

Perceptions of Corruption and Their Relevance to Anti-corruption Measures: Research Findings of the EU-Project ‘Crime and Culture’

Abstract

The article aims at presenting summary results and main insights on perceptions of corruption elaborated within the EU-research project ‘Crime and Culture’ (Sixth Framework Programme of the European Commission, 2006-2009). In order to optimise corruption prevention in the European Union, policymakers should pay closer attention to how corruption is viewed in individual member states and candidate countries. A ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach is unlikely to be effective. Instead, prevention policies should be adapted to fit prevailing socio-cultural conditions and take into account how such policies are perceived in daily practice. Efforts to encourage rule-conforming behaviour should be viewed as evolutionary learning processes. The article identifies, first of all, patterns of perception and interpretation of corruption in seven countries: Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Croatia, Greece, Germany and the United Kingdom. In a second step, these countries are grouped into three representative clusters: Germany and Great Britain, representing modern western European societies (democracy, rule of law, market economy), Greece and Turkey, representing partially modernised countries with a paternalistic state, Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria, representing post-socialist transformation countries. Therein, cluster analysis is oriented to common patterns of perceptions of corruption between countries as well as to the particular ‘paths of modernity’ of the single countries. Against this background the article finally sets the frame within which policy suggestions could be formulated.

1. Introduction: An overview of the ‘Crime and Culture’-project

The policies against corruption that have been implemented so far within EU-member or candidate countries have in general been characterised by legislative, administrative and police force measures. These are based on a definition of corruption prevention developed in political and administrative institutions that, for its implementation, rely on a top-down procedure. The EU-research project ‘Crime and Culture’ (full title: Crime as a Cultural Problem. The Relevance of Perceptions of Corruption to Crime Prevention. A Comparative Cultural Study in the EU-Accession States Bulgaria and Romania, the EU-Candidate States Turkey and Croatia and in the EU-States Germany, Greece and United Kingdom) proceeded from the assumption that the considerably varying perceptions of corruption, determined as they are by cultural dispositions, have significant influence on a country’s respective awareness of the problem and thereby on the success of any preventative measures. For this reason, the project investigated the ‘fit’ between institutionalised prevention policies and how these are perceived in daily practice, as well as how EU-member and candidate countries as a result handle the issue of corruption. The research project has been supported within the Sixth Framework Programme of the European Commission in the period January 2006-July 2009. Different patterns of perception and interpretation of corruption have been illustrated and analysed in the countries Bulgaria, Romania, Turkey, Croatia, Greece, Germany and the United Kingdom in six different societal areas (target groups) of each country, that is in the fields of politics, judiciary, police, media, civil society and economy.¹

¹ See more details and research related materials at: <http://www.uni-konstanz.de/crimeandculture/index.htm>

The 'Crime and Culture' project followed during the three project phases a twofold line of inquiry: The objects of the project were both the conceptual preconditions of the expert systems as well as the socio-cultural conditions under which these systems are put into effect. Accordingly, during the first empirical project phase an evaluation of expert systems took place. This was based on the analysis of a variety of documents of all target groups in all participating countries. The documents under examination were compiled of protocols of parliamentary debates from the national parliaments and the EU Parliament, verdicts, police guidelines for investigating and prosecuting indictable offences along with interrogation protocols, news and background media reporting, statements and strategy papers issued by national and international anti-corruption initiatives and finally public statements and statements of formal obligation by trade unions. During the second project phase interviews with representatives of all target groups have been conducted. The aim of the analysis was to reconstruct the common-sense definitions of corruption out of the data. The goal of the third project phase was, finally, to draw up a systematic strength–weakness analysis of expert systems. The results have been then discussed with invited practitioners and experts in the anti-corruption field in the final conference of the project in Brussels the aim of which was to define possibilities of bottom-up strategies for the prevention of corruption. During all project phases the project cooperated very closely with national and international anti-corruption agencies (Transparency International).

The sociological approach of the project can be sustained by pointing to the widely acknowledged fact that the common-sense perceptions of corruption often go well beyond what the penal law prescribes as such. The pragmatic dimension of corruption, i.e. its embeddedness in socio-cultural forms of action, reaches far beyond what the classificatory definitions of penal law circumscribe as criminal deed. From the perspective of the experts, corruption is nothing other than deviant, criminal behaviour incommensurable with institutional values and for this reason to be combated. In average people's daily lives on the contrary, corrupt conduct can be a part of that social order of things that is perceived as securing their existence, thus making it appear a factual 'normality'. Under such conditions, corruption may not even be considered criminal. Alternatively, corruption might commonly be seen as a widespread and socially tolerated trivial offence. In the everyday life of a society, corruption is enmeshed in people's existential interests to the extent that the consciousness of wrongdoing may resist both rational reasons and institutional enforcement of sanctions against corruption. Therefore attending to everyday life orientations rooted in socio-cultural contexts and conducive to corrupt behaviour comes closer to how more effective prevention policies may look like. Thus, taking our bearings from the cultural embeddedness of corruption perceptions facilitates examining those aspects of corrupt conduct that are almost insusceptible or even resistant to administrative measures.

Against this background the article will proceed by presenting in the following second chapter a summary of results on perceptions of corruption in the countries participated in the project. On the basis of research findings the countries will be in the third chapter grouped together in three clusters of analysis. Cluster generation is thereby based on similar patterns of perceptions of corruption among countries as well as on their specific "path of modernisation". Finally, lessons learned and anti-corruption suggestions based on research evidence will be formulated in the fourth and last chapter.

2. A summary of perceptions of corruption in the single countries

2.1 Perceptions of corruption in Bulgaria

First of all, there are some basic structural components of the transition period in Bulgaria which should be underlined: The research period is characterised by Bulgaria's ambition to become a member of the EU (which it has become in 2007). To fulfil this ambition, certain demands of the EU had to be fulfilled that can be subsumed under the notion of democratisation including measures against corruption. This has had different consequences:

1. Industries that were under control of the state during the communist era had to be privatised. Concerning this matter the ruling parties that were oriented towards the EU had an interest to sell these industries to international investors, whereas the opposition focused more on national interests and favoured national investors. This gave place to mutual accusations of corruption: The government was accused of disregarding the national interests (see below), the opposition was accused of following their particular interests rather than those of the country (e.g. in the case of the tobacco industry where one of the parties – the MRF, the political representation of the ethnic Turks in Bulgaria – had the opportunity to 'buy votes' since the tobacco industry is ruled by ethnic Turks).
2. The financing of the political parties had been precarious because of the lack of sufficient sources of funding referring to the state and membership fees. Other sources had to be tapped, especially donations from the private industry. Since the existing laws (up to an amendment in 2006) were not adequate to regulate this practice, doors were open to corruption or at least to respective accusations.
3. Due to the lack of experience foreign experts (political and economical) were invited to the country. These 'borrowed' forces brought with them their own interests or those of their actual employers that were not identical with the national interests of Bulgaria. The same goes for the financiers who were lending money to the country. In summary, some of the persons responsible for privatisation acts had allegiances to former colleagues and friends who worked for Western companies.
4. The distribution of competences between politics and judiciary were not clear as a result of the missing democratic heritage. Because of this the government was able to take back a juridical decision against their privatisation policy, arguing that the court was not to decide on the economic expedience of the deal, but only on its conformity to the law. This restriction of the courts led to a minimisation of according judgments and to a public perception that the fight against corruption is ineffective.
5. The introduction of democratic elections had the effect of a 'marketisation of politics' that caused various discourse strategies.

According to that the following core discourse strategies on corruption can be underlined. The depletion of certain resources for political mobilisation (ideology and patronage) in Bulgaria forces the political parties to draw more heavily to each other: the anti-corruption discourse became finally an implication of political interests. In this sense, measures against corruption were just a way of gaining control over the political discourse. The crucial point in this reference is the establishment of 'discourse coalitions'. These have been of specific interest for the government which otherwise tended to become isolated in the anti-corruption discourse because of its originally legalistic conception of corruption (see below). For example, the government can try to establish a discourse coalition with the media, accepting their more broad definition of corruption and 'feeding' them with information about cases of corruption which complement their interest in 'breaking news', knowing that the media interest is not as great in long term. The concepts of corruption varied – initially – according to the political position: Largely, when in power, politicians tend to support a legalistic view according to which actions in conformity with the law cannot be corrupt. On the other hand,

politicians while in opposition claim that corrupt behaviour can be more broadly defined as an offence against the national interest. Because of the aforementioned risk of discourse isolation the government in power is forced to reject its initial definition of corruption as too narrow.

The consequence of all these points is a considerable breach between an inflationary corruption discourse on the one hand and a very small number of actual juridical judgments on the other: when cases reach the courts, corruption curiously shrinks. The EU tends to criticise only the lack of judgements, disregarding the possibility that there could be more cases of accusations of corruption than actual corruption itself. As a result of the inflationary corruption discourse one can observe the public perception of an all-encompassing corruption, creating a situation in which populists can easily gain votes by promising unrealistic measures against corruption. Therefore the last elections in Bulgaria have all been characterised by such promises to the effect that none of the ruling parties could win a second mandate. As a consequence of these regular regime changes, there is a lack of continuity regarding anti-corruption policy and a complementary lack of law enforcement.

Accordingly, four theses on perceptions of corruption in Bulgaria can be stated: 1. In Bulgaria a transition is taking place towards an understanding of corruption which transcends the accepted everyday meaning of the word. In everyday parlance, corruption usually signifies a specific, illegal or illegitimate transaction – a quid pro quo situation. Debates on corruption generally start from this quid pro quo understanding, but they then usually replace it with a much broader understanding of corruption, which generally means bad and irresponsible government and government not in the interest of all. 2. What we are experiencing in Bulgaria is the profound politicisation of the understanding of corruption. The corruption discourse has been transformed into a tool for everyday politics. 3. The Bulgarian case study demonstrates that the more one “rationalises” the anticorruption discourse, that is the more one ‘disenchants’ the anti-corruption world (in the Weberian sense), the more anti-corruption magicians and superheroes emerge (see for example the outcome of the last parliamentary elections in Bulgaria). 4. The forming of discourse coalitions (e.g. between politics and civil society) tends to ‘de-politicise’ corruption as an issue. ‘De-politicisation’ does not mean the removal of anti-corruption measures from the field of politics as such, but the devaluation of the issue as a means in party struggle: Parties build coalitions – with other parties or other target groups – to the effect that the change of government is no longer seen as the key measure to be taken and that instead long-term, institutional anti-corruption measures are being favoured.

2.2 Perceptions of corruption in Romania

Can there be such a thing as a corrupt country without corrupt people? For some politicians in Romania this is not paradox at all, for it can pretty well be the case that the institutional framework provides the legal regulations to detect and sanction corrupt conduct, but the prosecution and indictment ‘output’ nevertheless falls very much short of standing up to the needs of effective punishment. Across all target groups in Romania one encounters the widespread belief that, rather than being an institution dedicated to prosecuting corruption, the judiciary is on the contrary its main structural cause. In the face of this, the aforementioned paradox can be rendered intelligible by claiming that everybody takes corruption for granted, but (almost) nobody, at least nobody that matters, seems to be held responsible or guilty. Thus, the judicial way of understanding ‘corrupt country without corrupt people’ would be to point to the insoluble tension between generalised corrupt conduct on the one hand, and the extreme difficulty of breaking down this generality in determinate corruption cases to be

sanctioned by justice on the other. The other way of explaining it is to connect perceptions of diffused corruption in Romanian society to the awareness that corruption has developed into a complex mechanism that aggregates multiple interests forging a 'thick fabric' of interdependencies, mutual liabilities and law-deviating networks spreading across all social fields.

Single phenomena to which perceptions of diffused corruption are related are: a) the 'thick fabric' of corrupt networking as a form of a 'Mafia ensemble' involving politicians, policemen and public administration servants; b) in the framework of privatisation the ensemble of intermingling interests consisting of a set of positions in the political, economical and judiciary system; c) the permanent law-deviating or extra-institutional exchange relations between business and political sphere; d) turning politics into a personal business as a network that transcends party boundaries and bundles the variety of corrupt practices across the political spectrum together; e) disposing of public property for party-political purposes; f) illicit transactions between politics and civil (and economic) society, public funds being diverted to political activities through the mediation of NGO's and private companies; and g) relationships and personal allegiances from the communist past constituting a form of social capital.

What seems to be the characteristic feature of corruption perceptions in Romania is a kind of mental habitus of turning corrupt conduct into an individual right and in turn a social norm everybody must but observe under the existing state of affairs. 'Rightful' corruption is perceived and practised not only on the grounds of 'legitimate' privileges accruing to certain social positions, though. It is often buttressed by various supplementary beliefs about it having a compensatory function. This consists in a) compensating for low income levels, b) compensating for perceived inequalities regarding the relation between effort/work and reward; and c) compensatory claims as lingering effects under the former communist regime. What generally seems to bring together the various aspects of the mentality of 'righteous' corrupt conduct is the intersection of two sets of regularised law-deviating practices: one has its origins in the economy of state-managed scarcity of the communist past, the other is a concomitant of the mechanisms by means of which the transformation of Romanian society from communism to market economy has taken place.

As regards the former, corruption as a mechanism of compensating for perceived injustices still rests on the people's 'legitimate' corruption that under communism functioned as a re-allocation of the system of scarce resources. For the communist ruling classes, however, 'legitimate' corruption had functioned as a steering mechanism of resource allocation. Thus, one of the legacies of communism is a culture of corruption to the extent that all sorts of constraint, coercion and inescapability under the communist regime of scarcity created over time firm orientations for action and patterns of dispositions sustaining the practices of 'legitimate' corrupt appropriation of public resources. As regards 'rightful' corruption forged during the transition period, the ways in which property transfer and institutional/social change took place rested upon firm and long-standing beliefs and perceptions of why a 'rightful' appropriation of resources by means of corruption was not only unavoidable, but also desirable. A great deal of the rules governing property transfer and privatisation thus consisted in adapting the communist culture of allocating resources by means of corruption to the exigencies of the new redistribution rules dictated by the forced and fraudulent privatisation process.

Taken together these two sets of regularised law-deviating practices have resulted in 'spaga' (petty corruption) and 'mita' (grand scale corruption) becoming interchangeable patterns of

corrupt behaviour in the ordinary perceptions of the population. High level corruption could mingle with ordinary petty corruption, giving rise to such ubiquitous notions as ‘corrupt country’ to the extent that the more successful and stable the fraudulent methods of wealth accumulation became, the more likely it became for the masses to disregard any form of law-conforming behaviour, or to perceive that the only way to cope with and take advantage of the possibilities the new situation offered was benefiting from lawbreaking themselves. On the level of contemporary corruption discourses, two aspects deserve peculiar attention: a) the politicisation of the anticorruption fight (i.e. corruption as a means of party political competition) and b) collective representations of a ‘corrupt country’ launched by the mass media. Like in other post-communist regimes riding the anti-corruption ticket has become a steady factor in Romanian politics. As regards the media one also observes an inflationary use of the notion of corruption. Taken together both have made out of ‘corruption’ a catch-all term purporting to cover all sorts of deficiencies, drawbacks, failures and malfunctions besetting contemporary Romanian society – a *pars pro toto* term designating the whole (of society, politics and economics) gone wrong.

2.3 Perceptions of corruption in Turkey

The first issue that catches one’s eye in the Turkish case is the discrepancy between social reality and its reflection, that is, between the factual decrease of corruptive behaviour in Turkey and the increase of the discourse on this topic. This incongruity may be explained with regard to the phenomenon which we entitled as “instrumentalisation”. Protagonists use this discourse strategy according to their particular interests: politicians exploit allegations in party struggles, representatives of the media use it as a means to get a large print run, and established businessmen employ it in order to repress new competitors. In this way, a public perception is being promoted which diverges from reality. Approaching the specific contents of perceptions of corruption within Turkish society the core research question was, what are the characteristics of corruptive behaviour, where does it take place and why does it happen? Concerning the social ‘loci’ of corruption it should be stated that politics (respectively state affairs in general) and connected areas are seen as the domains where corruption is most widespread. This diagnosis of (supposedly) factual reality is complemented by the allusion that the judiciary is the system in which corruption may potentially cause the most corporative damage. Such damage is one of the aspects used to define corruptive behaviour in the Turkish discourse. Concerning such definitions, there is a relatively broad consensus among the target groups. Corruption is usually described as breaking of rules in order to gain personal advantage, as non-transparent, uncompetitive behaviour the social costs of which are paid by society. Strikingly, classifications of this sort coincide with a somewhat positive view of corruption among the Turkish population. Another peculiarity is that the aspect of breaking rules not only refers to positive law, but very strongly to ethical norms, even from the perception of judges and lawyers. This observation already hints at a first category of causes of corruption which focuses on the conduct of the single individual and foremost on its moral deficiency. A second class of causes refers to structural or systemic shortages, like non-transparency of political processes, capacity overload in the judicial system, or red tape and over-bureaucratisation.

The somewhat positive valuation of corruption in Turkish society is to be understood against the background of a deeply rooted scepticism towards the state which goes back to the days of the Ottoman Empire. As a heritage from these times, the average person in Turkey does not trust the state, whose *raison d’être* has never been perceived as the provision of services to its citizens, and instead prefers to stay among his relatives or friends as much as possible. In this

sense, Turkish society is communitarian, it is characterised by nepotism and patronage. However, the scepticism towards the state, which was reinforced by the wave of economic liberalisation in the 1980s, does not lead to an attitude of strict denial. In contrary people try to become part of the corruptive network which the state is perceived to be. As a result, bribery – in its active as well as in its passive form – is legitimised as a tool of survival for the average man in Turkey who is inured to petty corruption and therefore stresses the (pretended) positive aspects of the latter. Thus, the evaluation of corruption is ambivalent: on the one hand, people complain about its negative effects for society and, on the other hand, they themselves engage in it as a functional means in the social distribution conflict.

The aforementioned fact that politics and state affairs in general are perceived as the foremost places where corruptive behaviour takes place collides with the fact that most attendees in the Turkish corruption discourse deny the possibility of self-purification within this domain of society. The possibility of effective anti-corruption measures is rather seen beyond that, mainly referring to the judicial system and the media which are proposed to operate as some kind of sentinel. Although their current state is often criticised as being deficient, judiciary and media represent those areas within Turkish society which are given most confidence with regard to anti-corruption. The estimation of a possible positive impact of the EU, in the contrary, is ambivalent. The explanation of this finding must refer to the causes of corruption as described above. Those who advocate the standpoint which identifies mostly structural causes of corruption tend to detect a positive impact by the EU since they see Turkey in some kind of transitory state that merely has to be completed in order to eliminate corruption – or at least to diminish it to a significant degree. Those who share the position which assumes a correlation between corruptive behaviour and modernity insist on more global measures, aiming at a shift of basic moral standards. As a consequence, they tend to be sceptical about the ramifications of Turkey's (intended) EU membership, because they think that such changes are beyond its scope.

2.4. Perceptions of corruption in Croatia

The empirical data upon which our findings are based stem mainly from two case studies. Case A refers to the financing of Presidential Elections. In 2005, a scandal revolved around the unrealistically small advertising budget reported by the ruling party candidate, and the majority of actors agreed on the failure of the pertaining Bill on the Financing of Presidential Elections adopted in the year before. Case B refers to grievances in Croatian homes for the elderly (HE) which aroused public interest in 2003. Among the irregularities were illegal use of the belongings and money of the deceased clients, bribing the managers of HE, illegal and preferential supply deals, trading a place in a HE for a client's apartment, etc. The ensuing court case was (temporarily) finalised in 2004, when the court ruled the accused manager not guilty.

The analysis of these cases leads to the insight that in order to explain perceptions of corruption in Croatia, one has to refer to a set of historical circumstances and socio-political developments. With reference to our topic the recent history of Croatia may be divided into three phases: 1. the war for independence from 1991-1995; 2. the post-war period of political instability until the death of president Tudjman in December 1999; 3. a succession of years of growing stability from the year 2000 onwards. The 1991-1995 war is often seen as one of the central generators of corruption, both structurally and culturally. The former aspect refers to the flourishing of war-profiteering groups and organised criminality, the latter aspect points to the emergence of the belief that crimes go without being prosecuted. During the post-war

period, a combination of the cultural legacy of state socialism, disruptions and costs caused by the war, a slow and party-controlled process of institutional reforms and the authoritarian and clientelistic regime of the late President Tudjman led to systematic irregularities within the economic subsystem and to a number of anomalies in public services. These irregularities and anomalies provided a fertile soil for corrupt behaviour. Finally, the period 2000-2006 was marked by growing political stability and also by an improving standard of living, leading to a decrease in corrupt activities as available crime statistics suggest. In contradistinction to this development, the surveys clearly document the increasing public awareness of corruption, that is, perceptions according to which corruption in Croatia (still) is ubiquitous. The key to understand this paradox is the differentiation between petty and grand corruption: the former (and therewith the number of cases) shrinks, whereas the latter (that is, their size) rises. Since grand corruption is less tolerated and therefore focussed more strongly upon by the Croatian population, this shift is perceived as an increase of corruptive behaviour in total. In this specific sense one may say that the public notion of corruption in Croatia is 'exaggerated'.

Looking at the sources of corruption in Croatia we may at first refer to traditional communitarianism, that is, the fact that pre-modern patterns of social behaviour originating from intimate social relationships, like kinship or friendship, are transferred to non-personal, systemic domains and disturb the functioning of the latter. One of the consequences of this circumstance is the phenomenon of hyperopic (mis)perception of corruption (HMC), where actors are critical of corruption in other sectors or groups, but tend to ignore or mislabel corrupt acts within their own institution or social group. Another set of causes consists in the historical setting already mentioned: in the Croatian case the transformation crisis that came over all post-socialist countries after 1989 was enforced by a painful process of state building during war times. Furthermore, there was the rule of Franjo Tudjman, an authoritarian and autocratic regime characterised by favouritism. Referring to the resulting institutional shortcomings one may state that in comparison with other post-socialist countries like Bulgaria and Romania Croatia is a "latecomer" in the process of modernisation. In general, sources of corruption in Croatia are of a political rather than of an economic nature.

With reference to measures against corruption we can again apply the distinction made above between petty and grand corruption. Concerning the former, the emphasis is usually put on the importance of citizens' cooperation. This approach aims at civic education and the improvement of individuals' morals. Concerning the issue of grand corruption many actors identified a deficit of political will to fight corruption, caused by lacking independency of state institutions. Therefore, anti-corruption efforts are foremost expected from the judicial system. Most actors agree that the EU is principally able to influence positively the fight against corruption in Croatia. However, reservations exist primarily among politicians, who point to EU internal problems as well as to the fact that corruption can only be efficiently combated within Croatia itself.

2.5 Perceptions of corruption in Greece

There are a number of ambivalences characterising perceptions of corruption in Greece. For one thing, one observes a very strong divergence regarding the question how widespread corruption in the Greek society is. On the one hand there are strong beliefs about corruption being highly widespread and diffused in the social fabric, because: a) corruption should indeed be considered as a dominant social attitude and acceptable behaviour, or even as one of the main evils in modern Greek society (social disease); b) general collapse of values: Greek society suffers an erosion of culture and therefore the 'usual' corrupt conduct does not

coincide with the explicitly illegal action. It goes against ‘approved social-ethical standards’, but these seem to have lost the binding force required to keep law-deviations at bay; c) ‘culture of corruption’: citizens view corruption as a normal way of getting things done and that this way of thinking and practice is becoming deeply embedded into the conceptual, moral and practical attitudes of everyday life.

On the other hand one finds attitudes according to which the level of corruption in Greece is no greater than in other western (or east European) democracies, because: a) corruption is inherent in the capitalist system of western type democracies. Therefore taking it to be merely a social disease obfuscates matters, or even worse, it represents a trivial justification of wrong-doing often used by the mass media and politicians; b) one should take the cultural determinants accounting for the spread of corruption more seriously. This means perceiving the ‘culture of corruption’ not as something that could have been avoided, but rather as inherent in the cultural civilisation of Eastern Europe: “the further east you move, the bigger the problem”; c) the only difference between Greece and the West: in the former there are no ‘rules of the game’.

What all perceptions of diffused corruption have in common can be summed up by saying that everybody takes corruption for granted, but nobody (as far as one knows) does it. To be sure, corruption should be considered as widespread or even omnipresent in the social fabric of modern Greece, but this acknowledgement is immediately blocked off by denying any personal experience of overtly criminal behaviour in one’s own field of action. All target groups claim they hardly know cases of illegal activities observed in their professional group. In any case, one should not fall prey to the Greek custom of exaggerating the problem, because it works like a self-fulfilling prophecy. Presenting corruption as all-encompassing helps create that social behavioural climate in which everybody takes it as granted and acts accordingly – making ultimately ubiquitous corruption true. Besides, there are ‘two Greeces’ and all modern societies suffer more or less from corruption.

Other perceptions that try to relativise the assumption of all-encompassing corruption run like this: a) the relative negative ranking of Greece should not be overestimated: The various CPIs and other indicators may be questioned regarding their integrity and credibility – they reflect subjective opinions and not ‘hard facts’ and purport to present trends that are not (may not prove to be) very reliable; b) only some people do it (black-sheep theory). Strict individualist causation: corruption should be linked to the personal/individual ethos, to the ethical standards and the morals of the individual.

Ambivalences can also be observed regarding the issue whether corruption in Greece is systemic or contingent. In support of the former, certain political-economic and socio-cultural determinants can undoubtedly be given. The latter rests on the assumption of purely moral-behavioural norm deviations. The cultural-heritage argument represents a kind of interface between the two. A closely connected issue is whether the structural embeddedness of corruption should be explained in a systemic-functional way, or rather in terms of the social-capital thesis. According to the former corruption fulfils functional requirements of an economic and political nature: a) corruption is inherent in the capitalist mode of production being steadily reproduced through commodity exchange relations; b) it is rooted in the Greek socio-economic and political structure; c) petty/grand corruption are due to state-capital relations (interface between modern state and capitalist interests); d) the reproduction of the power elites runs also by the way of corruption; and e) corruption is one modus operandi of the state. In sum, according to the functionalist reading corruption is perceived as a means of compensating for various distribution inequalities: corruption as a form of redistribution – a

compensatory mechanism that is motivated by perceptions of re-establishing social justice. The social-capital assumption puts emphasis on behavioural patterns or dispositions that represent ways of ‘translating’ systemic imperatives in individual experience and action: a) the informal and law-deviating social networks of corruption represent a form of social capital; b) corruption has come to be a component of the life-world, namely a peculiar form of solidarity among the various forms of reciprocities and mutual services; c) ‘corrupt exchanges’ are perceived as trying to cover up the gap or breach of trust between citizens and state. The low trust between state institutions and civil society in Greece is viewed as a lack of a positive form of social capital.

There is no less uncertainty as to what petty or grand corruption consists of and where it can be located. For some, what differentiates Greece from other (especially developed countries) is the widespread phenomenon of petty, everyday corruption, widespread corruption in society at large or associated to the lower and middle social strata. For others on the contrary, the ‘peculiarity’ of the Greek power structure lies in powerful economic and political groups systematically reproducing corrupt practices in order to secure the rules of domination and expand their power basis. Furthermore, everyday corruption is perceived to be a kind of elusive facticity lurking everywhere in social life, but when it comes down to pinpointing sites of everyday corrupt conduct only public administration is picked out. However extensive, diffuse petty corrupt conduct may be corruption at large and only becomes quite serious, when ‘big money’ is involved.

As regards political corruption, perceptions oscillate between individualist and structural approaches. Following a strict moralistic and ethicist stance associated only with personality characteristics politically corrupt conduct is attributed to individual deviations from the ‘proper’ ethical values. For the structural approach political corruption, far from being merely an aberration of wrong-doing individuals, is perceived as a modus of reproduction of the ruling elites. One of the main springing sources of political corruption should be seen in those informal networks through which a great deal of the state resource allocation takes place, namely clientelism. But there is a kind of ambivalence here: On the one hand there is a wide consensus that the informal system of non-institutional ‘contracts’ is one of the ‘evils’ of modern Greek society. On the other they are taken to have legitimacy in the sense of a) providing routes of political integration and b) filling up the gaps where the state mechanisms of redistribution of social wealth, welfare benefits and social protection fail to work, or worse still, are missing.

Considerable disagreement can also be observed as to the question about the objective validity of the notion of ‘corruption’: Is it a graspable social facticity or rather a discourse item deployed to certain ends? For those who support the latter, Greece suffers not so much from corruption, but rather from the inflationary use the media make of it. There are two versions of the inflationary-use argument against the media: a) the affirmative reproduction of what is perceived in everyday life as diffused corruption reinforces these perceptions thus ‘constructing’ a mentality habitus tolerant to or approving of corrupt conduct as a basic fact of social relations contributing at the same time to further eroding ethical values; and/or b) there is a kind of escalation spiral: medial representations conjure up the image of an all-encompassing corruption, the citizens for their part take this for granted and behave accordingly in everyday life, which in turn fuels the sensation greed of journalism.

2.6. Perceptions of corruption in Germany

The interesting thing about perceptions of corruption in contemporary Germany is a kind of contradiction: Although it generally seems that in terms of public perceptions the issue of corruption is not a serious, or simply significant problem confronting German society, there is nevertheless lately a growing awareness of it having become a social facticity of considerable gravity to be urgently dealt with. How is this paradoxical disparity to be explained? Whereas perceptions of corruption in a wide sense (i.e. public life at large) refer to it being an extensive social phenomenon, that is, a fact of everyday life or petty corruption – that obviously does not exist – the other type of corruption awareness points to there being certain domains in society where corruption has become (or has come to be perceived as) a structural feature. Such domains are politics (political corruption) and economy (economic corrupt conduct). As regards the former the crucial issue is to trace grounds for corrupt conduct by taking account of what forms societal perceptions of illegitimacy or ‘irregularity’ attached to practices can take. Some indicators of perceived illegitimacy are for example: a) violation of the independence of the political parties or political party competition through one-sided forms of donations; b) lobbyism as a organised form of ‘care of the political landscape’ – consulting agencies in mediating between politics and economics; c) party financing as a means of party control; d) transfer of knowledge and/or administrative know-how from the public to the private sector; e) ‘revolving door’/multiple jobholding of MPs; and f) ‘outsourcing’ activities of the state administration.

The issue of political corruption revolves around the (indissoluble) tension between the rationality (i.e. optimising/securing access to power, the logic of power politics) on the one hand, and the normativity (i.e. orientation to advancing the public good) of the rules of political action on the other. On the contrary, where the tension between rationality requirements and normative attitudes seems to be successfully resolved are the domains of judiciary and police. Attending to professional rules of legal expertise and investigative intelligence prosecutors/judges and the police force take at the same time a normative approach that includes both everyday experience and political, fiscal, economic, social and other discourses, the ‘real life context’, as well. In both domains one observes an effective match between the formal legal framework and the substantial professional pragmatics including normative stances.

Turning to the field of economic corruption it is interesting to observe how – despite the various economic scandals that have shaken German public life in the past years – there is apparently no awareness of corruption having become a persistent trait of economic action. Therefore it is significant that actors in the economical sphere – representatives from capital as well as of the labour force, i.e. entrepreneurs, managers, functionaries from industry federations and trade unions – contest that corruption is not a structural, but an individual problem, not an economical, but a psychological phenomenon (i.e. ‘criminal energies’). However, there are serious reasons to argue that the relation between economic rationality and corrupt conduct is much more structural than commonly believed. The reason is mainly that as habitualised practice the commitment to permanently raising performance efficiency is often prone to corrupt conduct, because ‘the (economic) end justifies the (norm-deviating) means’. As regards corruption abroad there is also something else deserving attention: The issue of corruption in the economic sphere is often a kind of disparity between subjective accounts of doing and social (or legally codified) perceptions of wrong-doing to be thought of as a cognitive/behavioural lag. The perceptions guiding action somehow fail to match up with what have become new social perceptions determining realities in the field of what counts as corrupt conduct.

Talking about corruption perceptions means necessarily also taking account of the public discourses of corruption that are dominated by the media and NGOs working in the anti-corruption field. As regards the latter, mainly Transparency International (TI), the anti-corruption work is *not* determined by beliefs of representation. The legitimacy of civil society organisations like TI rests not on representing (pre-existing) interests, but on succeeding in establishing the issue they stand for (for example anti-corruption) as a social state of affairs deserving public attention, organised action and institutional policy making. Thus, the legitimacy of civil society activism boils down to success (in making corruption an issue of serious public concern) and this in turn is like a market place. Other differences notwithstanding, there is a pattern of dealing with corruption observed in the media: It revolves around the question whether corruption should primarily be regarded as a breach of trust in terms of human morality or more in technical terms as a control problem. In general terms corruption is understood to be an indicator of the misuse of power (violation of the 'spirit of the constitution', 'nuisance') and as a failure of the institutionalised procedures of the political system. Beyond this common denominator there is a difference because of conservative and liberal mass media. The former follow an individualistic-functional approach and perceive corruption as a mechanism of self-purification of the political system, the latter follow a structural-normative approach and consider corruption as damaging social norms.

Finally, reflecting on ways of fighting corruption the question emerges whether preventing corruption should be recast in terms of a) tracing down the origins of corrupt conduct and b) perceptions of and attitudes to 'irregular' (distorted, corrupt) regularities, because perceptions of corruption rest upon normative attitudes and assessments of what counts as 'irregular' practice, corrupt conduct or wrong-doing. Thus, perceiving corrupt conduct boils down to becoming aware of 'irregular' regularities. In the most cases preventing corruption means exposing the implicit improprieties of regular practices, or in other words, making the implicit impropriety of corrupt conduct explicit through a reflection on the rules governing practices perceived illegitimate. One way of tracing down 'irregular' (illegitimate, corrupt) regularities is to point to the contradiction between rationalities of action and normative stances. Consider for example the contradiction public administrations become involved in, when they adopt as working ethos the rationality of private economic action: If the rationality of administrative action ought to comply with the imperative of raising efficiency, then the traditional norms and rules regulating practices of public offices (i.e. the normativity of promoting the common good) should be substituted by performance rules pertaining to economic rationality. What in this case is perceived as illegitimate or potentially corrupt rests upon long-standing beliefs that performances of public policies (ought to) have a normative status (i.e. value orientation) beyond any specific rationalities, whether procedural, political or economic.

2.7 Perceptions of corruption in the United Kingdom

There is a perspicuous disparity between perceptions holding the United Kingdom to be an almost corruption-free country on the one hand, and a growing awareness of corruption becoming a structural problem in British public life on the other. A great deal of corruption discourses revolves around the question whether an act could reasonably have been identified as corruption at the time it took place. Like similar cases in Germany (i.e. the Siemens scandal) one can identify the disparity between subjective accounts of doing and social or legally codified perceptions of wrong-doing as a cognitive/behavioural lag. The perceptions guiding action fail somehow to match up with what have become new social perceptions

determining realities in the field of what counts as corrupt conduct. In rather general terms there seems to be a consensus among all target groups that Britain has a long tradition of being relatively corruption-free, although in recent decades there has been growing awareness of the need to identify and tackle corrupt conduct. However, the persistent recurrence of corruption affairs seems to be no great concern among the target groups. They perceive it as not having structural causes, being rather the result of personal ignorance or oversight. Therefore, wrongdoers are not really to blame, because bureaucratic regulatory confusion and complications, rather than greed and deviousness, are the source of trouble.

The corruption-free perceptions rest on the experience of the absence of petty corruption. This in turn is attributed to the fact of the wealth of British society and the decent salary levels of the officials in the public administration, both at local and national level. Corruption is perceived of as somehow un-British, being rather something extraneous, bedevilling other, mostly underdeveloped countries. There is obviously a connection between this 'extraterritorial' attitude and cultural self-perceptions of British life as governed by and complying with firm standards of socio-ethical action and long-standing, binding cultural/customary codes of conduct. Thus, in most cases corruption awareness focuses on corruption abroad, i.e. British enterprises bribing foreign officials. Nearly all the various perception patterns and arguments underpinning stances towards corruption abroad support the assumption of corruption being contingent: a) the dilemma argument (i.e. corruption is contingent upon the decision of the individual either to uphold ethical standards and rules guiding fair competition, or execute business, where extra payments are expected, if not lawful); b) the competition argument (i.e. 'facilitation payments' are contingent, because they just happen sometimes to depend on the sort of business executed); c) the patriotic argument (i.e. 'facilitation payments' are in some countries a normal means of acquiring access to markets and infrastructures doing no harm to anybody; besides, they can be seen as a demonstration of patriotic competitiveness); d) the unavoidability argument (i.e. international efforts failing to impose binding standards and rules of competition can result in a 'race to the bottom' in which British, European and American companies lose out – but things being as they are, there is no reasonable ground to 'opt out' yet); and e) the argument of indeterminacy (i.e. Who is after all to determine whether facilitation bribes are illicit or not: the state/law, society, business or international organisations? When and why is something to be called corruption?).

There are sound reasons to dispute these contingency perceptions and argue for a structural causation of corruption. Far from contingent, facilitation bribes are part of habitualised attitudes. These in turn must be situated in the compelling relation between motivational dispositions, company objectives and the rationality of maximising efficiency (profit). Corruption for the sake of something (i.e. the long-term economic interests of the corporation, the positive effects on employment foreign investments will have for the company home, the benefits for the country as a whole in global competition, etc.) must thus be seen as a type of instrumental rationality. Back home in the United Kingdom things relating to political corruption can be shown to have structural causes as well. The disparity between perceiving corruption being contingent or public life as corruption-free on the one hand, and the recent account of TI presenting politics as the United Kingdom's most corrupt sector on the other, can be explained by pointing out that a) given the development of growing societal awareness of corruption as an issue to be dealt with and b) on the basis of perceptions of high public standards in the United Kingdom the presumed contingency assumes the character of a regularity (regular-structural patterns of behaviour) now perceived definitely as 'irregular' or corrupt.

This holds true of other aspects of political corruption in the framework of the relations between the spheres of politics and economics too. Take for instance lobbyism: The target groups converge on the assumption that lobbyist activism must not necessarily have corruptive effects, because access to policy making is not automatically translatable into the exercise of influence on public agendas. However, the fact that governments and public administrations themselves nowadays invite organised private interests to participate in or support shaping public policies renders the illegitimate intrusion of private interests in the sphere of law-making policies a rather recurrent, or even, structural feature. Political corruption par excellence: The rules governing the performance of governments and public offices a) discharge of their normativity of attending to the public good and b) come under the influence of the specific rationality governing private economic objectives. Admittedly, the issue of lobbyist corruption in the United Kingdom is far from clear. Where it surely is clear can be seen in the field of illegitimate party financing as a form of structural corruption in terms of access to politics being translatable into influence upon policy making. Under pains to ensure ever growing levels of financial capacities, the regular methods of donations acquisition of the political parties unavoidably become 'irregular', that is, illegitimate or norm-violating. Thus, it comes as no surprise that the dependencies on very wealthy donators have come to be seen by NGOs and politicians as symptomatic of a wider political malaise in the United Kingdom. Some consider patronage as part and parcel of this malaise. What is sometimes considered as illegitimate exercise of power is the fact that the competencies of the Prime Minister are uncontrolled by the usual parliamentary control mechanisms. From this legitimation deficit to the popular concerns about politicians systematically abusing their position to further personal interests is but just one step.

3. Cluster analysis

On the basis of the empirical findings the seven countries were divided into three clusters: Germany and Great Britain symbolise modern western European societies (democracy, rule of law, market economy); Greece and Turkey symbolise partially modernised countries with a paternalistic state, while Croatia, Romania and Bulgaria represent post-socialist transformation countries. The principle for generating the cluster is the path of modernisation. On the basis of M. Rainer Lepsius (1990, 2002) we differentiate between the short-term (politically) regulated transfer of institutions (abbreviated as 'state building', see Czada, Schmidt & Lehmbruch, 1993) and the long-term 'self-regulated' process of modernisation of society and culture, in which the institutional framework is filled with life and spirit (Berger & Luckmann, 1966). During the process of modernisation the cultural traditions come to bear in the form of a 'cultural lag'. Therefore, the cluster comprises countries, which are different in one common aspect, hence represent contrasting cultural types: Cluster 1: continental-etatist vs. Anglo-Saxon liberal (Germany, Great Britain), Cluster 2: individualistic-collectivistic (Greece, Turkey), Cluster 3: post-socialist - wartime economies (Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia).

Due to the general level of wealth and the functioning of administrative structures in Western central European countries there is basically no petty corruption among the broader population and therefore a social perception that corruption does not exist (correlative of a generally shared orientation towards the common good), which however disguises a structural corruption (grand corruption) among functional elites (and thus a breach of the social contract) in many areas – in particular at the interface between politics and the economy (public procurement). Due to the social pattern to view corruption as non-existent (e.g. corruption is regarded as 'un-British'), the anti-corruption policies are very restrained in such

cases (Germany) and such countries even regard themselves as a model to be exported to ‘underdeveloped’ countries (Great Britain).

Compared to the post-socialist transformation states, Greece and Turkey are countries that already have a long tradition of western modernisation in politics, law and the economy, but which demonstrate significant misguided cultural developments for entirely different reasons: Turkish culture is (outside Istanbul) still very traditionalistic, while in Greece a strongly hedonistic individualism has emerged due to the paternalistic political culture and a welfare state which is generously subsidised by EU transfer payments and exploited by the respective governing party (buying of votes by expanding the civil service sector, for example). Thus, if corruption is a societal practice in both countries, it is at least in the Turkish case linked to pre-modern economic structures (bazaar economy, neighbourly support, social control), and in Greece it is linked with the dominant consumer-based value system and hence by all means with modern culture (Zapf, 1990; Ingelhart, 1977).

The third, post-socialist cluster reflects entirely different starting conditions. After a more or less shock-like transformation of economy, state and society (institutional transfer), all members of the modern society – which previously had suffered numerous misdirected developments – had to recreate themselves. After the institutional transfer the subsequent modernisation process was strongly influenced by historical and in particular socialist legacies. The transition from socialist collectivism to liberal individualism signified an increase in the social inequalities and new class divisions: the former nomenclature became the dominant segment of the new middle class, which secured itself the leading positions in politics and business and in particular the ownership rights in the companies formerly ‘owned by the public’ by exploiting the former socialist redistribution networks – from which the public was now excluded. The system transformation resulted in the institutionalisation of the “privatisation of the state and publicly owned property” by the nomenclature, which already was under way during the phase of collapse of state socialism. The former socialist redistribution networks functioned as the vehicle behind this process (Kornai 1980).

3.1 Cluster 1: Bulgaria, Romania, Croatia

What seems to be the common denominator is that perceptions in these countries are guided by the assumption that corruption is deeply diffused in the social body and therefore to be taken for granted. In this respect Romania represents an outstanding example because in this case one can speak of a full-blown ‘culture of corruption’: This means that citizens view corruption as a normal way of getting things done and that this way of thinking and practice is becoming deeply embedded into the conceptual, moral and practical attitudes of everyday life. What is the reason for these perceptions of diffused corruption? There seems to be one dominant thing that sustains common-sense perceptions of diffused corruption: The awareness of a ‘mafia ensemble’: a complex mechanism that aggregates multiple interests forging a ‘thick fabric’ of interdependencies, mutual liabilities and law-deviating networks spreading across all social fields. Involved can be almost everybody: politicians, policemen public administration servants, magistrates, judges, lawyers, private businessmen, NGOs.

Similar perceptions of an all-encompassing corruption can be observed in Bulgaria and Croatia too. In Bulgaria they are based not so much on the belief or awareness of corrupt networks occupying ruling positions in state and economy – although this seems to be currently the case – but rather on public-interest notions: diffused corruption is perceived as bad and irresponsible government, i.e. public policies acting contrary to or violating the

national interests of the country. This public-interest-based perception of diffused corruption is however challenged by legalistic attitudes that narrow the phenomenon down to law violations or infringements of legal rules. Similarly, in Croatia there is a widespread public belief that corrupt behaviour can be found almost everywhere in society. However, although falling short of being perceived a 'mafia ensemble', there are certain interconnections between big business, politics and the judiciary that are perceived to be sources of structural, grand corruption.

Turning to the question how these diffusion-perceptions are accounted for, there are two points to make: a) the one has to do with the traces the transition process has left behind, b) the other with the distinction between petty and grand corruption. Romania can again serve as starting point. As regards the legacy of the past we can say that the corrupt mode of resource allocation in the former communist regime was transmitted to the transformation period. The inherited beliefs and perceptions regarding resource allocation by means of corruption became part of the mind-set, forged in the transition years. For this mentality corrupt conduct as a legacy of the communist period is taken to be an individual right and this in turn a social norm everybody must but observe under the existing state of affairs. 'Rightful' corruption is perceived and practised not only on the grounds of 'legitimate' privileges accruing to certain social positions, but also because it is seen to fulfil compensatory functions – compensating for social and economic injustices and inequalities. A great deal of contemporary perceptions of diffused corruption originates in how the transformation process from communism to free market economy has been associated by large parts of the populations in East Europe with fraudulent privatisation mechanisms. In Romania the 'old ways' of official-state corruption were supplemented by corrupt private appropriation of public resources, that is of common property. In Bulgaria the mechanisms of property transfer were determined by corrupt politics, the privatisation of big companies serving the financial interests of political parties. This kind of marketisation of politics has also contributed to the whole public sphere perceived in the grips of corruption.

Another component of corruption being perceived diffused in the social fabric is the fact grand and petty corruption becoming (almost) interchangeable. This is most clearly the case in Romania: High level corruption could mingle with ordinary petty corruption to the extent that the more successful and stable the fraudulent methods of wealth accumulation became, the more likely it became for the masses to disregard any form of law-conforming behaviour, or to perceive that the only way to cope with and take a share in the possibilities the new situation offered was benefiting from lawbreaking oneself. Concerning the transition period something similar can be observed in Croatia too, with an important difference, though. The weird ways of privatising former common property was in this case aggravated by the fact of war economy which was dominated by war-profiteering groups and organised criminality. The political regime that emerged from the war marked as it were by authoritarianism, favouritism and clientelism transferred in a certain way the cultural legacies of state socialism into Western model of a market economy. Both processes helped blur the distinction between grand and petty corruption. However, although public perceptions take for granted that corrupt behaviour is nearly ubiquitous, there is a kind of differentiation between them: One can observe a certain tolerance towards petty corruption whereas high-level corruption is seen much more critically and is therefore less tolerated.

In addition, there are three other possible causes explaining perceptions of diffused corruption, the most important of which being deficient prosecution, political instrumentalisation of corruption as a means of party struggle, and what is perceived as inflationary corruption discourse in the mass media. To begin with, what currently nourishes

perceptions of an omni-present corruption is that juridical prosecution practice falls dramatically short of producing any substantial number of verdicts – if at all. In both Romania and Bulgaria everybody takes corruption for granted, but (almost) nobody, at least nobody that matters, seems to be held responsible or guilty. The inefficiency of justice – or even, as in Romania, its involvement in corruption – are the main causes of such diffusion-perceptions such as “corrupt country without corrupt people”. In Croatia the state of affairs seems to be similar, because parts of the judiciary systematically underestimate the presence of corruption within the judicial system, most probably in fear that focusing on corrupt activities could lead to the destruction of overall credibility of the courts and judicial practice. How the issue is dealt with in the sphere of politics proves to be another reason corruption being perceived as omni-present: the problem of corruption is often exploited by politicians as just another means of party competition, or as a continuation of party struggle with other means. Riding the anti-corruption ticket has more or less become a steady factor in politics in the post-communist societies of Eastern and Central Europe. This holds particularly true in Bulgaria: In order to raise the mobilisation of voters ideologies and programs of the mainstream parties draw heavily on nationalism, identity politics or the anti-corruption discourse. Exploiting the prevalent awareness of corruption being widespread, political parties in Romania have also deployed an excessive anticorruption rhetoric: Trying to discredit the political opponent by all means, corruption as a political instrument has degenerated into ‘witch-hunt’ situations.

Closely connected with how public discourses are currently perceived to reinforce widespread corruption perceptions is the issue of corruption discourses launched by the media. There is a growing public awareness that the inflationary treatment of corruption affairs by mass media has counter-productive effects: Instead of promoting transparency, the media reinforce existing perceptions of widespread corruption. The affirmative reproduction of what in everyday life is perceived as diffused corruption reinforces these perceptions thus ‘constructing’ a mentality habitus tolerant to or approving of corrupt conduct as basic fact of social relations. This criticism leveled at the media is most acute in Romania. The way they capitalize on corruption is publicly perceived to have produced a ‘snowball effect’: The media representations tend to reproduce everyday ‘theories’ or perception patterns thus making out of them hard-boiled social facts, giving them a kind of ex post pseudo-legitimacy. In Bulgaria one sees governments establishing discourse coalitions with the media, accepting their broader definition of corruption and ‘feeding’ them with information about cases of corruption that serve party political goals. In Croatia on the contrary there seem to be no widespread perceptions about the media being an amplifying factor in making corruption a diffused social fact.

3.2 Cluster 2: Greece and Turkey

Although no transition countries Greece and Turkey share some of the corruption perception patterns observed in Romania and Bulgaria. For one thing, in both countries perceptions of widespread, diffused corruption are prevalent. However, there is an important difference: Whereas in Greece everybody knows about corrupt conduct taking place in every sphere of public life, nobody seems to know who exactly the perpetrator is, in Turkey everybody knows there is corruption all over, but only few are uncomfortable with this. Regarding Greece there are still some other aspects of shared ways of perceiving corruption as permeating the social fabric. Like in Romania and Bulgaria one speaks of a ‘culture of corruption’ in the Greek case, since it is widely believed that Greek society suffers an erosion of culture and therefore the usually tolerated corrupt conduct does not coincide with illegal action. To be sure, it goes against ‘approved social-ethical standards’, but these seem to have totally lost the binding

force required to keep norm-deviations at bay. Now, what sustains these perceptions seems to be a variation of regarding (petty) corruption as somehow 'legitimate', as in the Romanian case. Widespread corruption is accounted for by means of the assertion that it represents a form of 'survival' strategy against the odds of class subalternity. This can be termed a functionalist awareness of corruption to the extent that it regards corruption as a means of compensating for various sorts of distribution inequalities (i. e. as a form of redistribution) and the widespread feeling of injustice in the relations between citizens and state.

In addition, the inflationary corruption of the media in Greece is also perceived as aggravating the phenomenon. However, in contrast to Romania and Bulgaria, where there are serious concerns that the media somehow blockade the road of Europeanisation, in Greece it is not easy to discern what the inflationary treatment of corruption scandals consists in. One possible explanation for this would be to argue that the picture of deep-entrenched corruption delivered by the media is extremely harmful for the self-perceptions of Greek citizens. Since a main component of contemporary Greek self-consciousness is the European identity, failing to catch-up with European standards is perceived as a cause of distress. Comparing Greece and Turkey on this there seems to be less uneasiness with widespread corruption in the latter. In Turkey petty corruption (briberies) is taken for granted in every domain of daily life where citizens are faced with the state apparatus: the police, customs, the health sector, hospitals and so forth, but corruption is not necessarily perceived as a bad thing: According to prevalent notions it is regarded as some kind of 'natural' phenomenon within Turkish society, as a long-standing traditional way of getting things done within certain social contexts. The role of tradition or what is regarded to be a set of binding normative rules is an interesting point by means of which the 'cultures of corruption' in both countries can be compared. In Greece the usual moralistic accounting for widespread corruption runs like this: The decay of public morals and the diffusion of corrupt conduct should be attributed to the prevalent mentality of possessive individualism (i.e. egoistic self-interests, ruthless competition, greed for money and power, etc.). In Turkey we encounter the same line of reasoning, albeit the cultural factor plays a much greater role. Whereas in Greece perceptions of diffused corruption take for granted that the traditional bonds of social coherence seem to have disappeared allowing the pursuit of self-interest or hedonism by all (corrupt) means to hold sway, in Turkey corruption is pitted against traditional collectivist notions of moral conduct the binding force of which is still considered powerful. Principles of honesty and good will stated in religious-ethical and cultural codes are perceived to provide counter-forces against corruption propensities generated by egoistic individualism. The Greek individualism is of a more hedonistic style coupled with a consumerist welfare-state orientation, i.e. it has political roots and is the result of a false distribution of EU-transfers used for a kind of political corruption in the form of buying votes. Turkish individualism has strong economic features and is an expression of traditional bazaar economy and as such a part of carrier-planning.

In both countries patronage, clientelism and nepotism are perceived as major sources of widespread corruption. In both the breach of trust between state institutions and civil society runs deep, the latter perceiving the former as permanent oppressors, only to come by deploying rule-deviating methods. In short, corruption is somehow perceived a legitimate means of dealing with the state apparatuses. In Greece the 'corrupt exchanges' inherent in favouritism and clientelism are tacitly considered to be means to cover up the gap or breach of trust between citizens and state. With other words the gains from corrupt conduct are taken to be a positive form of social capital which citizens are entitled to, confronted as they are with a whimsical, arrogant or even tyrannical state machine. Nevertheless, there is a certain ambivalence attached to such perceptions of (petty) corruption being a sort of curious retrieval of citizens' empowerment: They help perpetuate exactly that state of affairs against which

they feel entitled to resort to deviant, corrupt behaviour. In Turkey in turn the mistrust against the authoritarian state is equally developed and deep-entrenched, although the accent is mainly put on participation in the corrupt networks of clientelism as means of securing a position in the state apparatus, that although not always well remunerated is nevertheless associated with certain privileges only the all-powerful Turkish state can confer.

3.3 Cluster 3: The United Kingdom and Germany

Moving to the North and looking at how awareness of corruption looks like, we encounter a completely different picture – at first sight. In both countries there can be no talk of perceptions of widespread corruption. However, no sooner has one observed this fact than another observation crops up: Although in both countries it generally seems that in terms of public perceptions the issue of corruption is not a serious, or simply significant problem confronting society, there is nevertheless in recent times a growing awareness of it having become a social facticity of considerable gravity to be urgently dealt with. How is this paradoxical disparity to be explained? The short-cut way of doing this is to make clear that the terms of this contrast do not obviously have the same reference: Whereas perceptions of corruption in a wide sense (i.e. public life at large) refer to it being an extensive social phenomenon, that is, a fact of everyday life or petty corruption, the other type of corruption awareness points to there being certain domains in society where corruption has become (or has come to be perceived as) a structural feature.

In the United Kingdom there are certain cultural determinants underlying perceptions of corruption-free social life. They are mainly cultural self-perceptions of British life as governed by and complying with firm standards of socio-ethical action and long-standing, binding cultural/customary codes of conduct. Furthermore, these customary codes contribute decisively to British people being (or perceiving themselves to be) culturally indisposed towards corruption, because it conflicts with their adherence to the concepts of fairness, rule-bindingness and openness (the ‘cricket’ norm). Therefore, until lately, perceptions of corruption as somehow un-British ‘outsourced’ corruption, taking it to be something extraneous, bedevilling other, mostly underdeveloped, countries. Thus, observers are all the more (apparently) taken by surprise by the extent to which key sectors of British public life (politics, civil service, business, the media) are afflicted by corruption. In fact, Transparency International-UK recently claims corruption has come uncomfortably close to the heart of the British establishment. Something similar can be observed in Germany. Given dominant perceptions of corruption in the public, which are characterised by trust in the rule of law, broad confidence in the state as an institution which provides for citizens and factual absence of everyday corruption, it seemed at the beginning that the party financing scandals that shook the country in the late 1990s were just a kind of an “on-the-job accident”. However, a series of other scandalous affairs, both political and economic, have paved the way for increasing awareness of corruption no longer as simply an erratic contingency, but rather a structural trait of the rationality governing political and economic action.

The divergence between certainties about corruption being non-existent on the one hand, the growing awareness of corrupt conduct in key sectors of public life on the other, explains one common feature of contemporary experiences with corruption in both countries. One encounters very often the argument whether an act could reasonably have been identified as corruption at the time it took place. Looking at comparable cases of economic corruption (i. e. bribes abroad) one can identify the disparity between subjective accounts of doing and social or legally codified perceptions of wrongdoing as a cognitive lag: The perceptions

guiding action somehow fail to match up with what have become new social perceptions determining realities in the field of what counts as corrupt conduct.

It seems that there is a structural reason accounting for this disparity: Characterised as it is by habitualised attitudes as expression of the compelling relation between motivational dispositions, company objectives and the rationality of maximising efficiency (profit) economic action follows an autonomous logic often detached from what in society at large has become standard ethical behaviour currently to be complied with. *Mutatis mutandis* this holds true of political action as well. Take for example the relation of politics and civil society: Whereas NGOs working on anti-corruption are regarded as pioneers in developing a new understanding of what constitutes corruption, politicians' perceptions often lag behind what NGOs have pushed through as new rules of compliance. Regarding a number of other issues, like party financing, MPs' norm-violating behaviour, lobbyism, the participation of private interests in shaping public economic policies, we can reasonably assume that given the development of growing societal awareness of corruption as issue to be dealt with and on the basis of perceptions of high public standards what previously was seen as rather contingent has now assumed another character, that is, of certain regularities (i.e. regular-structural patterns of behaviour) now perceived definitely irregular or corrupt.

4. Core results and derivation of anti-corruption measures

The aim of the 'Crime and Culture' project was to illustrate alternative possibilities for primarily administrative anti-corruption measures (top down). On the one hand, we therefore map out both the institutional/structural as well as the cultural/subjective conditions for corruption in the countries participated in the project. It turns out that objective and subjective reasons/motives for corruption do not exist 'autonomously', but rather can be found in the current historical and social situation and in the actors' concepts of normality. In other words, we were not interested in corruption in itself, rather in its institutional and cultural embeddedness. If one analyses petty or structural corruption, one must reconstruct the opportunities and structures which result in incentives for corrupt behaviour, as well as the socially and morally framed perceptions of corruption which promote or prevent such criminal conduct. The 'Crime and Culture' approach aimed to identify the causes and reasons for corruption within structural and perceptive patterns, which are defined by the socio-historical context (institutions) and cultural context (mentalities and concepts of normality). In a strict sense, the proposed theory based on the cluster model presented above only applies to the analysed cases. However, hypotheses can be derived from it for other cases, which then can be empirically tested.

4.1 Measures with regard to the clusters

First, at EU-level it is important to enhance cooperation and coordination of anti-corruption measures with other international organisations operating Europe-wide (OECD, Council of Europe). With regard to the clusters, however, two dimensions are of utmost importance: Training and incorporation of the public. With regard to this at least two types of measures can be differentiated: Measures at the macro- and micro-level. Measures at the macro-level target the institutional structures, while micro-measures target the perceptions, thinking and actions of humans in certain social situations.

I. Measures at the macro-level – institutional modifications: in the post-socialist countries above all the nomenclature, i.e. the networks within and between political and economic class, must be “broken down” and effective control structures (e.g. independent justice and press) must be incorporated. In order for them to be politically enforced, the media and civil society actors, in particular, must be integrated. In Greece and Turkey the pillarisation of society, i.e. the paternalistic assimilation of interest groups by means of parties, must be overcome. To do so, a reform of the electoral and party system is imperative. In countries such as Greece and Turkey, which have been damaged by state paternalism, civil society actors must provide for institutional control structures, which already exist in the western central European countries. In the western countries it is primarily a matter of changing attitudes and values in the public, in politics and in the economy (departure from national economic egoism and a shift towards global responsibility, a redefinition of the common good orientation of businesses and economics, and changes in the legal system, for example the transition away from the Roman legal tradition of the allocation of fault to individuals to collective/corporate liability, in order to counteract structural corruption).

II. Micro-level – collective learning processes: 1. School/University: forms of early detection must be developed which include important educational and pedagogical institutions. 2. Codes of Conduct/Management ethics: Here it is crucial to develop and/or transform the common good orientation of the elites away from particularistic (family-based, kinsman-like, neighbourhood/village, professional networks) towards universal responsibility. 3. Civil society self-organization (e.g. Transparency International/ALAC: Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres): in particular regard to this final and in our view most important point related to the direct participation of citizens in the fight against corruption, the Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres of Transparency International are particularly noteworthy. In recent years the European Anti-Fraud Office has highlighted the significance of the incorporation of the public sphere in the fight against corruption (OLAF, 2009). Furthermore, it is even more important to offer citizens instruments for direct and active participation, as it has been shown that citizens begin to take active measures against corruption when they are offered efficient instruments to do so. This finding is based on experience from previous commitments of the Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres of Transparency International, which have played a significant role in fighting corruption world-wide since approx. 2002. These centres are primarily based in some eastern European countries as well as Asian and African countries. The EU project ‘ALACs’, which is financed by the Seventh Framework Programme of the European Commission and initiated in cooperation with the project management of the ‘Crime and Culture’-project and the Secretariat of Transparency International, aims to evaluate several Advocacy and Legal Advice Centres with regard to their structure and efficiency and to provide recommendations to improve their impact based on the given socio-political environmental conditions.

Literature

A. Research project discussion papers

Tänzler, D., K. Maras & A. Giannakopoulos (2007). Breaking New Ground in Corruption Research. Discussion Paper No 1

Tänzler, D. (2007). Cultures of Corruption. An Empirical Approach to the Understanding of Crime. Discussion Paper No 2

Maras, K. (2007). Tracing the Elusiveness of Political Corruption. A Discourse Analysis. Discussion Paper No 3

Precupetu, I. (2007). First Steps Towards a Grounded Theory of Corruption. Corruption in Romania. Discussion Paper No 4

Stulhofer, A., K. Kufrin, O. Caldarovic, T. Marsic, M. Gregurovic, I. Odak & M. Detelic (2007). Chronic, Incurable or What? Perceptions of Corruption in Croatia. Discussion Paper No 5

Lambropoulou, E., S. Ageli, N. Papamanolis & E. Bakali (2007). The construction of corruption in Greece. A normative or cultural issue? Discussion Paper No 6

Smilov, D. & R. Dorosiev (2007) Perceptions of Corruption in Bulgaria. A Content Analysis of Documents from Politics, Judiciary, Police, Media, Civil Society and Economy. Discussion Paper No 7

Tänzler, D. (2007). Corruption as a Metaphor. Discussion Paper No 8

Sarlak, Z. & B. Bali (2007). Corruption in Turkey. Is the donor content when the recipient is content? Discussion Paper No 9

Xenakis, S. (2007). The Dog(s) that Didn't Bark. Exploring Perceptions of Corruption in the UK. Discussion Paper No 10

Stulhofer, A., K. Kufrin, O. Caldarovic, M. Gregurovic, I. Odak, M. Detelic & B. Glavasevic (2008). Corruption as a Cultural Phenomenon. Expert Perceptions in Croatia. Discussion Paper No 11

Lambropoulou, E., N. Papamanolis, S. Ageli & E. Bakali (2008). Views on Corruption in Greece. Between "Low Morals" and a "Culture of Compromise". Discussion Paper No 12

Precupetu, I. (2008). On the Nature and Causes of Corruption in Romania. Evidence From a Grounded Theory Approach. Discussion Paper No 13

Sarlak, Z. & B.B. Bali (2008). Corruption in Turkey. Why Cannot an Urgent Problem Be a Main Concern? Discussion Paper No 14

Maras, K. (2008). Knowledge Transfers, Rationality Fictions and Lobbyist Exercise of Influence on Public Administrations. Discussion Paper No 15

Smilov, D. & R. Dorosiev (2008). Perceptions of Corruption in Bulgaria. A Content Analysis of Interviews with Politicians, Representatives of the Judiciary, Police, Media, Civil Society and Economy. Discussion Paper No 16

Xenakis, S. (2008). The View from Above. Interviews with Corruption Experts in the UK. Discussion Paper No 18

Xenakis, S. (2008). Domestic Elite Perceptions of British Corruption. Discussion Paper No 19

Stulhofer, A., K. Kufirin, O. Caldarovic, M. Gregurovic, I. Odak, M. Detelic & B. Glavasevic (2008). Combating Corruption in Croatia. From Expert Perceptions to Policy-Oriented Action Strategies and Back. Discussion Paper No 20.

Precupetu, I. & A.M. Preoteasa (2008). Patterns of Perceptions Towards the Anticorruption Fight in Romania. Discussion Paper No 21

Smilov, D. & R. Dorosiev (2008). Uses and Abuses. Findings from the Content Analysis of Interviews with Politicians, Representatives of Judiciary, Police, Media, Civil Society and Businessman in Bulgaria. Discussion Paper No 22

Lambropoulou, E., T. Iosifidis, N. Papapamanolis, E. Bakali, S. Ageli, E. Bakirli & G. Massouri (2008). Corruption in Greece or Corruption of Greece? The “Modern” Triumphalism. Discussion Paper No 23

Sarlak, Z. & B.B. Bali (2008). Politics in Turkey: Condemned to Corruption? Discussion Paper No 24

Tänzler, D., K. Maras & A. Giannakopoulos (2008). Perceptions of Corruption in Germany. A Comparative Study. Discussion Paper No 25

B. General literature

Berger, P.L. & T. Luckmann (1966). The social construction of reality: A treatise in the sociology of knowledge. Garden City, NY: Doubleday

Inglehart, R. (1977). The Silent Revolution. Changing Values and Political Styles among Western Publics. Princeton: Princeton University Press

Czada, R., M.G. Schmidt & G. Lehbruch (1993). Verhandlungsdemokratie, Interessenvermittlung, Regierbarkeit. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag

Kornai, J. (1980). Economics of Shortage. Amsterdam: North-Holland Publications

Lepsius, R.M. (1990). Interessen, Ideen und Institutionen. Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag

Lepsius, R.M. (2002). Institutionalisierung und Deinstitutionalisierung von Rationalitätskriterien. Konstanz: Univ., SFB 485: Sonderforschungsbereich Norm und Symbol, Diskussionsbeiträge, Vol. 25

OLAF (2009). *Deterring Fraud by Informing the Public*, Third Edition. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

Zapf, W. (1990). *Modernisierung und Modernisierungstheorien*. Berlin: WZB, Arbeitsgruppe Sozialberichterstattung

Authors

Dr. Angelos Giannakopoulos is a research and teaching associate and the head of office of the research project “ALACs”, Seventh Framework Programme of the European Commission at Konstanz University. He was previously the head of office of the EU-funded project “Crime and Culture” at Konstanz University. He earned his post-doctoral degree in Sociology (Habilitation) at the University of Dortmund, his PhD in Sociology at the University of Tübingen and his Master in Political Science and Public Administration at the University of Athens. He was visiting professor at the Universities of Cyprus, Galatasaray (Istanbul), Budapest, Herzliya (Israel), Al-Quds (Palestine) and at the Royal Scientific Society in Amman, Jordan. He was Visiting Scholar at the Center for International and Area Studies at Yale University, the Woodrow Wilson Centre in Washington DC, USA and at Waseda University, Tokyo, Japan. Fields of research and teaching: sociology of knowledge, sociology of culture, political sociology, European integration, modernisation of South Eastern Europe, cultural aspects of corruption and qualitative methods of social research. He is the author and co-author of many books and articles related to his research interests. Email: angelos.giannakopoulos@uni-konstanz.de

Dr. Dr. Konstandinos Maras is currently a fellow of the Institute for Advanced Studies in Humanities (Kulturwissenschaftliches Institut) in Essen, Germany. He was a lecturer in the Faculty of Cultural Sciences of the University of Tübingen, Germany. He earned two PhDs in Philosophy and Art History at the University of Tübingen. He owns a master in Economy (University of Athens), Philosophy, Art History and German Studies (University of Tübingen). He is a participant in the EU-funded research projects ‘Crime and Culture’ and ‘ALACs’ as methods manager supervising the usage of the qualitative, computer-supported content and data analysis. His special research and teaching interests are critical theory, aesthetics and the history of American art, European identity and integration and corruption. Email: konstandinos.maras@kwi-nrw.de

Dr. Dirk Tänzler is a professor for sociology and co-ordinator of the EU-research projects ‘Crime and Culture’ and ‘ALACs’ (Sixth and Seventh Framework Programmes of the European Commission) at Konstanz University. He was a Visiting Professor at Zurich and Vienna Universities, Visiting Lecturer at the University of Luzern, Zeppelin University, University of Salzburg and Humboldt University in Berlin. He was the Director of the Sozialwissenschaftliche Archiv at the University of Konstanz and a research fellow at institutes in Berlin and Boston. He earned his postdoctoral degree (Habilitation) at the University of Konstanz and his PhD at J.-W. Goethe University of Frankfurt a.M. His special research and teaching interests are sociological theory, social philosophy, history of sociology, sociology of knowledge, sociology of culture, political sociology, qualitative methods, hermeneutics, media analysis and visual sociology. He has published extensively over the last 20 years in many fields of social research. Email: dirk.taenzler@uni-konstanz.de