Member of Parliament has very good contacts in the real estate market. Do you think it is corrupt that this MP gives his contacts to his daughter who works for a real estate agency. Doing so, she can acquire more real estate contracts.	41,5
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 that a company in Germany purchases entrance tickets for the mayor's ball for a total amount of 1,000 euro?	37,7
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 a Brussels meeting area for free and pays the invoice of the dinner?	36,1
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 receive business class football tickets from companies that want to do maintenance work for the company he works at?	33,4
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 his survey to the political party he is a member of in order to get more assignments that way?	32,4
An alderman purchases computers for his city service at a chain store. Do you think it is corrupt that the alderman, 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?	30,5
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 that a company located in another city purchase entrance tickets for the mayor's ball for a total amount of 1,000 euro?	26,9
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 of a golf course in his municipality?	25,7
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 rewards Bart with a holiday after Bart has improved he production process resulting in a higher airbag productivity?	24,3
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 secretariats of minister offices to apply for support to get more assignments?	21,4
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 John rents a luxurious flat at a regular rental price, the flat being owned by a real estate agent who executes large building	18,6

assignment for the city?	
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 the mayor is invited to the Brussels establishment of the building company?	18,3
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 that a local company purchases entrance tickets for the mayor's ball for a total amount of 1,000 euro?	17,3
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 a Brussels meeting area for free, where they can organise their event?	15,0
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 provides for free advice to friends in order to submit the best possible tax return in his district?	14,8
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 of an industrial site in his municipality?	11,4
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 of a home for elderly in his municipality?	7,0

