



Peiffer, C., & Alvarez, L. (2016). Who will be the principled Principals? Examining willingness to actively oppose corruption. *Governance*, 29(3), 351-369. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12172>

Peer reviewed version

Link to published version (if available):
[10.1111/gove.12172](https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12172)

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Who will be the ‘Principled-Principals’? How Perceptions of Corruption Influence Willingness to Engage in Anticorruption Civic Action

Caryn Peiffer
Linda Alvarez

Note: This is the pre-published manuscript for: Peiffer & Alvarez (2016) ‘Who will be the Principled Principals? Examining willingness to actively oppose corruption’ *Governance* Volume 29, Issue 3, pp 351-369. The version presented here may differ from the published version or from the version of record. If you wish to cite this item you are advised to consult the publisher’s version

Abstract

Many anti-corruption campaigns aim to encourage citizens to demand better control over corruption. Recent literature suggests that perceived high levels of corruption and government effectiveness in controlling corruption will limit citizens’ willingness to actively oppose corruption. Using Transparency International’s 2013 Global Corruption Barometer we test these ideas across a 71 country sample. We find that perceived government effectiveness tends to encourage anticorruption action, while perceptions of corruption being widespread tend to have the opposite impact in non-OECD countries. Our analyses also suggest that the interaction between these perceptions are important; we find that especially among those who perceive that the level of corruption is high, when confidence in the government’s efforts grows so does their willingness fight corruption.

Over the last fifteen years, the effort and investment poured into fighting corruption in the developing world has grown seemingly exponentially (see Michael and Bowser, 2009:1), and the focus of donor supported anticorruption initiatives has arguably broadened, as well (Johnson, Taxell & Zaum, 2012; Schmidt 2007). Along with targeting the ‘supply’ of corruption, through the support of reforms that promise to ensure greater government transparency, a reduction in civil servants’ discretion over resources, and harsher punishments for corrupt transgressions (Agarwal and Van Wicklin III, 2012; Shah 2007), it is now the norm that anti-corruption initiatives also tackle the “demand-side” too. Demand-side initiatives share in common the goals of widening the socio-political space available for citizens to demand better control over corruption and empowering citizens’ groups to do so (Chene, 2008; Schmidt 2007; McNeil and Malena 2010). The logic behind these types of initiatives is rooted in the assumption that where political commitment to reform is lacking, “the demands and protests emanating from civil society can induce reluctant political leaders to conduct anti-corruption purges” (William 2000: xvi).

However, as several have noted, programs that simply facilitate an opening in the socio-political space available for citizens to voice their grievances or participate in government decision-making do not necessarily result in greater accountability (Ackerman, 2004; O’Neil et al., 2007:4-5; Malena et al. 2004). People face varying social, economic, and political obstacles to voicing demands for a more corrupt free environment (Chene, 2008; McGee and Gaventa, 2011). Moreover, even when

citizens have the ability to take advantage of opportunities to express their grievances, it is not entirely clear that many will be willing to do so.

The first contribution of this research is to examine the drivers of variable willingness to engage in anticorruption civic action, and we focus specifically on empirically investigating arguments made in recent literature on how different perceptions of the corruption environment impact willingness to participate in anticorruption civic activism. Based on lessons from Kenya and Uganda, Persson, Rothstein and Teorell (2013), argue that when there is a pervasive perception across society that everyone is engaging in corruption, most citizens will be inclined to “perpetrate rather than fight corrupt exchanges” (7). And, drawing on data from a survey of Swedes, Bauhr (2012) has argued that when people perceive that their government is capable of controlling corruption, they will view their own efforts within civil society to oppose corruption as unnecessary.

Thus far, these hypotheses have not been tested outside of the narrow contexts within which they were developed. Using data from Transparency International’s 2013 Global Corruption Barometer, we test these hypotheses using indicated willingness to engage in four types of anticorruption activities—namely, reporting corruption, participating in anticorruption protests, joining an anticorruption organisation, and paying more for products from a company that is corruption free—across a sample that includes responses from 71 countries. Leveraging the breadth of this sample, we find that the determinants of willingness to engage in anticorruption activism tend to differ across OECD and non-OECD contexts. For example, we find that perceptions of corruption being widespread tend to hamper willingness to fight corruption in a non-OECD setting, but encourage it in an OECD setting.

The second contribution this research makes is providing a test of how the interaction of these different perceptions influence willingness to fight corruption. In doing so, we find that, especially among those who perceive that corruption levels are high, when confidence in the government's efforts grows so will willingness to fight corruption. This is our most robust finding, as it holds up in all five non-OECD sample analyses, and in two of the five OECD sample analyses. Finally, based on our results, we conclude with some thoughts on how anticorruption awareness campaigns can best encourage a broad civil society response, and on how future research can further explore the link between perceptions of corruption and anticorruption activism.

Demanding control of corruption

Demand-side development programming—initiatives that support citizen groups' engagement in the public arena—inherently assume that citizen feedback can have a positive influence on developmental policy design and implementation. A World Bank guidance note describes the expected relationship between citizens expressing their voice and development outcomes: "...a vibrant civil society, and a transparent flow of information support poverty reduction by helping to hold governments accountable for delivering better services, creating jobs, and improving living standards" (The World Bank, 2009: 5). Like other demand-side development initiatives, those focusing on anticorruption do not assume the presence of an engaged citizenry; however, their effectiveness is thought to hinge upon it. Who should we expect to become engaged in an anticorruption focused civil society?

Very little has been written on the topic of anticorruption activism. Unlike questions of people's direct experiences with bribery, which now appear on many cross-national barometers (Rose and Peiffer, 2015), many surveys do not ask

questions about willingness to report corruption or protest against it. Perhaps as a result, the question of who is most likely to demand greater control of corruption remains understudied. In our consideration of this issue we did not find any other research that had examined the issue of corruption activism using data from the few surveys that have posed questions about reporting corruption. Recently, however, using data from qualitative interviews, two studies have suggested that certain perceptions of the corruption environment impact a person's willingness to engage in anticorruption activism. It is from these arguments that we derive the two main hypotheses that we test in this paper; we review them below.

Potentially important role of perceptions

Perceptions of the scale of corruption

In their insightful article, Persson, Rothstein and Teorell (2013), argue that traditional anticorruption interventions have failed because they are based on a mischaracterization of the problem. Most often seen through the prism of principal-agent theory, corruption is conventionally thought to occur when civil servants have discretion over public services and lack accountability. Through this view, corruption can be effectively tackled when 'principals' reduce government officials' level of discretion over services, increase their own ability to monitor officials' actions, and/or impose harsher punishments on those that get caught. Critical of this take on corruption, Persson, Rothstein and Teorell (2013), argue that in systemically corrupt contexts corruption is best understood as a collective action problem, instead. From their perspective, the application of the principal-agent theory mistakenly assumes that there will be 'principled principals' in civil society and in positions of power that will want fight corruption through civic action or enforce anticorruption laws.

According to Persson, Rothstein and Teorell (2013), when corruption is

systemic and perceived to be the norm, it is far more likely that people will continue to go with the corrupt grain, regardless of the reforms that are passed in the national capital (see also Marquette, 2012; Bauhr and Grimes, 2014). In this context most citizens will be inclined to “perpetrate rather than fight corrupt exchanges” (Persson, Rothstein and Teorell, 2013: 7). For Persson, Rothstein and Teorell (2013) collective action theory makes sense of this; it recognizes that peoples’ perceptions of others’ actions can reduce their willingness to work towards a common goal, even when the collective good will ostensibly benefit everyone if it was reached. Therefore, in contrast to a principal-agent approach to corruption, which tends to focus on the incentives an individual faces when making a choice to engage in corruption at a discrete point in time, a collective action theoretical approach highlights how collective or societal dynamics can work to sustain different patterns of practiced corruption.¹

For Persson, Rothstein and Teorell (2013), corrupt countries do not remain corrupt because they lack the legal framework or national institutions to fight it, but because people think their own actions to fight or abstain from corruption will not make a difference. From this logic, a perception that corruption is widespread or normal induces a ‘*corruption fatigue*’;² instead of motivating people to voice their discontent with how pervasive corruption is, people become less motivated to do anything to counter it. From Persson, Rothstein, and Teorell (2013), we derive the

¹ See Marquette and Peiffer (2015) for a review of how the two theoretical perspectives differ as they have been applied to anticorruption.

² The term ‘corruption fatigue’ is used in this article to articulate the idea that, instead of motivating people to actively oppose corruption, perceptions of corruption being widespread work to make people less motivated and/or disengage altogether from doing anything to counter it.

first hypothesis we test:

H1: The more a person perceives corruption to be pervasively practiced in society, the less willing they will be to engage in anticorruption activism.

One counter argument to this notion is that perceptions of corruption levels will not necessarily have a significant impact on willingness to fight corruption. Marquette and Peiffer (2015) have argued that a collective action theoretical approach to corruption should go beyond considering what impact perceptions have on the decision to engage in or fight against corruption. They argue that people may be reluctant to collectively fight corruption because the status quo is morally, politically, or materially defensible for those involved. This means that, depending on the context, many other variables, like the presence of societal norms that define corrupt acts as favorable expressions of reciprocity and/or whether corrupt exchanges satisfy material or political needs in an environment of poorly performing state institutions, may be more influential in shaping willingness to fight corruption.

A second counter argument, of course, is that perceptions of corruption being widespread or on the rise will instead serve as a motivating grievance for people to engage in anticorruption civic action. Drawing from research and case studies on social accountability, this is the assumption made by principal-agent theory inspired transparency initiatives (Persson, Rothstein and Teorell, 2013; Bauhr and Grimes, 2014; Kolsteg and Wiig, 2009). Peruzzotti and Smulovitz (2006) explain that societal accountability occurs when citizens and civil society organizations successfully publicize perceived government abuses and have compelled government institutions to investigate and issue related sanctions. Thus, transparency, through the lens of principal-agent theory, is expected to reduce citizens' cost of monitoring public officials, and through its publicization of corruption, heighten public awareness of

corruption, once hidden. Those espousing for greater transparency make an implicit assumption that citizens will disapprove of the corrupt acts revealed, and that such disapproval will translate into a willingness to become active in the effort to try to hold corrupt officials accountable (Bauhr and Grimes, 2014).

While several scholars have documented cases wherein ordinary citizens have effectively served as citizen ‘auditors’ to the government (Kaufman, 2002), and have created more transparency and accountability in government as a result (Fox, 2007), the chances of transparency measures evolving into greater social accountability are recognised to be tempered by the particularities of the governance environment within which they exist (Fenster 2006; Kolstad and Wiig, 2009; Bauhr and Nasiritousi, 2012). In the first instance, if perceptions of corruption hamper willingness to fight corruption, as Persson, Rothstein and Teorell (2013) argue, then transparency efforts that expose corruption may backfire by heightening the public’s perceptions of corruption, and by extension reducing popular willingness to fight corruption (see also Bauhr and Grimes, 2014). Moreover, others have found that transparency measures have a limited impact on social accountability in contexts where citizens lack education, media circulation is limited, and where elections are less than free and/or fair (see Lindstedt and Naurin, 2010). Transparency alone is therefore widely recognized to not be enough to ensure greater social accountability.

Perceptions of the government’s response

How pervasive corruption is perceived to be across society is only one dimension of a person’s perceived corruption environment. Also held are perceptions of how effective/ineffective the government is in its own efforts to control corruption. What impact do these perceptions have on willingness to actively oppose corruption? Examining the responses to a survey from a Swedish sample, Bauhr (2012) found that

corruption was both perceived to be a marginal problem and something that the political system could control itself. For Bauhr (2012), this high level of institutional trust works to produce a *lack* of civic engagement, as it gives citizens a “(potentially unwarranted) high trust that the government is able to deal with corruption” (79). Taking this argument to its extreme suggests that even when the problem of corruption is made salient, if people think that the government is able to control it, people will see no point in engaging in anti-corruption activities to counter it. From Bauhr’s (2012) study, we derive the second hypothesis we test:

H2: The more a person perceives their government’s efforts to control corruption as effective, the less willing they will be to engage in anticorruption activism.

A more nuanced argument to this one is put forward by Machado, et al. (2009); examining survey data from Latin America, they find that when political institutions were perceived to be strong and reliable, individuals were more likely to refrain from unconventional political action, like protesting, and instead channel their grievances through more ‘legitimate’ means, such as voting. Therefore, perceived institutional effectiveness may have varying effects on different types of political action. Of course, the opposite to Bauhr’s (2012) argument could instead be true, as well. People may feel encouraged by a perceived effective government’s response to control corruption and want to join in on the anticorruption fight, instead of sit on the side-lines. Along this vein and in more general terms, several studies have found that institutional trust is negatively linked to political disaffection (Pharr and Putnam 2000; Catterberg and Moreno, 2006; Levi and Stoker, 2000).

Both, Persson, Rothstein, and Teorell (2013) and Bauhr (2012) frame their arguments to be context specific. For Persson, Rothstein and Teorell (2013), the

negative influence that a perception of widespread corruption likely has on anticorruption engagement is a symptom of living in a systemically corrupt context. Indeed they found in their interviews of Ugandans and Kenyans—arguably, systemically corrupt countries—that despite moral disapproval of corruption, their interviewees often viewed efforts to fight corruption as futile, and justified their own engagement in corruption as a necessary evil. Similarly, for Bauhr (2012), whose observations are based on responses from a Swedish survey, institutional trust hinders civic anticorruption engagement in a context wherein corruption exists only at the margins. While instructive, by design both studies do not address how, if at all, generalizable these relationships are.

The question of generalizability has important policy consequences. For those working to encourage a civil society anticorruption response, the outlined hypotheses have important implications. Should anticorruption awareness raising campaigns publicize messages of corruption being a widespread problem? Or will those backfire, by limiting willingness to get involved? How about the government's efforts? Should successful stories of government interventions be highlighted or downplayed? Moreover, absent from the discussion thus far is how these perceptions interact with one another to impact anticorruption activism. After all, people hold perceptions of many different dimensions of their corruption environment at the same time.

We offer two contributions to the discussion on how perceptions impact active anticorruption opposition. First, with GCB's 2013 survey data, we test the outlined hypotheses using responses from people in 71 countries. Specifically, we examine how well each hypothesis is supported in a 23 OECD country sample, and a 48 non-OECD country sample. By splitting the total sample we are able to examine how context specific the evidence for each of the hypotheses is. Second, we examine how

perceptions of the corruption environment interact with each other to shape willingness to engage in anticorruption activity. We describe our data source and variables of interest next.

Willingness to Engage Across Countries

We rely on Transparency International’s 2013 wave of the Global Corruption Barometer (GCB) as it included questions to respondents about their willingness to actively oppose corruption. We benefit from its large cross-national reach, and in the aim of focusing on nationally representative samples, we use data from 71 of the 109 countries the survey was administered in.³ No other survey has reached such a large sample with questions about active opposition to corruption.

The questions on active opposition to corruption appear toward the end of the survey, after demographic questions and questions about perceptions of and experiences with corruption. Several yes/no questions are asked in a battery, wherein the respondents are first told, “there are different things people could do to fight corruption and I am now going to ask whether you would be willing to do any of the following.” The anticorruption activities we examine are listed in Table 1.

Table 1. ACTIVITIES IN OPPOSITION TO CORRUPTION ON GCB 2013

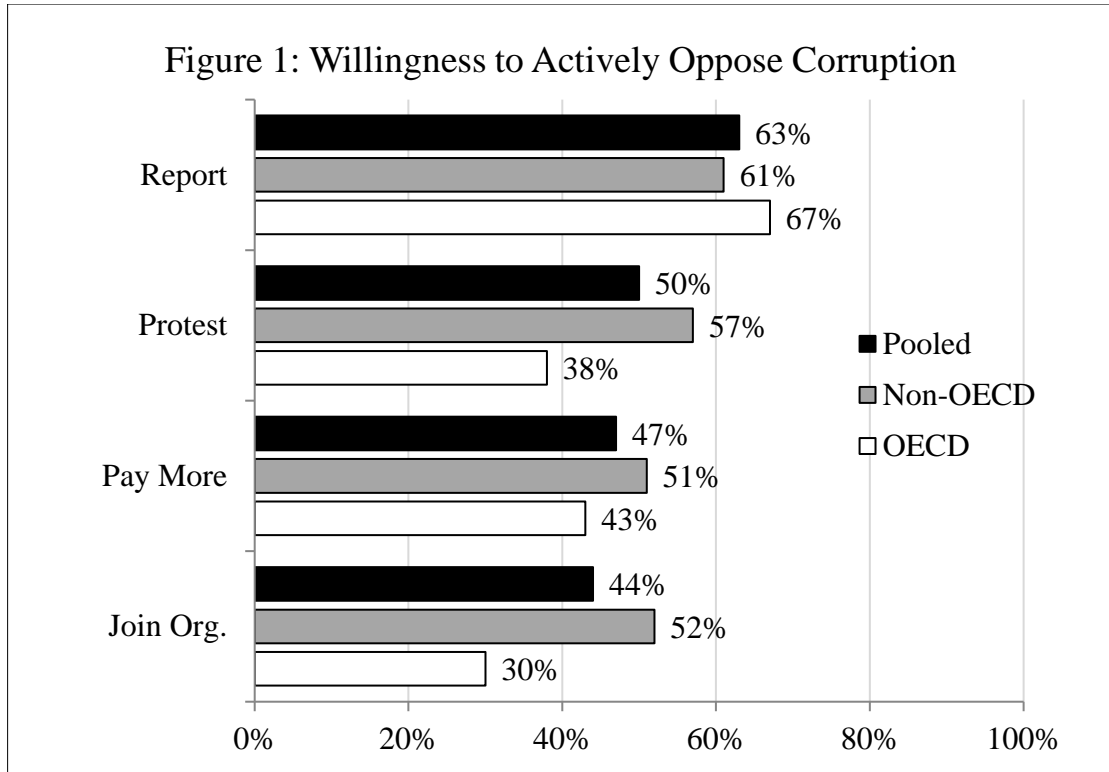
-
1. Take part in a peaceful protest or demonstration against corruption.
 2. Join an organization that works to reduce corruption as an active member.
 3. Pay more to buy from a company that is clean/corruption free.
 4. Report an incident of corruption.
-

³ We excluded 12 countries from our analysis because Transparency International advised us that data from those samples were potentially unreliable, and 20 other countries because their samples’ socio-demographic representation were inconsistent with what we expected given other sources of data. If requested, the authors can provide a more detailed discussion of the exclusion criteria used.

These activities—taking part in a protest, becoming an active member of an anticorruption organization, paying more to a corrupt-free company and reporting corruption—arguably all require varying costs to the individual, in terms of time, effort, or monetary engagement, and range from formalized to informal activities. For example, participating in an anticorruption protest would require an individual to travel to the anticorruption protest and ostensibly be there for a few hours of one day, while becoming an active member of a formal organization would require more regular dedication on behalf of the activist.⁴

As Figure 1 indicates, a majority of our sample stated that they would report corruption (63 percent of the total sample). Half were willing to protest, a little less than half were willing to pay more to a corruption free company, and about two fifths said they would join an anticorruption organization as an active member. Close to equal fifths of the total sample are spread across a five point scale of how many of these activities one would be willing to participate in; specifically, 23 percent indicated that they were willing to participate in all four of the activities, 19 percent in only three, 20 percent in only two, 19 percent in only one, and 21 percent in none of the activities.

⁴ Also asked is whether people would be willing to sign an anticorruption petition or spread the word on social media. We do not examine those actions as they do not require a significant time commitment, or cost to the individual.



These percentages of willingness to actively oppose corruption are strikingly high; even in countries where protests are frequently held nowhere near half of the population find themselves joining in. It is likely that these survey questions on willingness to oppose corruption have triggered a social desirability effect in responses. Respondents may feel some pressure to conform to the socially expected behavior that one would want to oppose corruption, regardless of whether or not they ultimately end up carrying out such behavior. This, however, is not necessarily a limitation of the data; although indicating on a survey that you are willing to engage in anticorruption activism is relatively ‘cost’ free in and of itself, and thus, not a perfect indicator of whether someone will actually get involved, the responses to these questions are arguably still differentiating between those that think that such endeavors might be worthwhile and those who do not.

Figure 1 highlights response differences across the OECD and non-OECD samples. Except in the case of reporting, respondents in non-OECD countries

generally indicate a higher degree of willingness to engage in anticorruption activism than do OECD respondents. Compared with OECD willingness rates, non-OECD respondents are a further 22 percent willing to join an anticorruption organization, a further 19 percent are willing to protest, and a further 8 percent are willing to pay more for a corruption free product. In contrast, OECD respondents, on average, are slightly more willing to report corruption. It is also important to note that comparisons of these country groupings hide a great deal of variation. For instance, roughly the same percentage (6 percent) of respondents from the Belgian and Jordanian sample are willing to engage in all four activities and 89 percent of both the Canadian and Ugandan sample would engage in at least one.

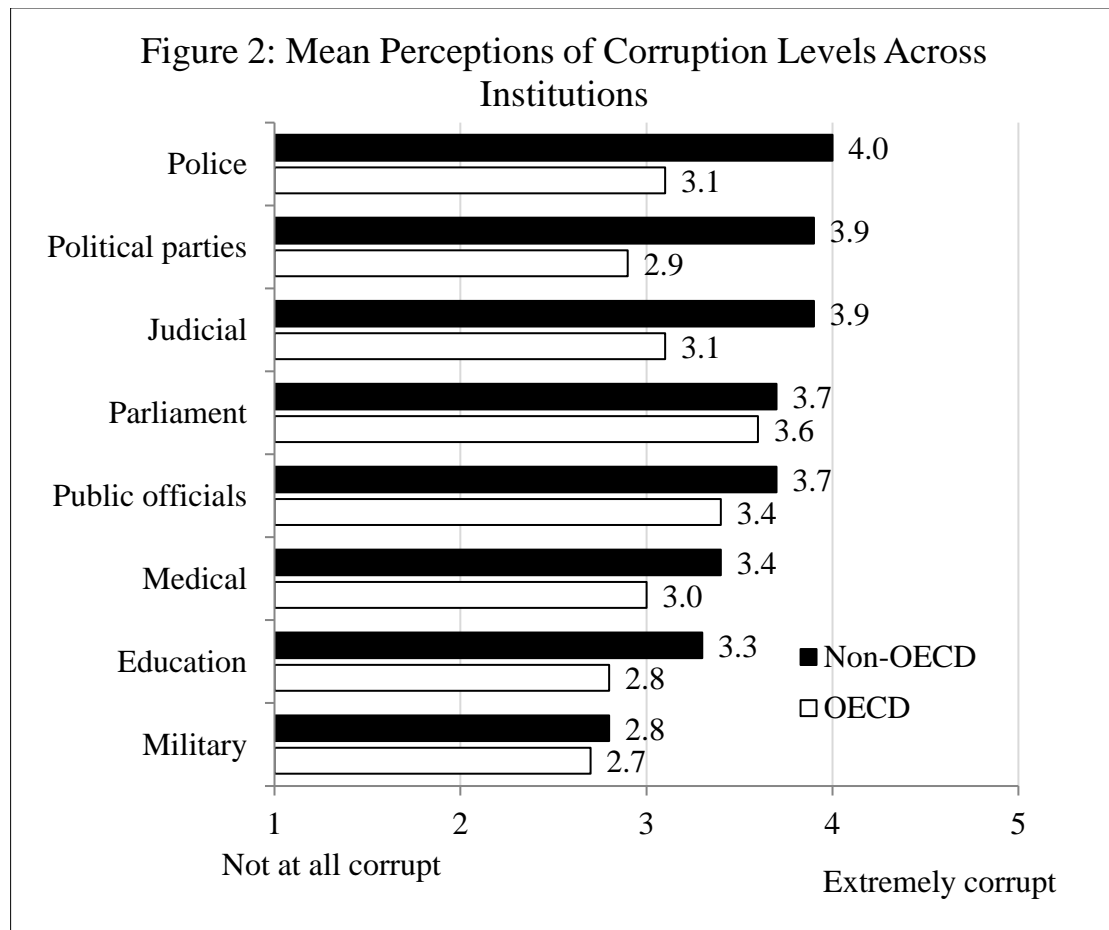
Measuring Perceptions of the Corruption Environment

The GCB includes many questions gauging respondents' perceptions of their corruption environment.⁵ Perceived corruption levels in society are approximated by responses to a battery of questions that ask "to what extent do you see the following categories in this country to be affected by corruption?" The government-related sectors that are asked about are political parties, parliament, military, education, medical, judiciary, police, and public officials. The possible answers range from 1, not at all corrupt to 5, extremely corrupt.

Figure 2 shows the mean responses to these questions, by OECD/non-OECD country categories. On average, OECD respondents perceive public institutions to be less corrupt than non-OECD respondents. However, the differences across the OECD and non-OECD divide are slight for evaluations of many institutions; on average,

⁵ The highest correlation between the three perception measures discussed used is -0.38, which is between "corruption increase" and "government is effective."

OECD respondents only rate their military, education system, medical sector, public officials, and parliament/legislature as a half or less than half a point less corrupt than non-OECD respondents. In contrast, an average non-OECD citizen tends to judge the police, political parties and judicial system much more harshly than an average OECD citizen.



For our analyses, we used principal component factor analysis to construct perceived measures of corruption levels from the responses to all of these questions. This was done for the OECD sample and the non-OECD sample separately. The factor analyses formed a single factor with an eigen value well over 1.0 for both samples (4.3 for the OECD sample and 3.6 for the non-OECD sample). In both cases, higher values of the factor score indicate higher perceived levels of corruption in the

government.

To test the second hypothesis, which focuses on perceived government's effectiveness in controlling corruption, we use responses from GCB's question, "how effective do you think your government's actions are in the fight against corruption?" Responses to this question are on a scale that ranges from 1, very ineffective to 5, very effective. The mean perception score of how effective the government is in addressing corruption across the two samples are similar; on average, the OECD sample rates government effectiveness in controlling corruption at a 2.4, and the non-OECD sample gives an average rating of 2.5.

Also controlled for in our analyses is an additional perception measure. It is based on a single question in the GCB of how corruption is perceived to have changed over the last two years. To this question respondents can answer on a scale of 1, decreased a lot to 5, increased a lot. Arguably, if people do tend to suffer from 'corruption fatigue'—wherein a perception of corruption being widely practiced in society negatively impacts willingness to actively oppose corruption—then it might also be true that a perceived notion that corruption is increasing will also hamper willingness to engage in anticorruption activism. The mean response to this question across OECD and non-OECD categories is the same: 3.7, which is somewhere between thinking that corruption 'stayed the same' or 'increased a little'.

Estimation Strategy

In the analyses that follow, indicated willingness to report, protest, pay more, and join an anticorruption organization are our respective dependent variables. Additionally, using tetrachoric correlations in factor analysis, we created an index of willingness to engage in anticorruption civic engagement, which is based on

responses to the questions on all four of the actions reviewed. The index aims to capture the extent to which a respondent is willing to engage in anticorruption activism, more generally.⁶ As the response options to the activism questions were yes/no, we employ logit analyses when analyzing their determinants, and regression analysis when analyzing the determinants of the anticorruption civic engagement index.⁷ To account for the multi-level structure of our data, each analysis treats countries as cluster variables. Additionally, in all reported statistics and analyses we weight each country-sample with the provided survey weight and incorporate into it a weight to equalize the samples across countries, so as to avoid giving one country-sample undue influence in aggregated statistics. Because our country-level samples are considerably smaller (23 for OECD and 48 for non-OECD) than our individual-level samples, we use a 0.10 p-value as the threshold for considering a country-level variable significant, and the standard 0.05 p-value as the threshold for considering individual-level variables as significant.

In each analysis, in addition to testing what impact each of the perceptions variables reviewed have, we control for several other potential influential variables. The list includes an individual's gender, age, income, education, urban locale, and

⁶ Tetrachoric correlations were necessary to use in the factor analyses because the responses to each of the activism questions are dichotomous. Two indices were produced, one for each sample; in both cases, a single factor with an eigen value well over 1.0 was created (2.0 for the OECD sample and 2.8 for the non-OECD sample). Higher values of the factor scores indicate greater willingness to engage in anticorruption activism.

⁷ The primary data set we use—Transparency International's 2013 Global Corruption Barometer—is cross-sectional (i.e. gathered at a single point in time). Like most analyses of survey data, this means that our analyses are unable to establish whether causal relationships exist between variables.

experience in participating in bureaucratic corruption (number of services bribed in the last year) and interfacing with the state (the number of state services the respondent has contacted in the last year). At the country level, we also control for the degree of democracy (Freedom House composite score, reversed so that higher numbers indicate more freedom), a measure of state ‘modernity’ (the percentage of women working in the workforce), and a country’s wealth (GDP per capita, ppp). Summary statistics and details on coding for all of the variables we use in analyses are detailed in Appendix Table 1.

Estimating the direct links between perceptions and anticorruption activism

As the hypotheses we outlined earlier deal with the potential direct effects that perceptions have on willingness to engage in anticorruption activism, we first estimate regressions without the inclusion of interaction terms between the perceptions variables. Table 2 shows the results of each analysis performed. As standard logit coefficients are difficult to interpret, we instead report predicted probability shifts for the analyses that use logistic regression. The shifts articulate estimations of how the predicted probability of being willing to engage in anticorruption activism changes when, holding the effects of all other variables constant, a shift is made in the independent variable of interest from its minimum to its maximum value. Predicted probability shifts not only illustrate the direction of the association between the independent and dependent variables—a positive shift illustrates a positive association—but they also indicate the size of the effect that each independent variable is estimated to have on the dependent variable. Moreover, as we calculate like predicted probability shifts—a minimum to maximum shift for all variables—the size of the estimated shifts are meaningfully comparable across variables. Finally, as

it is difficult to interpret the size of an estimated impact on determining a factor score, we report simple OLS regression coefficients for the models determining the activism indices.

Table 2: Analyses of the Determinants of Activism

	NON-OECD					OECD				
	Report	Protest	Join org.	Pay more	Index	Report	Protest	Join org.	Pay more	Index
	<i>Predicted probability shifts</i>				<i>Coef.</i>	<i>Predicted probability shifts</i>				<i>Coef.</i>
<i>Perceptions</i>										
Corruption level	-0.15*	-0.11*	-0.10	-0.14*	-0.02*	-0.05	0.12*	0.19***	-0.08	0.02
Gov't effective	0.10***	0.02	0.06**	0.03	0.01*	-0.01	-0.15***	-0.03	0.06*	-0.01
Corruption increase	0.06	0.06*	0.08**	0.05	0.02*	0.06	0.11***	0.05*	0.02	0.02*
<i>Individual level controls</i>										
# of bribes	-0.15*	-0.03	0.04	-0.14*	-0.01	-0.25**	0.12	0.17*	-0.01	0.01
# of contacts	0.22***	0.19***	0.16***	0.20***	0.03***	0.31***	0.21***	0.23***	0.20***	0.03***
Female	-0.03***	-0.05***	-0.02**	-0.01*	-0.03***	-0.02***	-0.03**	-0.03***	0.02*	-0.02***
Age	-0.07**	-0.14***	-0.12***	0.02***	-0.02***	-0.01	-0.09**	-0.04	0.03	-0.01
Income	0.03	0.00	-0.02	0.04	0.00	-0.01	-0.02	-0.03	0.06	-0.00
Education	0.03	-0.08*	0.02	0.02	-0.00	0.25***	0.03	0.09**	0.20***	0.05***
Urban	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.04*	0.03*	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.02	0.04
<i>Contextual controls</i>										
FH democracy	0.15	0.10	0.00	-0.02	0.01	-0.21	-0.09	-0.20	-0.23	-0.09
% women in work	0.12+	0.14	0.30***	0.22*	0.00**	0.12	0.03	-0.12	-0.20	-0.00
GDP per capita	-0.14	-0.22*	-0.32***	-0.20+	-0.01**	0.06	-0.11	0.02	0.12	0.00
N	36642	36642	36642	36642	36642	17354	17354	17354	17354	17354
Wald chi ²	306	244	202	110		625	214	436	345	
Prob >chi ²	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	
Pseudo R ²	0.03	0.03	0.07	0.03		0.06	0.04	0.05	0.04	
F					19.32					22.00
Prob>F					0.00					0.00
R-squared					0.09					0.09

Levels of statistical significance are denoted by ***p<0.001, **p<0.01, *p<0.05, and +p<0.10 (applied only to country-level variables)

The results from our analyses lend mixed support to the idea that a perception of corruption being widespread reduces willingness to engage in anticorruption activism (H1). In relatively strong support of the hypothesis, we find in four of the five non-OECD analyses that perceived corruption is significantly and negatively related to willingness to engage in anticorruption activism. Specifically, holding the effects of all else constant, a shift in perceived corruption from a minimum to maximum level engenders a predicted 15 percent decrease in the probability of being willing to report corruption, 11 percent decrease in the probability of being willing to join an anticorruption protest, and a 14 percent decrease in the probability of being willing to pay more for a corruption free product. It is also negatively and significantly associated with the willingness to engage in anticorruption activism index. These findings strongly support H1, which articulates the argument advanced by Persson, Rothstein and Teorell (2013); in countries where corruption is thought to exist more systemically, people's perceptions of corruption levels as being high can work to evoke a 'corruption fatigue', thereby reducing willingness to fight the issue.

In contrast, in OECD countries, when significantly associated, our analyses suggest that a high level of perceived corruption works to ignite the activist spirit. This trend, however, is illustrated in only in two of the five OECD models; in the other three there is not a significant association found. Holding the effects of all else constant, the estimated change in probability of being willing to protest and join an anticorruption organization when perceived corruption goes from its minimum to maximum value increases by 12 and 19 percentage points, respectively. Therefore, together, these 'mixed' results breathe life into a cohesive message: whether and how perceptions of corruption levels impact willingness to get involved in the fight against corruption does indeed depend very much on the context within which corruption is

perceived.

A less clear message emerges from the estimated impact that government effectiveness has on willingness to get involved. In only two of the OECD and in three of the non-OECD models is government effectiveness found to be significantly associated with willingness to engage in anticorruption activism. In four models, perceived government effectiveness is positively associated with willingness to get engaged, while in one it is negatively so. Specifically, holding the effects of all else constant, a shift from a minimum perceived level of government effectiveness to a maximum level is associated with a 10 percent increase in the probability of being willing to report corruption and a six percent increase in the probability of being willing to join an anticorruption organization in the non-OECD sample, and a six percent increase in the probability of being willing to pay more for a corruption free product in the OECD sample. It is also significantly and positively related to the activism index in the non-OECD model. In contrast, it is significantly and negatively associated with being willing to protest corruption in the OECD sample; only this finding offers support for the hypothesis advanced by Bauhr (2012) (H2) that perceived government effectiveness will hinder activism in contexts where corruption exists more incidentally in society.

For both samples, when significantly associated with willingness to actively oppose corruption, a perception that corruption is increasing compels willingness rather than reduces it. A shift from thinking that corruption has decreased a lot in the last two years to increased a lot in the last two years is associated with a predicted six percent and 11 percent increase in the probability of being willing to protest for non-OECD and OECD samples, respectively (holding the effects of all else constant). Similar shifts are associated with a predicted eight and five percent increase in the

probability of being willing to join an anticorruption protest for non-OECD and OECD samples, respectively. A perception of corruption increasing is also significantly and positively associated with the activism index for both samples.

These results are particularly interesting given the fairly consistent message given by the estimated impact of perceived corruption levels on anticorruption activism in the non-OECD sample models. To summarize the paradox: on the one hand, we find, of the non-OECD sample, that perceptions of corruption being widely practiced tend to reduce willingness to get involved, and on the other hand, we also find that a perceived notion of corruption becoming a greater problem may work to counter ‘corruption fatigue’ by compelling willingness to engage in the fight against corruption. As these are two distinctly different perceptions, this message is not necessarily inconsistent. People may be swayed in one direction by their perceptions of how widespread corruption is, and in another direction entirely by a perception that corruption is becoming more of a problem.

Taken together, uneven support emerges for the outlined hypotheses. Perceptions have inconsistently estimated direct effects on the dependent variables. Most strongly, the message emerges that perceived systematic corruption works to reduce willingness to engage in activism in the non-OECD setting, and, if impactful at all, likely induces it in the OECD setting. Less robustly, we find that perceived government effectiveness and perceptions of corruption increasing tends to compel willingness to get involved. The lack of robustness found of the effects of perceptions stands in strong contrast to the estimated impact of being a man, and having frequent contact with the state’s services; consistently, these factors are found to significantly and positively impact willingness to engage in anticorruption activism. Of the two, the number of state contacts garners the largest estimated effect. For example, a shift

from having zero to eight contacts with the state is associated with a 31 percent increase in the probability of being willing to report corruption in the OECD sample and a 22 percent increase in the non-OECD sample, holding all else equal. In contrast, a shift from being a male to being a female is only associated with a 3 percent decrease, in the probability of reporting corruption in the non-OECD sample and a 2 percent decrease in the OECD sample.

Moreover, some of the control variables appear to have sample specific effects. For instance, in OECD models, education seems to matter; people with a higher level of education are more willing to protest, join an organisation and pay more for a corruption free product. Education is also positively associated with the index of engagement for that sample. Age is a consistent predictor across all dependent variables in the non-OECD sample models; in that setting, older people are less likely willing to report, protest, or join an organisation, but more likely willing to pay more for a corruption free product. It is also negatively associated with the index of engagement. In the OECD sample models, age is only significantly related to willingness to protest, and it is negatively so.

In our non-OECD sample models, there tends to be a positive and significant association with activism and living in a country where a high percentage of women work in the formal labour market. The percentage of women in the formal workforce has been used elsewhere as a proxy for a more culturally modern, or individualistic (as opposed to a collectivist) society (Peiffer and Boussalis, 2010). More than a culturally traditional society, a culturally modern society is thought to put greater value on gender equality and the rights of individuals and minorities. Perhaps these cultural attributes give respondents a feeling of empowerment to voice their discontent with a corrupt transgression. In contrast, income, urbanisation and the level

of democracy, the latter of which we expected would especially encourage engagement in civic action through its securing of civil liberties, were either not at all significantly associated to willingness to engage in anticorruption activism in any of the models or registered somewhat minor significance in only a couple of the models.

How perceptions interact

Thus far we have considered whether and how different perceptions of the corruption environment directly impact willingness to engage in anticorruption activism. As people hold different perceptions of their corruption environment at the same time, it is important to also examine whether perceptions interact with each other to influence willingness to actively oppose corruption. Here we focus on the two variables of interest in the literature, perceptions of corruption levels and government effectiveness in controlling corruption. To test what impact an interaction variable created between the two has on willingness to engage in anticorruption activism we estimated new analyses using the regression models of Table 2 as ‘base models’ and added to them an interaction variable of two perception measures.

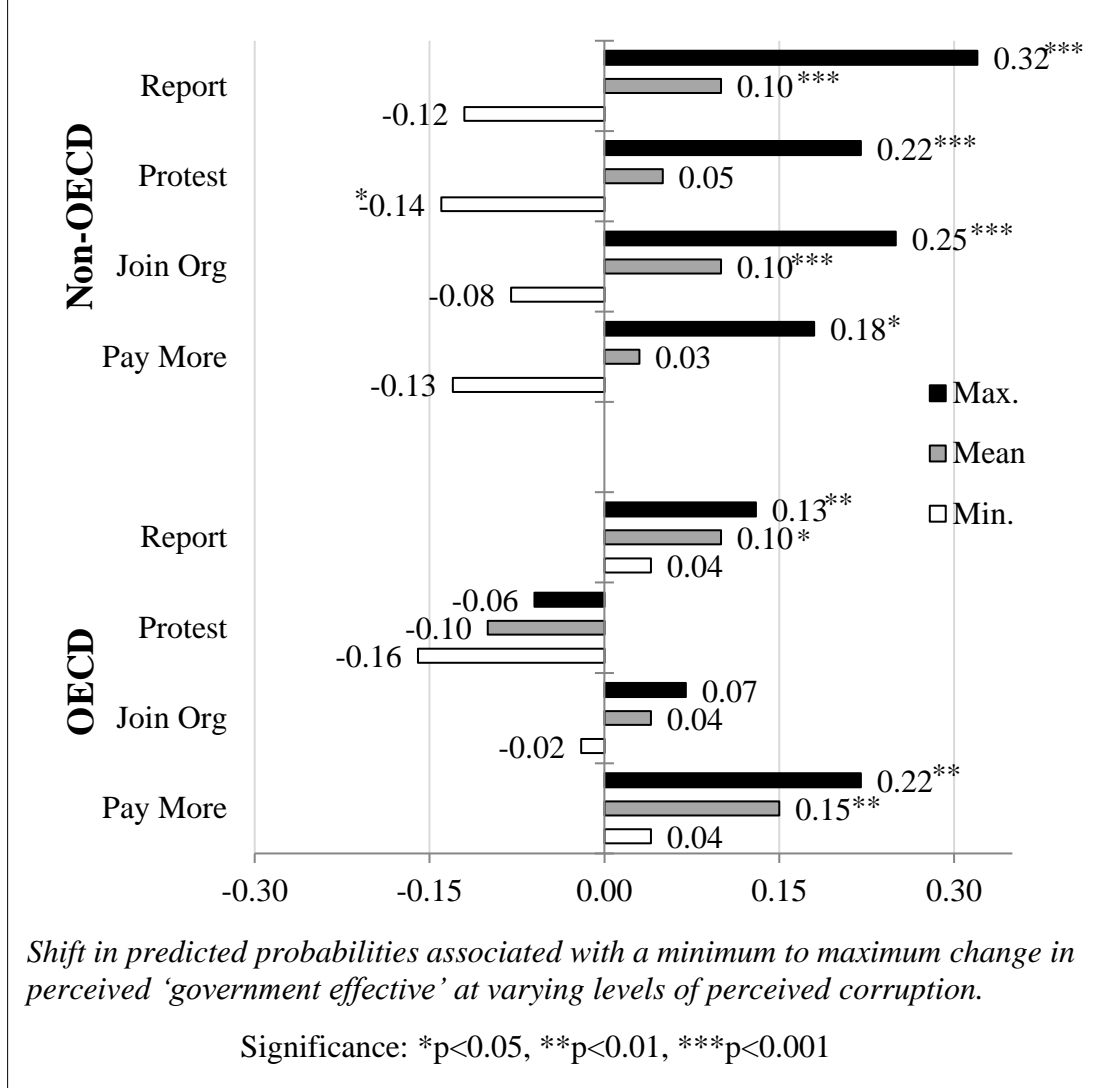
Estimating the direction, size and significance of the impact that an interaction variable has on a dependent variable in a logistic analysis is not as straightforward as it is in a linear regression, like OLS. Because of this statistical inferences cannot be made about the impact of an interaction term by simply looking at its coefficient and statistical significance (Ai & Norton, 2003). An insignificant and negative coefficient, for example, may hide that the interaction term is significantly and positively associated with the dependent variable at high levels of both constituent terms, but not at middle or lower levels of the constituent variables. Therefore, it is important to ‘unpack’ the effects of the interaction. For this reason, we focus here on

the ‘unpacked’ effects of the interaction variable in the logistic regressions, which are summarised in Figure 3.

Through ‘unpacking’ the effects of the interaction we address the question: how, if at all, is willingness to get involved impacted by a change in perceived government effectiveness, when that change is also accompanied with varying perceived levels of corruption? More precisely, Figure 3 displays shifts in the predicted probabilities of being willing to engage in anticorruption activism that are associated with a change from thinking that the government is very ineffective in its efforts to control corruption to thinking that the government is very effective in its efforts to control corruption, at different levels of perceived corruption. Denoted by black bars is a maximum, highest level of perceived corruption, in grey is a middle point, which is a mean level of perceived corruption, and in white is a minimum, lowest level of perceived corruption.⁸

⁸ The minimum, mean and maximum values for non-OECD sample and OECD samples are respectively: are -2.61, 0.00, and 2.05, and -3.43, 0.00, and 2.61.

Figure 3: Interaction Associated Changes in Predicted Probabilities



Across all of the non-OECD, and two of the OECD logistic regressions (reporting and paying more) we find a consistent story. A positive change in perceived government effectiveness is associated with a positive shift in the predicted probability of being willing to get involved when it is also accompanied by a perception that corruption is high. The robustness of this dynamic deserves highlighting, as only in the case of 'number of state contacts' and gender do other variables have such a consistently estimated impact on the dependent variables scrutinised in Figure 3. The sizes of the estimated impact of this interaction are quite striking as well; in the non-OECD setting, when complemented with a high level of

perceived corruption, a minimum to maximum change in perceived government effectiveness is predicted to increase the probability of being willing to report corruption by 32 percent, join an organisation by 25 percent, protest by 22 percent, and pay more for a corruption free product by 18 percent (holding the effects of all else equal). Under the same conditions in the OECD (high perceptions of corruption), holding all else equal, a minimum to maximum shift in perceived government effectiveness is predicted to increase the probability of being willing to pay more for a corruption free product by 22 percent and report corruption by a more modest 13 percent.

In strong contrast, our estimations indicate that when corruption is perceived to exist at a middle level (neither high nor low levels), a shift in perceived government effectiveness is not at all associated with changes in the predicted probability of willingness to protest or pay more in the non-OECD context, or protest or join an organisation in the OECD context. And, in the cases of being willing to report in the OECD and non-OECD setting, and join an organisation in the non-OECD setting, at a middle level of perceived corruption, the minimum to maximum shift government effectiveness is associated with a smaller shift in the predicted probability of willing to engage in anticorruption civic action, than that of the comparable predicted probability shift associated with a high level of perceived corruption.

Furthermore, at the lowest levels of perceived corruption, a change in perceived government effectiveness is more often than not, not significantly associated with a shift in the predicted probability of being willing to get involved. Only in the case of protesting in a non-OECD setting is a positive change in perceived government effectiveness negatively related to willingness to get involved when corruption is perceived to be low.

Finally, also examined, in unreported models, is how the interaction between the two perceptions associates with the activism indices that were created. To summarise those results, for the non-OECD sample, a minimum to maximum change in perceived government effectiveness was once again significantly and positively associated with the activism index when perceptions of corruption were high (change in slope: 0.26, p-value: 0.000), less positively and significantly associated when perceptions of corruption were at middle levels (change in slope: 0.08, p-value: 0.005) and not significantly associated at low levels of perceived corruption (change in slope: -0.12, p-value: 0.075). By contrast, for the OECD sample, the same shift in perceived government effectiveness was not significantly associated with the activism index at any level of perceived corruption.

Taken together, the overall message that emerges is both nuanced and clear. On the one hand, for those that think that corruption exists only at the margins of society, confidence in the government is unlikely to impact their engagement in anticorruption work. This is a slightly different finding, compared to the argument advanced by Bauhr (2012), which was that perceived government effectiveness would negatively impact willingness to engage in anticorruption activity when it was accompanied by a view of corruption being incidentally practiced. On the other hand, our results also suggest that when corruption is perceived to be a widespread issue, particularly in the non-OECD context, a significant growth in confidence in the government's efforts will work to compel willingness to get involved in the fight against corruption. This message adds an important layer to the support we found

earlier for the argument advanced by Persson, Rothstein and Teorell (2013).⁹ Instead of perceived widespread corruption only working to dim the activist spirit, our results show that it can work with perceived government effectiveness to encourage willingness to become engaged. Our findings indicate that willingness to get involved hinges not only a perception that the government is working sincerely and effectively to tackle corruption, but also on perceiving that corruption is a significant problem to tackle.

Conclusion

The aim of any anticorruption program is to ultimately reduce corruption. The logic underscoring demand-side anticorruption interventions holds that the potential effects of anticorruption efforts are inherently linked to their ability to motivate broad sectors of the population to buy into a mentality that actively opposes corruption. Inspired by recent literature, this article has empirically tested whether and to what extent different perceptions of the corruption environment impact willingness to fight corruption. We found, in a non-OECD setting, that perceptions of corruption being widespread can contribute to a ‘corruption fatigue’ whereby people are less willing to engage in anticorruption activism, but in an OECD setting such perceptions are likely less influential and, if anything, can work to ignite the activist spirit. Though less robustly, we also found that perceived government effectiveness and perceptions of corruption becoming a worse problem tend to encourage willingness to get involved, rather than hamper it.

⁹ Persson, Rothstein and Teorell (2013) do not address what impact perceived government effectiveness may have on corruption patterns or willingness to fight corruption.

In an additional contribution to the literature, we also examine how these perceptions interact with each other to impact willingness to fight corruption. When interpreting the effects of an interaction term, we found considerable support for the idea that a person's willingness to actively oppose corruption is a function of how different perceptions work when held together. Specifically, we find that especially among those who perceive that corruption levels are high, when confidence in the government's efforts grows so will willingness to participate in the fight against corruption.

Taken together and relating this to potential policy lessons, two key messages deserve underlining. First, especially in places where corruption is perceived to be widely practiced, 'corruption fatigue' should be a real concern to those that want to encourage a popular anticorruption response; widely held perceptions that corruption is normal can work to undermine efforts to get civil society involved in meaningful anticorruption work.

The second message is more hopeful. Especially in a setting where corruption is perceived to be widespread, and where society is most vulnerable to 'corruption fatigue', changing people's perceptions of their own government's role in fighting corruption can work to counter corruption resignation. Rather than sit on the side lines to let the government deal with it, people will likely be encouraged by signs of government success to join in on the fight. As such, a strict interpretation of our results suggest that, especially in a developing country context, those interested in encouraging a civil society anticorruption response should focus awareness raising efforts on publicising government successes. However, changing widespread perceptions of how effective or sincere the government is in its efforts to tackle corruption may admittedly be very difficult. Especially in systemically corrupt

contexts, the public may be rightfully sceptical of ‘good governance’ publicity campaigns that are not matched by genuine observable changes in how public officials deal with corrupt transgressions.

Thus, perhaps more than anything, our findings highlight the need for further research into how perceptions of the corruption environment are formed and maintained. We think that a particularly important task going forward will be to assess what impact anticorruption awareness raising campaigns have had. Efforts to educate citizens about the harms of corruption and what governments are doing to tackle corruption are now prominent in many anticorruption campaigns. How if at all are these efforts effective in inspiring activism? Or might they be unintentionally backfiring, by inducing a sense of ‘corruption fatigue’?

Though the initial evidence presented here indicates that perceptions of corruption matter, it also signals strongly that their effects on activism are non-linear. We suspect that no less should be expected of how perceptions interact with various anticorruption strategies on the ground. If civic action is key to reducing corruption, we must not only pay attention to what people perceive of their corruption environment, but how perceptions are shaped, and what role anticorruption programming is playing in shaping them.

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Appendix Table 1: Construction and Sources of Measures

Variable	Q #/Source	Notes on construction	Mean	Std Dev.	Values
<i>Dependent Variables</i>					
Report	Q10F	1 if willing to report corruption, 0 if not	0.63	0.48	0,1
Protest	Q10B	1 if willing to protest against corruption, 0 if not	0.51	0.50	0,1
Join Organization	Q10C	1 if willing to join anticorruption organisation, 0 if not	0.45	0.50	0,1
Pay more	Q10D	1 if willing to pay more for a corrupt free product, 0 if not	0.48	0.50	0,1
Activism Index (OECD)	Q10B-D,F	Factor index created from responses from Q10B-D,F	0.55	0.42	0-1.11
Activism Index (non-OECD)	Q10B-D,F	Factor index created from responses from Q10B-D,F	0.53	0.42	0-1.09
<i>Perceptions</i>					
Corruption level	Q6A-C, H-L	Factor of perceived corruption of public officials.	0.04	0.89	-2.6-1.6
Gov't effective	Q5	How effective gov't: 1 very effective to 5 very ineffective	2.50	1.10	1-5
Corruption increasing	Q1	Past 2 years corruption: 1 decreased a lot, to 5 increased a lot	3.66	1.16	1-5
<i>Individual level controls</i>					
# of bribes	Q7B1-8	Number of services bribes given	0.53	1.14	0-8
# of contacts	Q7A1-8	Number of services contacted	2.79	2.00	0-8
Female	SEXE	1 female, 0 male	0.50	0.50	0,1
Age	AGE_YRS	1 <25, 2 25-34, 3 35-44, 4 45-54, 5 55-64, 6 65+	3.07	1.57	1-6
Income	INCOME	1 low, 2 medium low, 3 medium, 4 medium high, 5 high	2.58	1.11	1-5
Education	EDUCATION	1 none, 2 basic, 3 secondary, 4 university	2.96	0.86	1-4
Urban	RURAL	0 rural area, 1 urban area	0.58	0.49	0,1
<i>Contextual Controls</i>					
FH democracy	Freedom house (2012)	Average of civil liberties and political rights score; inversed.	4.11	1.64	1-6
% women in workforce	World Bank (2011)	% of women working in the workforce	51.0	16.3	14.5-88.2
GDP per capita	IMF WEO (2012)	GDP per capita (ppp), in thousands, current international dollars	13.5	13.6	0.55-54.4

Note: Summary statistics reflect the 71-country pooled sample.