A Watching Citizenry

Little Brother Watching Big Brother

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Introduction

The topic of corruption is a difficult one to study, because it is dishonest and illegal behaviour, and reliable numbers for its incidence are hard to come by. Despite this, or perhaps because of this, it has become a popular field for researches from a multitude of disciplines including, economics, political science, anthropology, and sociology. The different academic fields are sometimes concerned with different aspects of the concept of corruption, including possible consequences in terms of economic growth, development, inequality, democracy, and social trust. The intricacies of corruption call for various perspectives to provide insights so to better understand this and related phenomena.

What is classified as 'corruption' varies between countries and contexts. In this study corruption is a form of dishonesty or criminal offense undertaken by a person or organisation entrusted with a position of authority, to acquire illicit benefit or abuse power for one's private gain. Hence, corruption is a normative classification indicating an international moral standard set by different actors, such as Transparency International (Bukovansky 2002). This normative understanding might include behaviours considered acceptable in various parts of the world (Gupta 1995; Friedrich 2007). This may include cultural factors such as guanxi in China, where gifts are seen as the norm to maintain social relationships (Andvig & Fjeldstad 2001). In other cultures, family might be more integral and important to society than it usually is in the West, and as such, people hire family members into positions (nepotism) and give public gifts to their close family (corruption), while this not being described by their culture as corrupt, just how things are done (Gardiner 2007). Whether something can be considered corrupt or not is tied to culture, individual morality, and values. Actions what are for one person considered corrupt, might be justifiable for another (Melgar, Rossi & Smith 2010).

The use of the term corruption is not always clear. Several analysts described corruption in terms of public officials using their power or public resources to gain privately, whether this is monetary gain, status, favours (Rose-Ackerman 1996; Stapenhurst 2000). Research on corruption presents a plethora of definition. Many definitions are concerned with a public official using public resources to enrich themselves. In legal terms, corruption is a transaction between a state official and one civilian, where the state official breaches the limits of laws and regulations to enrichen himself in the forms of a bribe (Andvig & Fjeldstad 2001: 9). But with this

explanation we will lose much of what is considered corruption, such as misappropriating public funds (embezzlement) or hiring close friends and family into public roles based on social ties instead of merit (favouritism/nepotism).

This study will investigate the role of civil society and media usage for reducing corruption in Europe. Civil society is the idea of communities of citizens linked by common interests and collective activity, as a sort of third sector of society distinct from government and the markets. The media is often referred to as a watchdog for keeping track of malfeasance in politics, and medias role in fighting corruption is regularly recognised (Le Moglie & Turati 2019; Sikorski 2018; Camaj 2013; Di Tella & Franceschelli 2011; Ralchev 2004; Brunetti & Weder 2003). When citizens follow news reported in media, they might give public officials less leeway to act as they would want, for example to use public power to benefit themselves. Through activism, which includes reading newspapers, voting, and interacting with media, citizens can keep the government in check (Fiorino, Galli & Goel 2019).

Active consumers of news media and current affairs may be more prone to believe corruption is a problem because they are more exposed to it, even though they might not have experienced corruption personally. This can be problematic, as reported corruption may not be representative of the actual levels of corruption in a country (see Rose & Mishler 2010: Figure 1). For example, media might report on many aggravated cases of corruption, while petty corruption is at a minimum. The latter may be more felt personally in the daily lives of citizens, but the aggravated corruption cases brought up in media may have people report differently to what is happening in reality. This ties in with the reporting often used in corruption studies, perception. Perception might be a lot higher than experienced corruption, which could have adverse effects in the economy (Melgar et al. 2010). On the other side, countries with citizens who consider corrupt behaviour to be more excusable may have a media which does not report on corruption. Having a media which reports on corruption is itself an indicator that this type of behaviour is socially unacceptable. Hence, the media reporting on corruption may reflect both he incidence and the non-acceptance of corruption.

The perception of corruption is not a perfect measurement. Still, it is considered by some as the best available quantitative data in the often-grey area of corruption research (Heath, Richards, & de Graaf 2016). Using perceptions to analyse corruption can be justified by W.I.

Thomas's theorem: 'If men define situations as real, they are real in their consequences'[1]. In this study we use data from Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index and data from the European Social Survey about economic morality, this will, of course, be explained extensively in the methodology chapter.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis: The incidence of corruption is lower in countries with an active civil society. By "active civil society" we mean when individual residents of a country watch the news and current affairs. If people are watching the news, they can actively get rid of corrupt behaviour using democratic systems; in other words: voting corrupt politicians out of office. If this is done, it sets a precedent for politicians to not act corruptly because they will not receive votes. For other public officials that are not voted into their occupation, the democratic systems may also work indirectly. There is the possibility that politicians with an anti-corruption agenda are more likely to be voted into office, and if so, they make also take actions to further reduce or prevent corruption. It is not possible to vote for different police officers or bureaucratic workers in the welfare system. So, what can an active civil society do with corrupt individuals who are not prone to the wrath of democratic dealings? If people believe corruption to be a big issue in their country, they might vote in someone who campaigns in dealing with the issue, like "draining the swamp" - replacing corrupt actors with fresh anti-corruption representatives.

The incidence of corruption is difficult to assess. In this study, we will use various indicators. Some are based on the assessments of international business people, others are based on the assessments of general populations in Europe. Regular people might experience different types of corruption than business people, or perhaps interact with different corrupt actors.

[1] Thomas, The Unadjusted Girl (Boston: Little Brown, 1923)

Corruption

Corruption may be classified as petty, routine, or aggravated (Heidenheimer 2007) depending on different factors like the amounts of monetary loss or sectors where corrupt behaviour has taken place. Some studies focus on the public aspects of corruption, having corruption tied directly to public officials. A known researcher on corruption, J. S. Nye defines corruption as: "Corruption is behavior which deviates from the normal duties of a public role because of private-regarding (family, close private clique), pecuniary or status gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence. This definition includes such behaviour as bribery (use of reward to pervert the judgement of a person in a position of trust); nepotism (bestowal of patronage by reason of ascriptive relationship rather than merit); and misappropriation (illegal appropriation of public resources for private-regarding uses)." (Nye 2007: 284). This definition is quite clear on what political corruption is, but does it encompass what regular people think when presented with the question of what corruption is? Corruption can be a diffuse term, and cover so much different behaviour that it might be hard to know what people truly think of when asked about it. Perhaps Huntington's short definition better encompasses what regular people more immediately think of when the word corruption is used: "Corruption is behaviour of public officials which deviates from accepted norms in order to serve private ends" (Huntington 2007).

Corruption is often thought of as synonymous with bribery, but it can be so much more. "Corruption, while being tied particularly to the act of bribery, a general term covering misuse of authority as a result of considerations of personal gains, which need not be monetary" (Friedrich 2007: 7). It is crucial to remember that corruption is not only based around monetary gain, failure to do so is a failure to understand human will. Is it most important to gain capital in economic form, or social capital, or perhaps cultural capital? Social ties might play just as important of a role as money does, if not more. Being allowed to build that extension on your summer house because the public official in charge of such decisions is your Saturday night dinner guest. Dodging the drunk driving charge because your dad knows the police chief. Using connections to "get things done" is by many in Russia the preferred method in order to get into hospital or to get a permit or official document (Rose & Mishler 2010: Table 4.1).

Bribery is a payment in some form (often monetary) that is given to taken between corrupt actors. When a public official trades his or her services for a transfer in value it is

considered corruption. Public officials can offer under the table deals for their private benefit to potential companies or individuals. The companies or individuals paying the bribe to the public official can potentially enjoy a sped up bureaucratic process, skip regulations, get clearances they would not otherwise get etc. Bribery can crop up in many ways, and it is not always as easy as money changing hands.

Another form of corruption is embezzlement. Embezzlement is misappropriation of resources by employees who are supposed to administer it. Public official may, for example, use public tax money to build a new floor onto his or her house. Embezzlement is considered included in corruptions broader definition, as it does not include a civilian – other than the general public, which arguably had the rights to the resources embezzled (Andvig & Fjeldstad 2001). There is also a danger with embezzlement that it can be institutionalized within corrupt countries and consequently used by the ruling elites to enrichen themselves.

There is a pressing distinction when it comes to the difference between bribery and extortion, where bribery is initiated by the private citizen and extortion by the public official (Granovetter 2007). Extortion is sometimes referred to as extracting a bribe, where the public official threatens out the bribe from the civilian. Those with the power to extort may coerce or threaten to get what they want, without giving much or anything to the civilian(s). Examples of extortion from public officials could be threats of long wait times, harassment from the tax departments, or that they will find something to charge you with if you do not pay up.

Fraud is also considered a form of corruption. Fraud is the intentional deception in order to secure yourself some economic gain. Public officials can manipulate information in order to extract private profit, either tricking people or turning a blind eye to crime which they enjoy a share from. Falsifying documents, for example, forging fake passports is considered fraud.

Lastly, favouritism and nepotism are considered corruption. Abusing power to favour family and friends is referred to as favouritism within the corruption sphere (Andvig & Fjeldstad 2001). Favouritism from a public official can be their proclivity to distribute public resources in beneficial ways to their closest network. For example, granting them building rights, giving them a job, helping them before someone else, or flat out granting them money from the public funds (which would include some other forms of corruption as well). Nepotism is the preference of family members. Hiring a family member to an office position regardless of their merit could be

considered nepotism. It should be noted that there might be some differences in what constitutes bribes, embezzlement, extortion, fraud, and favouritism between countries and contexts.

Corruption is typically seen as a problem which seeps into many facets of modern society and everyday life of citizens (Heath, Richards, & de Graf 2016; Prasad, da Silva, & Nickow 2019). It is considered to have several unfavourable outcomes, such as poverty, economic growth, development, clean energy, equality, peace and justice[2]. The dominant perspective, certainly in Western countries is to see corruption as something negative, a problem in society. However, an alternative perspective holds that corruption could in some situations be beneficial to a society. Corruption might reduce bureaucracy, speeding up administrative practices giving the economy a quick boost (Huntington 2007). Instead of waiting for the machine to slowly churn out whatever it is that you need, you can grease the wheels to make it go faster. In other words, corruption can lead to efficiency. This can be especially important in developing countries with newly formed bureaucracies, based on historical political developments in British and American systems during the 18th and 19th centuries (Nye 2007). We can view corruption as a necessary part of the evolution to become a modern, developed nation, as there is a need for economic development. Corruption might be the short-term answer to a long-term plan, although the beneficial effects of corruption are scarce (Ahmad, Ullah & Arfeen 2012).

[2] https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals

Consequences of corruption

Corruption may breed inequality, since those with the most resources will be able to use corruption to their benefit, at least more often than the resource starved (You & Khagram 2005). The poor may be more prone to extortion and can find it difficult to hold those with power accountable as inequality increases. Having a bureaucracy based on honesty and integrity is praised for helping prevent and combat corruption.

The arguments against corruption are by some called 'sand in the wheels' hypothesis, implying the impact of corruption on bureaucracies (and thereby the economy) grinds the wheels to a halt. Public officials may cause delays which otherwise might not have appeared so they can extract a bribe (Myrdal 2007). Preserving their income through perpetuating corrupt behaviour which benefits them. Potentially creating more channels in which people have to come through bureaucrats in order to conduct business (or whatever they desire really) is perhaps encouraged when public officials are bribed. Méon & Weill (2009) point out that corruption might not be the best way to award a licence to the most efficient producer. A winner of a competitive, corrupt auction for a licence which may perhaps be profitable, may only win because they are the most optimistic. Rose-Ackerman (1997) argues the highest briber could be the most compromising actor willing to reduce the quality of the goods they will produce. There is also a possibility of investors getting somewhat frightened by dealing with corrupt actors, which may cause them to not invest as much as they would otherwise do. All this support the theory of corruption as inefficient – the sand which makes the wheels go slower.

Other studies focus more on the potentially positive outcomes of corruption, suggesting corruption can help countries in certain situations. These situations can be the process of modernization and ineffective bureaucracies (Leys 2007; Huntington 2007). A typical argument is that corruption can act as a lesser evil, replacing violence with functions which fill demands, although imperfect. Instead of violent revolutions overthrowing government institutions, corruption makes institutions workable.

Some studies have tried calculating the costs and benefits of corruption, implying there might be different considerations within societies which can benefit or be hindered by corruption (Nye 2007). Arguments claiming that benefits can be achieved through corruption are often

called ‘greasing the wheels’ hypotheses, indicating the ineffective, grinding wheels of bureaucracy can be lathered in grease, increasing effectiveness by reducing red tape.

A negative perspective on corruption is more popular, however. Corruption has been touted by some as detrimental for economic growth and contributes to more inequality in societies plagued by it. Trusting corrupt public officials can be a lot to ask for investors, causing investments into known corrupt countries to dry up (Mauro 1995). Some researchers have argued for the costly nature of corruption in both the developed and the developing world (Heath, Richards, & de Graaf 2016). Heath et al. (2016) theorize both macro and micro foundations for corruptions cost. On a micro level, an individual may or may not consider bribery or extortion in a situation from a cost-benefit analysis. Depending on what position a public official hold, how much the bribe is, chances of being reported or exposed, they can make a rational choice in regard to bribery and extortion. The macro-level theories consider societies with widespread corruption to be hard to “cure”, since there is no incentive for public officials to play by the rules, since condemnation from their corrupt behaviour is unlikely to happen (You & Khagram 2005; Heath et al. 2016). This may trigger habitual norms of behaviour, making it very hard to break out of cycles of corruption because it’s just “how things are done” – or what You & Khagram (2005) call vicious circles of inequality and corruption. Countries could be trapped in the vicious circles of inequality and corruption or be liberated in virtues circles of equality and integrity, which are both hard to break out from. Corruption is pervasive and notable in many countries around the world, and it may hinder development through the high costs it brings with it. Both territorial bribery for economic expansion, and the need for secrecy of corrupt behaviour can be very costly (Shleifer & Vishny 1993). Through the necessity of permits and licences, private industries are vitally dependent on governments to supply these, which they have a monopoly over, in order to conduct business. Depending on bureaucracy integrity and efficiency, corruption may hinder investment and growth (Mauro 1995). According to Mauro (1995), investment rates will rise with improvements in bureaucratic integrity and efficiency. International organisations like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) also view corruption as a considerable challenge to economic development (Méon & Weill 2009).

Empirical research provides findings indicating that corruption is detrimental to the economy, and a catalyst for inequality. Mauro (1995), using an index of corruption from

Business International, found a strong negative association between investment rate and corruption. This finding was regardless of the amount of red tape (high value of red tape fostering need for corruption to grease the wheels). There were no significant differences in low-red-tape and high-red-tape countries - they had similar regression slopes while a standardised correlation (reported as R^2 statistics) was higher for countries where the bureaucracy had high levels of integrity and efficiency (Mauro 1995). This providing no support for claims of slow bureaucracies needing corruption as a beneficial support to speed up growth (Mauro 1995). Further he finds statistically significant evidence that countries with higher corruption receive lower ratios of investments – with one-standard-deviation increase of improvement in the corruption index is associated with an increase in the investment rate by 2.9 per cent of GDP (Mauro 1995). You and Khagram (2005) provide empirical evidence for the theory of the reciprocal causation between inequality and corruption. They find that countries with high levels of corruption have more inequality. To measure income inequality, they used gini coefficients from sources such as the UN-WIDER Income Inequality Database. The gini coefficient ranges from 0 to 1, with a gini of 0 representing perfect equality, and a gini of 1 meaning that only one person or household has the total income in the country. In their regression analysis they find an increase in the gini coefficient on corruption from 0.23 to 0.63 or 0.73, with it being significant at the 1 per cent level (You & Khagram 2005). Their findings are consistent with other findings, such as Gupta, Davoodi, & Alonso-Therme (2002) and Li, Xu, and Zou (2003).

Other studies have investigated more negative aspects of the 'greasing of the wheels' argument. Kaufmann and Wei (1999) found that firms that paid more bribes were also more likely to spend more management time negotiating with public officials and spent more money. Their data focused mainly on the time senior managers of firms had to spend with bureaucrats negotiating regulations. In their country-level regression measuring time wasted by senior managers of perms with public officials on a constant, they found a slope-coefficient of 0.29, which was statistically significant at the 5 per cent level (Kaufmann & Wei 1999).

Some studies argue that corruption might be an effective lubricant to the grinding gears of bureaucratic governance, which does not necessarily mean it is good or bad, but a solution to a problem (Leys 2007; Huntington 2007). This has been used as an especially prudent argument in developing states, in the beginning stages of the modernization process. The case is that the painful process of modernization can be somewhat eased by corruption, and punishing

developing countries for their corrupt behaviour through the lens of Western ideals might hinder developing countries progress. Nye (2007) notes that corruption probably has had positive and negative influences on Russian and American economic development, and that moralists may have to tone down their rhetoric regarding corruption in developing countries. Corruption may be a possible perk for public officials who would otherwise choose another line of work due to low government wages (Leys 2007).

Empirical evidence to prove the argument 'grease the wheels' theory is rather sparse. Méon & Weill (2009) found some evidence to suggest that greasing the wheels in countries with weak institutional frameworks is less detrimental. Countries with very ineffective institutions may receive efficiency benefits from corruption, though this could hurt them in the long run.

Perceptions and experiences of corruption

There are different approaches to measure the scope of corruption, and perceptions and experiences are the main measurements of corruption. Perceptions and experiences of corruption do not necessarily correlate highly in studies, perceptions of corruption in a country may be high, even though individuals are rarely experiencing corrupt behaviour personally (Rose & Mishler 2010). This also applies when comparing perceptions and experiences of corruption between countries, there might be other factors than experienced corruption to make people believe that their country is corrupt – like trust in public officials or public institutions (Solè-Ollè & Sorribas-Navarro 2018). Who reports corruption might also pose an issue with perceptions and experiences, as respondents who are international business people or other elites (CPI) could perceive corruption to be something different than citizens of a particular nation. Business people may have different interests and biases which are not as indicative of general public interests, such as low taxes and less regulation (Kaufmann, Kraay, & Mastruzzi 2007). A reason for low correlation between perception and experiences of corruption could also be a consequence of error margins stemming from the comparative few amounts of people actually experiencing corrupt behaviour versus everyone's perception of it. People are able to believe corruption to be an issue in their own country, and in others, but experiencing bribery or extortion in the real world may be rare.

Some studies have investigated the relationship between the perception of corruption and experienced corruption. Can we trust national-level indexes to be a reasonable metric for measuring corruption which is happening, experienced by citizens? Some studies have found correlations between perceived corruption as measured by national-level indexes and experienced corruption within a country (Kaufmann, Kraay, & Mastruzzi 2006; Kaufmann et al. 2007; Melgar, Rossi, & Smith 2010). Kaufmann et al. (2006 and 2007) argue that expert assessments over national-level indexes are good indicators for reality. Melgar et al. (2010) focus on reasons for people's perceptions on corruption, and they argue that even when corruption perception strongly varies from the current level of corruption, the latter influences the former. Gonzales, Mackenna, & Muñoz (2019) argue people form mental images of corruption beyond their personal experiences with corruption. People's everyday experiences of corruption are tied to a general perception of corruption, for example, hearing about corrupt politicians on the news can influence people to believe corruption is a pervasive issue. What other people (often mass media) have reported might also influence people's opinions on issues of national interest, for example corruption (Gonzales et al. 2019). In their empirical findings, they find a moderately high positive effect of experiencing bribes on national perception levels of corruption (coefficient 0.03), being significant at the 0.01 level (Gonzales et al 2019).

Other studies focus on the relationship between perceptions and experiences of corruption (Weber Abramo 2008; Rose & Mishler 2010; Donchev & Ujhelyi 2014). In their studies, they question what perceptions of corruption really measure. There might be a lot of talk in news about grand corruption, which may not translate into experienced petty corruption in lower rungs of the bureaucracy. Rose & Mishler (2010) found that 86% of Russians surveyed said they learned about corruption from national television and the news. The Russian respondents also reported that they though most officials were corrupt, even though the respondents never experiences bribery personally. This could be because the national corruption in Russia is so high (second highest), so people generalize corruption to be an issue in everyday life, even though they may never experience it themselves. Donchev & Ujhelyi (2014) are concerned with perceptions of corruption used in indices being interpreted as experienced corruption.

Kaufmann et al. (2006) checked the correlation between expert assessments and the Global Competitiveness Report[3] (GCS) (2002-2005). They found high correlations between them, for example correlations for control of corruption 2002-2005: 0.77, 0.80, 0.82, 0.80 for experts and 0.79, 0.83, 0.83, 0.82 for GCS. This, according to Kaufman et al. (2007) should douse any doubt as to biases in cross-country expert assessments. Testing business people's biases on what constitutes good governance, Kaufmann et al. (2007) assess correlations between surveys of different firms. The correlation between the World Competitiveness Yearbook[4] and the Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey[5] (BEEPS) are 0.74 and 0.43. Melgar et al. (2010 find evidence to suggest that corruption perception at the micro-level may be shaped by personal characteristics. Using data from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP), they find that self-employment (1.30 percentage points increase), working in the private sector, being divorced, being unemployed, and being a woman are positively correlated with corruption perception, while those in full-time employment, being married, attending religious services, higher education, and the state of democracy (6.9 percentage points decrease) are less likely to report corruption (Melgar et al. 2010). This means there may be groups of people who are more likely to engage in bribery as they tend to believe that corruption is high.

Donchev and Ujhelyi (2014) suggest that corruption experience is a weak predictor of corruption perception, and that corruption perception from indices are biased by factors which reduce corruption – such as economic development, democratisation, and Protestantism. With their comparison between experience measures from households and the business sectors, plus the standard corruption perception indices, they found that a number of factors which were commonly thought to cause corruption seemed to bias perceptions away from experience (Donchev & Ujhelyi 2014). One of their findings suggests that 15 – 30% more of the variation in corruption perceptions can be explained by general measures of culture, economic development, and political institutions, then for corruption experience. Corruption perception indices as such may be more affected by country characteristics that cannot explain corruption experience.

[3] The Global Competitiveness Report integrates the macroeconomic and business aspects of competitiveness into a single index. The report "assesses the ability of countries to provide high levels of prosperity to their citizens". This in turn depends on how productively a country uses available resources.
[4] The World Competitiveness Yearbook (WCY) is the leading annual report on the competitiveness of countries using 330 criteria measuring different facets of performance of 63 economies.
[5] The Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey (BEEPS) is an extensive survey undertaken as a joint initiative by the World Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

Using Russia as a test case, Rose & Mishler (2010) argue that most people do not base their personal experience paying bribes when asked about perceived corruption. They provide a weak correlation between generalised perception of corruption and paying a bribe ($r = 0.09$). 75% of people who view most officials as corrupt had not had anyone in their family pay a bribe in the past 2 years.

Arguably, the argued gap between perceived corruption and experienced corruption does not diminish the importance of perceived corruption, as it might be an important part of people's attitude towards public officials and governments in general, as well as their trust in political figures (Donchev & Ujhelyi 2014). As Treitsman (2000: 412) puts it: "The perception of corruption may have as serious consequences for economic development as corruption itself." It has also been argued that survey-based general perceptions of corruption can be a promising avenue for sociological research (Heath, Richards, & de Graaf 2016; Gonzalez, Mackenna, & Muñoz 2019). However, as Heath et al. (2016) point out, there might be some faults in trying to fit large, national indices into research about corruption, as what constitutes as corruption varies so much in different contexts, cultures, and regions. Heath et al. (2016) instead argue for a more disaggregated approach to corruption, meaning a more distinguished look at differences in corruption, instead of a big 'lump' of generalized assumptions stewed into the word 'corruption'. Experienced and perceived corruption in the population may be different than what globalist experts' experiences and perceptions are, and some issues with using perception-based surveys based on experts' opinions are discussed further in the method chapter of our study.

Media and news

This study focuses on corruption and the role of an active civil society from citizens watching the news and current affairs. The media are supposed to shine a light through the darkness, revealing information the public in general would not be privy to know, such as abuses of power (Price 2019). For example, investigating where government money goes, which organisations get what – and perhaps why. This, among other things, is why a free press is often touted as a good tool for keeping corruption in check (Brunetti & Weder 2003; Dutta & Roy 2016). For the purposes

of this study we must look to earlier findings on people's interaction with media and news in Europe. In the current times of extreme choice opportunities, where people can choose what media to engage with, will people still watch the news? Also, are public officials being held accountable for their actions when corruption gets reported on in the news?

Research on news usage is an evolving comparative field. Some argue on a theoretical level that following news and current affairs is important for being able to criticize or punish public officials, and being an informed citizen.

Some studies argue there are increasing gaps in entertainment and news watching over time (Prior 2005; Aalberg, Blekesaune, & Elvestad 2013). Over time there has been an increase in choices presented to us in media. People can now, more than ever before, choose exactly what they want to watch, read, or listen to. It is now possible to exclusively engage only with what people want – there are media options for only entertainment, and choices for only news and current affairs. Choices between television channels with news 24/7, newspapers, and Internet news in written or video form – and on the other side, entertainment channels, gossip magazines, and Internet content purely for entertainment purposes. There are some blurred lines on what could be considered entertainment, news, and current affairs. The show *Fiks Fare* could be an example of this, revealing everyday experiences of corruption in Albania through satire (Musaraj 2018). Another example of this is late night shows using politics for entertainment. Prior (2005) mentions previous decades of television watching where it was not as easy to choose what you wanted to watch, so incidental news watching was possible. Television viewers who were less interested in politics had no choice in watching the news from time to time (Aalberg et al. 2013). Being an ill-informed citizen can thus not be considered to be caused by a lack of ability to watch the news and current affairs, but to motivation to do so. The gap could be due to people with low levels of social capital tuning out the the news, indicating a disconnect from society and personal networks (Blekesaune, Elvestad, & Aalberg 2012). The gaps between those who watch the news and those who abstain could also be related to political interest (Shehata & Strömback 2011).

Being able to hold public officials accountable for their actions required their actions to be public, i.e. in the news. Corrupt public officials can only face the wrath of civil society if people know what they have done – thus requiring a news media which exposes them. Press freedom is touted by many for its ability to curb corruption (Brunetti & Weder 2001; Camaj

2013; Dutta & Roy 2016; Mancini, Mazzoni, Cornia, & Marchetti 2017). With increases in press freedom and higher levels of electoral participation, corruption levels in countries tend to decrease (Camaj 2013). Through media investigation and reporting of news, the public can combat corruption, if they desire to do so, through actively participating in civil society – for example through voting. Some studies have found links between scandals and votes in elections, in that politicians who are implicated in scandals receive less votes (Costas-Pérez, Solé-Ollé, & Sorribas-Navarro 2012; Song 2016). News and stories on current affairs may help citizens make more informed decisions and give them the opportunity to hold public officials accountable for their behaviour. In their study of corruption accountability of politicians in Spain, Costas-Pérez et al. (2012) find that vote loss following a corruption scandal rose with the number of news reports on the matter. With less than ten news reports, vote loss was around 4%, while above ten news reports it rose to 9%. Costas-Pérez et al. (2012) argue that this may have considerable effects on who sits in public office, since there are low average vote margins with which Spanish elections are won. But this requires wide media coverage, which is not necessarily happening for every case.

Solé-Ollé & Sorribas-Navarro (2018) go further with the research on corruption scandals in Spain, finding correlations between corruption scandals and local trust in local politicians and perceptions on corruption. They use quantitative data on corruption scandals from news coverage in national and regional Spanish newspapers. When a corruption scandal is reported, 6.2% of the overall population shifts from trusting to not trusting politicians. There is also a shift in perception that takes place in the occurrence of corruption scandals almost equal to the results listed above. 7.5% of citizens shift from low to high perceptions of corruption in the aftermath of a corruption scandal. There might be a link between corruption scandals, corruption perception and trust in local government. Perceptions change, and so people are less likely to trust the government. Sikorski (2018) explains in his meta-analysis of political scandals that there are many different themes or factors which play a role in whether a politician is re-elected in the aftermath of a political scandal, for example, what type of scandal it was, the characteristics of the politician and their response to their own transgression, general attitudes of the voter base and other contextual aspects. Corruption causes some voter loss, but it has usually not been enough to make the corrupt politicians lose elections, especially if the corrupt behaviour benefits the population in some way (Sikorski 2018: 3121).

Civil society and activity

"People's indifference is the best breeding ground for corruption to grow"
– Delia Ferraria

In this study, we use the term "civil society" frequently. What we try to achieve with this term is an explanation of an active citizenry which differs from the government and the market. Civil society must be understood as something outside the public institutions; it is the realm of everyday private citizens who, through their actions and behaviour, control and enforce norms. Going out and voting (as mentioned previously) or protesting represents an active way to participate in civil society, while watching the news and current affairs presents a passive way to participate. Through communicative behaviour, with the information we are able to gather, we can discuss what needs to be done for the possible betterment or improvement of society (see Habermas 1984). Because the concept of corruption is hard to grasp, civil society plays a crucial role in finding and enforcing corruption. Through active participation, people can share their experiences and inform others on what is happening with their public officials. Perhaps there is an area of government which is particularly corrupt, and people who experience it report it to the news, sparking debate, reforms, or different voting patterns in the next election. Transparency through civil society organisations weaponize civil society to confront secretive or unresponsive governments or corporations (Sampson 2010).

Civil society rests on an idea of common values and shared goals based on horizontal trust and reciprocity (Putnam 1993). An active civil society can advance social capital elements within a society, such as trust, norms, and shared values. If civil society is actively "used" on the political sphere, democracy can improve. Putnam (1993) argues that it is not wealth which creates an active civil society, but that civil society creates wealth.

The importance of civil society in combating corruption has been noted in many studies (Ralchev 2004; Fiorino, Galli, & Goel 2019; Rasmussen & Reher 2019). The idea is that centralized power in institutions is not enough to keep corruption in check; there is also a need for decentralized power in the hands of citizens. "Civil society" becomes a term for the community-driven norms which punishes bad faith actors, in this study's case, corrupt actors. These corrupt actors can often be part of the centralized power; politicians, law enforcers, or

bureaucrats, which means it can be hard for institutions themselves to catch them without the help of citizen enforcement – an active civil society. An active civil society can be described as a form of social capital (Rasmussen & Reher 2019). Civil society can be the death ringers for any sitting public official if properly organised. Organised forms of civil society are often called non-governmental organisations, or NGOs.

Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) can be an important tool to foster activism in civil society. Not only in the obvious that they are not officially part of the state government, but they can start engagement in the population with regards to policy dialogue and create opportunities and organise for people to actively participate in politics (Ralchey 2004). NGOs interested in battling corruption can, as an example, organise people to protest the government, help journalists to pick up stories on corrupt behaviour, or protect whistle-blowers when need be. Transparency International (TI) is an example of an NGO with the goal of uncovering and stopping corruption. It might be important to mention that it is in the best interest of these organisations to show corruption to be a problem, so they can continue to practice their power and receive donations from people and nations in order to fix the particular issue they are occupied with. There might also be an issue with compressing an intricate term like corruption into a standardized numeric value ranging from 0-100 (Sampson 2010).

Fiorino, Galli, & Goel (2019) published an article studying the influence that civic activism could have in exposing corruption in Italian regions. According to them, civic activism can take various dimensions, such as newspaper reading, media participation, voting, volunteering, internet blogging etc. They distinguish between two forms of activism: active, such as interacting with media and voting, and passive activism such as blood donations or volunteering. Information flows through the media can empower civil society by showing them corrupt behaviour (Fiorino et al. 2019). A free media (free of government) can act as a watch dog against governmental corruption in showing the voters how they are acting – transparency. Doing so may lead to civil activism, getting people interested in doing something to stop this behaviour, such as voting, protesting, or writing about it themselves in letters to the editor, often featured in newspapers. There is, however, an issue with the information flows, namely that they can be manipulated by other interests. This can be governments taking control over media channels, media partisanship leading to only focusing on corruption of one side and ignoring the other (Mancini et al. 2017).

Ralchev (2004) investigated civil society's role in fighting corruption and organised crime in Southeast Europe. He theorises that civil society organisations, along with awareness from media, are pivotal in fighting corruption and organised crime (Ralchev 2004). Using multilevel regression analysis on data on opinion on 20 specific policy issues in 30 European countries, Rasmussen & Reher (2019) find evidence to suggest civic engagement can improve the quality of democracy through issue-specific information. Their findings propose that civil society organisations appear to act as important information distributing agents, helping reduce uncertainty between citizens and policy-makers. There is empirical evidence to offer credence to the necessity of citizens participation in policing the commons, as Abdallah, Sayed, Rahwan, LeVeck, Cebrian, Rutherford, and Fowler (2014) put it. It seems that more decentralized governments relying on civil society engagement flourish more in regard to public goods[6] (Abdallah et al. 2014). Civil society can be argued to be a part of the checks and balances to hold actors, such as public officials, in order.

Critics and sceptics of civil society challenge the altruism of civil society organisations. One of the claims is that NGO's are often not very transparent to the public, and they are rarely held accountable themselves (Ebrahim 2003; Townsend & Townsend 2004). Another critical claim on NGOs is the failure of internal controls, noting lax oversight, internal control, and absence of checks and balances, leading NGOs to become breeding grounds for corruption (Gibelman & Gelman 2004). Gibelman & Gelman (2004) show several cases of wrongdoing in NGOs over time, noting rhetoric regarding recommendations for improvements so that this does not continue to happen. Despite this, abuses continue, and new forms of misconduct emerge, such as excessive compensations and conflicts of interest. NGOs fighting corruption might themselves become corrupt, or as Nietzsche put it: "Whoever fights monsters should see to it that in the process he does not become a monster. And if you gaze long enough into the abyss, the abyss will gaze back into you."

Some criticisms of the term civil society argue that the term is too broad, what does civil society actually apply to, and because of this, how useful can the term be (Torsello 2012). Torsello (2012) also argue that the terms origins – Western Europe, classical Greek and Latin

[6] A public good is a product that an individual can consume without reducing its availability to others and of which no one is deprived. Examples include law enforcement, national defense, sewer systems, public parks, and the air we breathe. As those examples reveal, public goods are almost always publicly financed (https://www.investopedia.com/terms/p/public-good.asp)

philosophy – means the term "civility" is somewhat tainted with the sting from where it originated and is hard to apply in other areas of the world. This is something similar to what we have argued on "corruption": context, geography, and cultures matter and change what people believe to be "corrupt" or "civil". This is in part the reason this study focuses on European countries – there might be some differences in perceptions of what corruption or civility is in the countries which are represented in this study, but hopefully, they are not so large as to divert the entire research.

Method

This study uses a comparative approach to study corruption and news consumption. We seek to understand if corruption is more prevalent in European countries where the public opinion or at least large selections of the public are not watching the news and current affairs. This approach has limitations because the number of countries is relatively few, and they are also different in terms of many other characteristics than the ones we are investigating. There are also measurement problems associated with the spread of corruption, and this may lead to measurement errors in our study.

The empirical analysis investigates on two data sources: Transparency International and the European Social Survey. Transparency International and the European Social Survey are both survey data, but they rely on different types of informants. Transparency International rely on experts in different fields, and their data collection and methods will be explained further under "corruption perception". European Social Survey collects data from face-to-face interviews within all participating countries. There is a national funding agency in each country which appoints a National Coordinator and a survey organisation to implement the survey according to the common ESS specification. The specifications put forth by ESS are to ensure accuracy of the data in each country, and so the data can compare easily across countries.

We have also included data on country wealth (measured as DGP), income distribution (measured as the GINI coefficient), and education levels (measured as expected years schooling), everything collected from the United Nations Development Report for 2010. We use these data to check our main findings regarding the news variable with other independent variables.

Business elite data on corruption

To measure our dependent variable, *corruption*, we use data from Transparency International's corruption perceptions index (CPI), from the year 2012. We use the corruption perceptions index from 2012 because it lines up well with our data from the European Social Survey (ESS) years 2008-2011. The hope is to attempt to show how the independent variables from the ESS that were conducted in the years before effects perceived corruption in European countries. We also investigated the CPI correlation between the years 2012, 2013, and 2014 which resulted in near perfect correlation (r = 0.99-1.00) (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Correlation between Transparency Internationals Corruption Perceptions Index years 2012, 2013, and 2014.

	CPI 2012	CPI 2013	CPI 2014
CPI 2012	1.000		
CPI 2013	**0.992**	1.000	
CPI 2014	**0.987**	**0.996**	1.000

The CPI is widely used and regarded as one of the best indicators for measuring corruption (Solis & Antenangeli 2017; Camaj 2013; Zakaria 2012; Rose & Mishler 2010; You & Khargram 2005; Andvig & Fjeldstad 2001). This index ranks 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption according to experts and businesspeople. It uses a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean. The index is a combination of 13 surveys and assessments of corruption, collected by a variety of reputable institutions. It is the most widely used indicator of corruption worldwide.

The CPI methodology follows four basic steps, as described in their 2012 technical methodology note: selection of source data, rescaling source data, aggregating the rescaled data and then reporting a measure for uncertainty. There is also a strict quality control mechanism which consists of parallel independent calculations conducted by two in- house researchers and two academic advisors with no affiliation to Transparency International. In order to create the

Corruption Perceptions Index, Transparency International draws upon different data sources which have the purpose of capturing the assessments of experts and business executives on different corrupt behaviours in the public sector, which include: bribery, diversion of public funds, use of public office for private gain, nepotism in the civil service, and state capture. Some sources also include the mechanisms accessible for corruption prevention in a nation, for example: the government's ability to enforce integrity mechanisms, effective prosecutions of corrupt politicians, red tape and excessive bureaucratic burdens, the existence of adequate laws on financial disclosures, conflict of interest preventions and access to information, and legal protection for whistle-blowers, journalists and investigators. The aim of the CPI is to provide a more reliable picture of the perceived level of corruption around the world than any of the thirteen sources could independently.

The source data for the CPI 2012 are a collection of the 13 sources of information (Table 1.2). Not every country is rated by every source – some focus on regions or other forms of collections of countries. Our study focuses on Europe, so we include here the questions asked to those reporting corruption perception in European countries. The sources not included below are the African Development Bank Governance Ratings and The Political and Economic Risk Consultancy Asian Intelligence.

Table 1.2: 2012 CPI Sources of Information with number of countries (Corruption Perception Index 2012)

Source	Number of countries
1. African Development Bank Governance Ratings (AFDB)	53
2. Bertelsmann Foundation Sustainable Governance Indicators (BF-SGI)	31
3. Bertelsmann Foundation Transformation Index (BF-BTI)	128
4. Economist Intelligence Unit Country Risk Ratings (EIU)	138
5. Freedom House Nations in Transit (FH)	29
6. Global Insight Country Risk Ratings (GI)	175
7. IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook (IMD)	59
8. Political and Economic Risk Consultancy Asian Intelligence (PERC)	16
9. Political Risk Services International Country Risk Guide (ICRG)	140
10. Transparency International Bribe Payers Survey (TI)	29
11. World Bank - Country Performance and Institutional Assessment (WB)	67
12. World Economic Forum Executive Opinion Survey (WEF)	147
13. World Justice Project Rule of Law Index (WJP)	97

Experts were asked by the Bertelsmann Foundation Sustainable Governance Indicators to assess "To what extent are public officeholders prevented from abusing their position for private interests?" Scores were given on a scale of 1 (highest level of corruption) to 10 (lowest level of corruption). A low score of 1 to 2 meant "public officeholders can exploit their offices for private gain as they see fit without fear of legal consequences or adverse publicity". The highest scores of 9 to 10 meant "legal, political and public integrity effectively prevent public officeholders from abusing their positions." This was done to 31 OECD countries.

The Bertelsmann Foundation Transformation Index asked experts to assess: "To what extent are public officeholders who abuse their positions prosecuted or penalized?" A low score of 1 to 2 means "Officeholders who break the law and engage in corruption can do so without fear of legal consequences or adverse publicity", while a high score of 9 to 10 means "Office holders who break the law and engage in corruption are prosecuted rigorously under established

laws and always attract adverse publicity." Experts were further asked to assess: "To what extent does the government successfully contain corruption?" Assessments ranged from a low of 1 to 2 where "The government fails to contain corruption, and there are no integrity mechanisms in place." A high assessment, 9 to 10, meant "The government is successful in containing corruption, and all integrity mechanisms are in place and effective." The scores were given on a scale of 1 to 10, where 10 was the lowest level of corruption and 1 was the highest level of corruption. The experts assessed 128 countries and territories

The Economist Intelligence Unit Country Risk Ratings asked teams of experts supported by a global network of in-country specialist a number of corruption questions. The included specific guiding questions presented were:

- "Are there clear procedures and accountability governing the allocation and use of public funds?"
- "Are public funds misappropriated by ministers/public officials for private or party political purposes?"
- "Are there special funds for which there is no accountability?"
- "Are there general abuses of public resources?"
- "Is there a professional civil service or are large numbers of officials directly appointed by the government?"
- "Is there an independent body auditing the management of public finances?"
- "Is there an independent judiciary with the power to try ministers/public officials for abuses?"
- "Is there a tradition of payment of bribes to secure contracts and gain favours?"

Scores were given as integers on a scale from 0, indicating a very low incidence of corruption, to 4, indicating a very high incidence of corruption. This assessment scored 144 countries or territories.

Freedom House Nations in Transit asked their experts to explore a range of indicative corruption themed questions, including:

- "Has the government implemented effective anti-corruption initiatives?"

- "Is the government free from excessive bureaucratic regulations, registration requirements, and other controls that increase opportunities for corruption?"
- "Are there adequate laws requiring financial disclosure and disallowing conflict of interest?"
- "Does the government advertise jobs and contracts?"
- "Does the state enforce an effective legislative or administrative process—particularly one that is free of prejudice against one's political opponents—to prevent, investigate, and prosecute the corruption of government officials and civil servants?"
- "Do whistleblowers, anti-corruption activists, investigators, and journalists enjoy legal protections that make them feel secure about reporting cases of bribery and corruption?"

These scores ran from 1, the lowest level of corruption, to 7, the highest level of corruption, with half and quarter intermediate scores allowed (e.g. 3.25). The assessment was done over 29 countries and territories, including Central Europe and Newly Independent States (NIS).

Global Insight Country Risk Ratings provide data scores from 203 countries/territories worldwide. They have assessments from over 100 in-house country specialists, who also receive expert opinions from in-country freelancers, clients and other contacts. They qualitatively assess a broad range of corrupt activity, such as petty bribery to high-level political corruption. The experts were asked to assess: 'Corruption, particularly as it affects operational activities for businesses. There was an analytical emphasis on the economic and political drivers of the problem.' 'From a business perspective, corruption is a particular concern in relation to obtaining business permits and favourable policy and planning decisions. Analysts will closely assess businesses' experience of these processes.' The scores ranged from a minimum of 1.0, minimum corruption, to 5.0, maximum corruption, with the possibility for half-point intermediate scores (e.g. 3.5).

The IMD World Competitiveness Year Book surveyed senior business leaders who reflected a cross-section of a nation's corporate community on corruption. They were asked the following question: "Bribing and corruption: Exists or do not exists". Scores ranged on a 1 to 6 scale, which was then converted to a 0 to 10 scale where 0 is the highest level of perceived corruption and 10 is the lowest. 4200 responded in 2012 covering 59 countries and territories around the world.

The Political Risk Services International Country Risk Guide produces risk ratings for 140 countries and territories on a monthly basis. Their corruption question was stated as follows: "This is an assessment of corruption within the political system. The most common form of corruption met directly by businesses is financial corruption in the form of demands for special payments and bribes connected with import and export licenses, exchange controls, tax assessments, police protection, or loans. The measure is most concerned with actual or potential corruption in the form of excessive patronage, nepotism, job reservations, exchange of favours, secret party funding, and suspiciously close ties between politics and business." They scored corruption on a scale of 0, highest potential risk, to 6, lowest potential risk.

The Transparency International Bribe Payers Survey contains a survey of business executives in 30 countries and territories around the world. Their survey from 2011, conducted on 100 business executives, through phone, face-to-face, and online interviews. Respondents were asked the following questions on corruption: "In your opinion, how common is it for public officials to demand or accept bribes in this country?" and "In your opinion, how common is the misuse of public funds for private gain in this country?" The scores were given on a scale of 1 to 5 on both questions, where 1 corresponds to "never", and 5 corresponds to "very common".

The World Bank Country Policy and Institutional Assessment rate corruption with help from a staff of experts. The experts were asked to assess the following: Transparency, Accountability and Corruption in the Public Sector. "This criterion assesses the extent to which the executive can be held accountable for its use of funds and the results of its actions by the electorate and by the legislature and judiciary, and the extent to which public employees within the executive are required to account for the use of resources, administrative decisions, and results obtained. Both levels of accountability are enhanced by transparency in decision making, public audit institutions, access to relevant and timely information, and public and media scrutiny. A high degree of accountability and transparency discourages corruption, or the abuse of public office for private gain. National and sub-national governments should be appropriately weighted. Each of three dimensions should be rated separately: (a) accountability of the executive to oversight institutions and of public employees for their performance; (b) access of civil society to information on public affairs; and (c) state capture by narrow vested interests." The scores ranged from 1, low levels of transparency, to 6, high levels of transparency, and it allowed for half-point intermediate scores (e.g. 3.5). The CPIA covered 78 countries.

The World Economic Forum Executive Opinion Survey surveys business executives over 140 economies. Respondents were asked the following: “In your country, how common is it for firms to make undocumented extra payments or bribes connected with the following: a) Imports and exports; b) Public Utilities; c) Annual Tax Payments; d) Awarding of public contracts and licensing; e) Obtaining favourable judicial decisions.” They were also asked: “In your country, how common is diversion of public funds to companies, individuals or groups due to corruption?” The questions were scored by respondents on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means “very common”, and 7 means “never”. Results of a) to e) were aggregated into a single score, and the results of both questions were averaged across all respondents to score every country/territory.

The World Justice Project Rule of Law Index provide data from questions asked of local experts and respondents from the general population. They were asked 68 questions on the extent to which the government use public office for private gain. The questions touched on a variety of sectors within government, including the public health system, regulatory agencies, the police, and the courts. Individual questions were aggregated into four sub-indices:

- Government officials in the executive branch do not use public office for private gain
- Government officials in the judicial branch do not use public office for private gain
- Government officials in the police and the military do not use public office for private gain
- Government officials in the legislature do not use public office for private gain

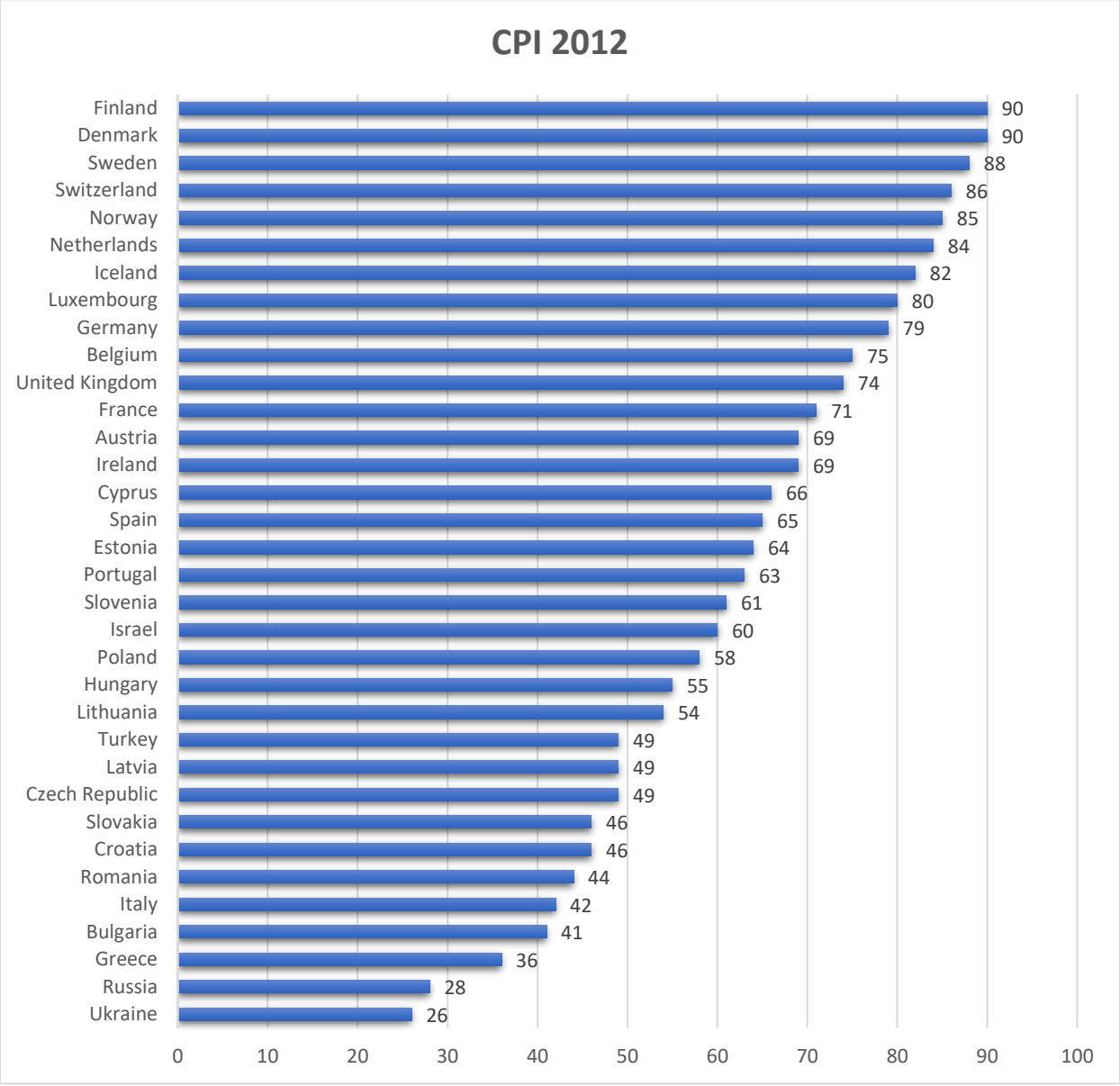
Scores were given on a continuous scale from a low of 0 to a high of 1. 97 countries were scored in 2012.

When merging the different scores, each source is standardised to be made compatible with other available sources, into the CPI scale. The standardisation coverts all data sources to a scale of 0-100 where 0 is the highest level of perceived corruption, and 100 is the lowest level of perceived corruption. Any of the sources scaled such that lower scores represent lower levels of corruption are reversed. Standardisation means subtracting the mean of the data and dividing by the standard deviation.

Northern European (Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Iceland) countries top the list along with Switzerland and the Netherlands, they are all above 80 points on the CPI (Figure 1). They are followed by mostly Western European countries, which lie between about 70 and 80

points on the CPI. Some Southern European countries follow at around the mid 60 scores (Cyprus, Spain, and Portugal), with some Eastern European countries and Israel around the 60-score point. Towards the bottom of the list we see a mix of Southern and Eastern European countries, notably at the bottom we find Greece (36), Russia (28), and Ukraine (26) (Figure 1).

Figure 1: European countries (ESS) ranged on the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) 2012 from Transparency International, from least corrupt to most corrupt (100 = minimal corruption, 0 = very corrupt). N = 34



There are, however, criticisms which can be targeted at the CPI. First of all, it might be biased as it is derived from self-reported data by people working for multinational firms and institutions. These are described as experts and business executives in Transparency Internationals methodology.

What, specifically, the Corruption Perceptions Index is measuring can be discussed, as one number ranging from 0-100 is supposed to capture an incredibly complex phenomena can be problematic (Wedel 2015). An issue with some of the sources used in the CPI is that the respondents are asked to report the extent of a phenomena referred to in the form of broad and abstract concept. What exactly it is measuring depends on what those who are reporting are defining corruption to be, and who they view as possible to commit corrupt behaviour. We know that culturally, corruption is very different in crossing national lines, and what is viewed by a European as corrupt, might be a completely normal affair to, for example, developing nations (Gardiner 2007). Addressing this we have focused on one continent, Europe (including Israel), so to attempt to capture roughly similar attitudes and understandings of the concept of "corruption". It is still important to emphasise that the citizens in a nation might not have the same understanding or reality to corruption to those who report it in the CPI.

Let us also address the idea of people's perception of corruption as a good measurement of actual corruption. Is it viable to give credence to respondents' self-reported perception of the concept of corruption, or in other words, how can we be sure that actual experienced corruption correlates with perceived corruption? The defence for the use of perceived corruption can be derived from Gonzalez et al. (2019) which we have previously been through in the literature review. They bridge the gap between perceived corruption and experienced corruption and argue it is either a part of everyday life or it very much is not. This is to say that people are either very inundated with corrupt behaviour in their everyday life, and as such report perceived corruption to be high, presumably. Contrast to this, people living in countries with low amounts of experienced corruption will report low amounts of corruption. In some cases, however, respondents might report corruption to be a bigger issue than it is in actuality because they experience something outside of their everyday life – for example being asked for a bribe when this is not the norm of their society.

Pollack & Allern (2018) note several large-scale bribery scandals conducted by Scandinavian telecommunication corporations in Uzbekistan. This might show an issue with measurements of corruption, as it may not fully take into account that international corporations located in (and partly owned by) the least corrupt countries in the world are actors who use corrupt cultures in other countries.

Population data on corruption

The European Social Survey has collected survey data on several topics every second year since 2002. The ESS uses a source questionnaire consisting of a collection of questions which can be classified into two main parts – a core section and a rotating section. The core section contains items measuring a range of topics of enduring interests to the social sciences as well as the most comprehensive set to background variables of any cross-national survey. How many items can change between rounds, but each question has a unique variable name to assist users working with data over time.

The rotating sections of the European Social Survey select multi-national teams of researchers to contribute to the design of two rotating modules for the questionnaire containing up to 30 items each. Rotating modules are selected following an open invite for submissions of applications on what the modules of questions are to be fielded as part of a round. Each rotating module covers a single academic and/or policy concern within Europe and is drafted by a competitively selected team. The rotating modules can contain new modules or repeat ones in order to compare with previous ESS rounds.

Data collection in the European Social Survey is done via face-to-face computer-assisted personal interviewing (CAPI). In each country, the national funding agency appoints a National Coordinator (NC) and a survey organisation to implement the survey according to the common ESS specification. The Specification is set to ensure the accuracy of data in each country and to optimise comparability of data across countries. The most important standards on data collection include:

- Response rate target 70% (as a general target; actual target lower in some countries)

- Non-contact rate target of 3% maximum
- Fieldwork period of at least 6 weeks within the 5 months between September of the survey year and January of the following year
- Detailed briefing of interviewers in face-to-face sessions
- Restricted interviewer workload (maximum 48 sample units gross)
- Interviewer call schedule: 4 contacts attempts minimum, among which at least 1 in the evening and 1 at the weekend
- Contact forms to record and document data on fieldwork processes
- Quality control back-checks on completed interviews and ineligible cases
- Close monitoring of fieldwork progress

This analysis includes data from the first seven rounds of data, collected from 2002 to 2015. All analyses presented here include all respondents aged 20 to 70 years.

Because some of the phenomena investigated in these data are correlated with the respondents' age (i.e., older people have more time to watch and read news), we have adjusted all variables for the age-composition of the countries. First, we have used linear regression models with a linear age covariate and random effects for the countries. Then, we have added the mean value (at the level of individuals) to the country level random effects. The age-adjusted and non-adjusted data are closely correlated with r-statistics typically higher than 0.99 at the level of countries. This method corresponds to correcting for linear age in so-called multi-level methods using random effects (intercepts) for the countries.

Economic morality

As people hear about corruption in media and other reports, there is the possibility that they perceive corruption to be a bigger issue than it might actually be. People who never personally experience corruption can still report high levels of corruption. To check for this potential bias, we use people's reporting of experienced corruption in the European Social Survey round 2

from 2004-05. This bias could be important, as high levels of perceived corruption can have policy implications, as noted by Masters & Graycar (2015).

The second round of the European Social Survey collected in 2004-05 had a special module for economic morality. It includes several items related to corruption. The questionnaires used several items including items on experiences of corruption, trust in public officials, and attitudes toward corruption.

The item on experiences asked: "How often, if ever, have each of these things happened to you in the last five years?" including … "A public official asked you for a favour or a bribe in return for a service", with five possible responses: "Never" (1), "Once" (2), "Twice (3), "3 or 4 times" (4), "5 times or more" (5), plus "(Don't know)" (set to missing).

Being asked for a bribe is a rare phenomenon in the majority of the European countries. In eight of the 25 countries investigated, only one such request had been made per 100 respondents over the previous five years, given that they have a mean value of approximately 1.01 in the ESS data (Figure 2.1). The Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish respondents reported two to three such requests per 100 respondents over the five years. The mean value among the 25 countries is 11 requests for bribery per 100 respondents (Table 2). Only seven countries had responses above that level, and they are all in the Eastern part of continent geographically, even though not necessarily in terms of the historically important political east-west divide: Greece (geographically but not politically), Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Ukraine. Ukraine stands out with 72 requests for bribery per 100 respondents, more than two-and-a-half times as many as the second most corrupt country according to this indicator, Slovakia with 27 similar requests.

The item on trust was "How much would you trust the following groups to deal honestly with people like you?" including … "Public officials", with five possible responses ranging from: "Distrust a lot" (1), "Distrust" (2), "Neither trust nor distrust" (3), "Trust" (4), "Trust a lot" (5), plus "(Don't know)" (set to missing).

The age-adjusted country-level mean values vary from 2.6 (between "neither-nor" and "trust") to 3.6 (between "trust" and "trust a lot"). Norway is on the top (Figure 2.1) and again, Ukraine on the bottom. The difference between Ukraine and some of the other countries is much smaller on the item on trust (Figure 1) than on the previous item on having been asked for a bribe (Figure 2.1). The mean value for the 25 countries is 3.2. Hence, we can conclude that a lot more

people trust than do not trust public officials in Europe. Still, the balance is more even in some countries than on others. As for bribes, respondents in the Eastern part of Europe report less trust than in the Western part of the continent. There are exceptions, however. The UK, with the second-lowest incidence of bribes (Figure 1), is among the countries where the general population express low trust toward public officials (Figure 2.1). In contrast, Slovakia with the second-highest incidence of bribes (Figure 1) is among the countries where many people report high levels of trust in public officials (Figure 2.1).

The last item was investigated to find out how wrong respondents felt being asked for a bribe was "How wrong, if at all, do you consider the following ways of behaving to be? How wrong is … a public official asking someone for a favour or bribe in return for their services?", with five possible responses: "Not wrong at all" (1), "A bit wrong" (2), "Wrong" (3), "Seriously wrong" (4), plus "(Don't know)" (set to missing).

On the item of how wrong respondents find bribery to be, the age-adjusted country-level mean values vary from approximately 3.4 and 3.8 (both between "wrong" and "seriously wrong"). This suggests that most people in Europe find bribery to be an unjust act. On top of the list is Denmark, and once again with Ukraine at the bottom. At the bottom we find two countries which were on top for incidences of bribery (Figure 2.1), Ukraine and Slovakia. Hence, it appears that having a greater chance of being asked for a bribe might minimize the reaction to being asked, as indicated by people responding to bribery not being as wrong. There is the possibility that causality runs in the opposite direction as well, that liberal attitudes toward corruption make it easier to be corrupt. It is not a huge stretch to assume that corruption is widely viewed as a bad thing (Bukovansky 2002). Although there is evidence to suggest Eastern Europe are more ok with bribes than Western and Northern Europe, there are exceptions here as well. At the top there are mostly Nordic countries: Denmark, Norway, Iceland, and Finland (Figure 2.3). At the bottom there are mostly Eastern European countries: Ukraine, Slovakia, Hungary, and Estonia (Figure 2.3). One exception is the third bottom European country, France (Figure 2.3), which is also on the third bottom spot for being asked for a bribe (Figure 2.1). In contrast we find Poland as the fifth highest country thinking bribery is wrong (Figure 2.3), but as the fourth highest country with incidences of bribery (Figure 2.1) and on the bottom portion of trusting public officials (Figure 2.2).

Table 2: Summary of European countries corruption experiences. N = 25

	Observed Countries	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min	Max
Trust in Public Officials	25	3.19	.24	2.64	3.58
Been Asked for a Bribe	25	1.1	.15	1.01	1.72
How Wrong is Bribery?	25	3.64	.11	3.4	3.83

Figure 2.1: Respondents from European countries answering that they have been asked for a bribe from a public official. ESS round 2. N = 25

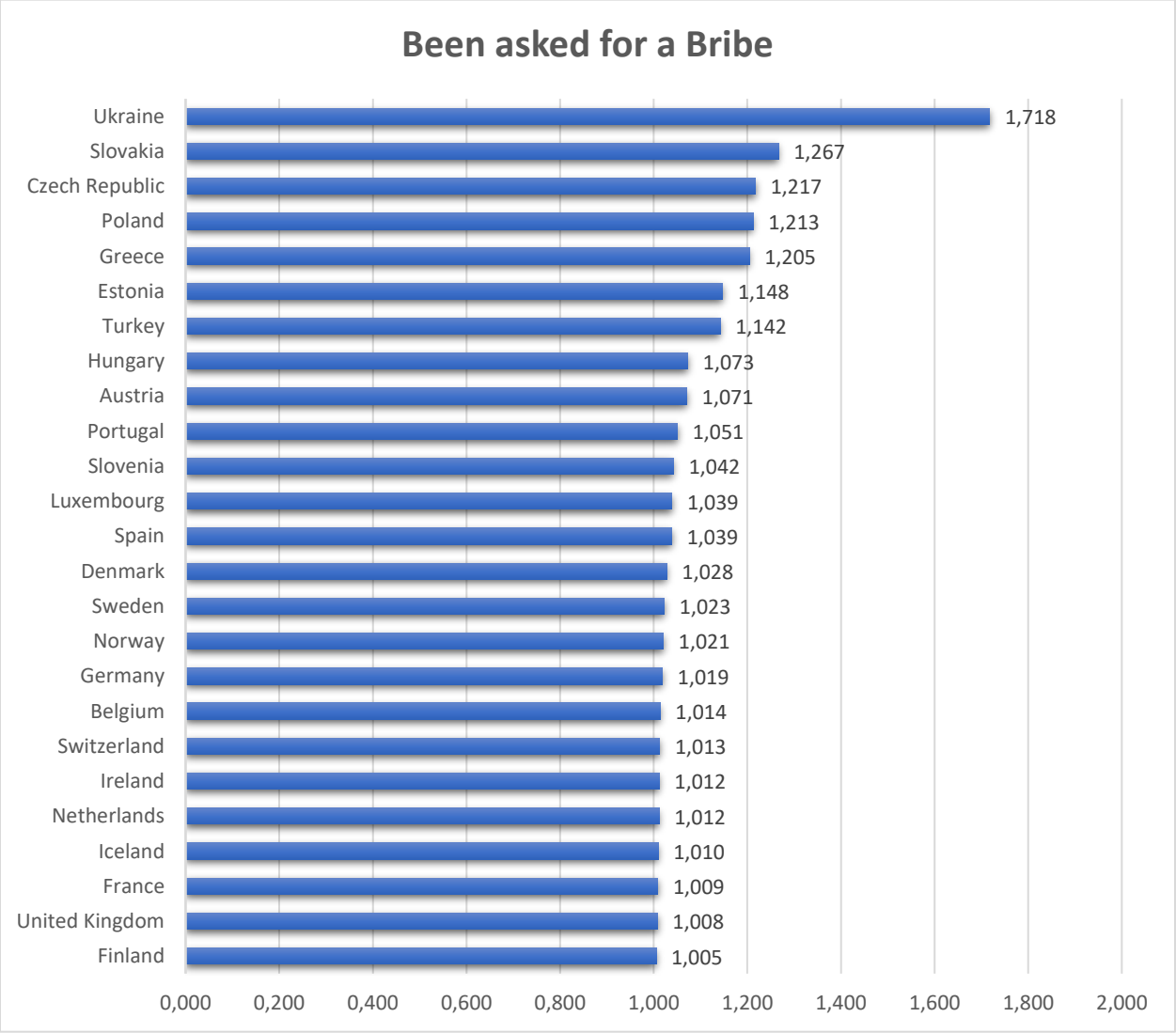


Figure 2.2: Trust in public officials in European countries. ESS round 2. N = 25

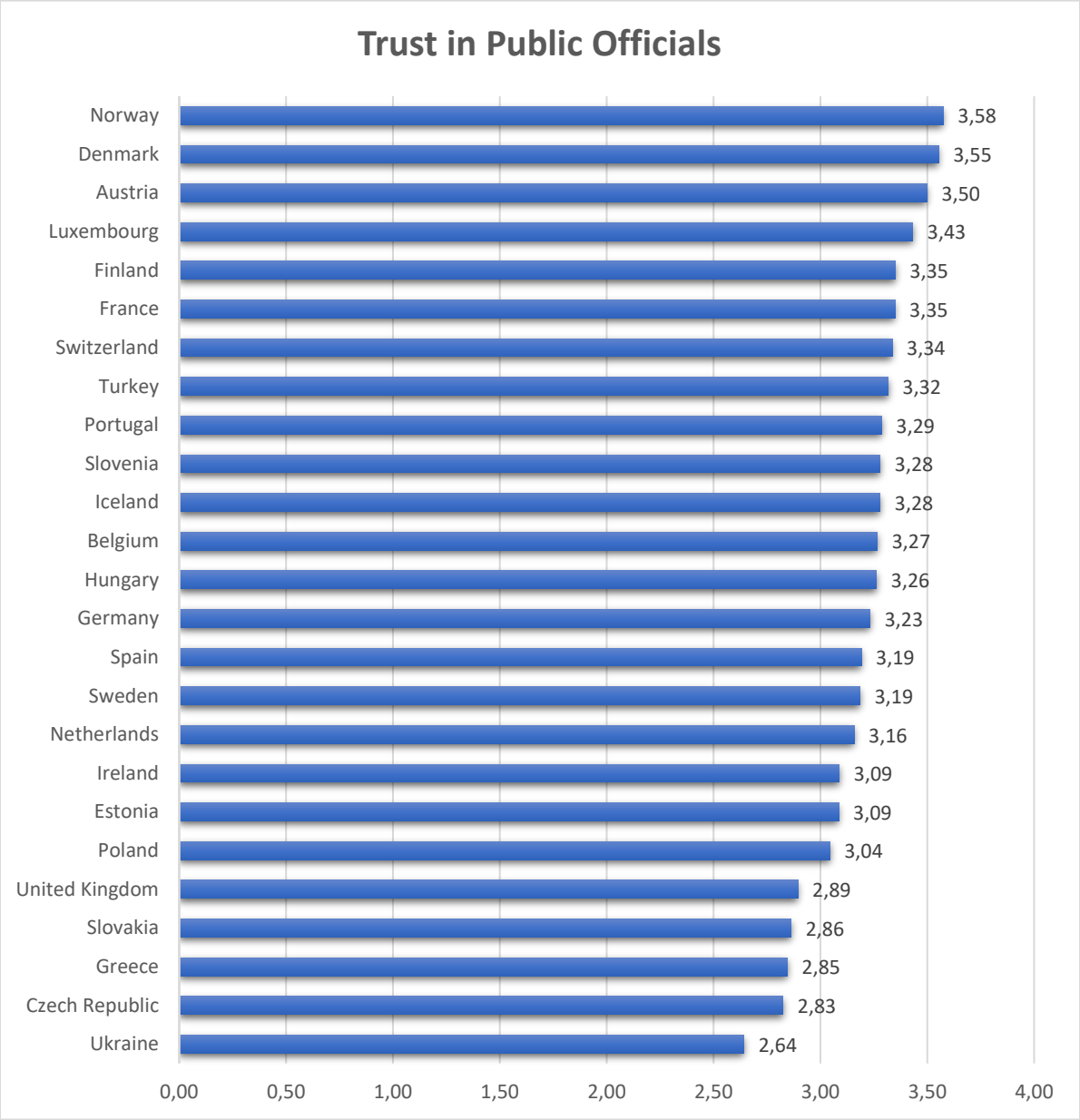
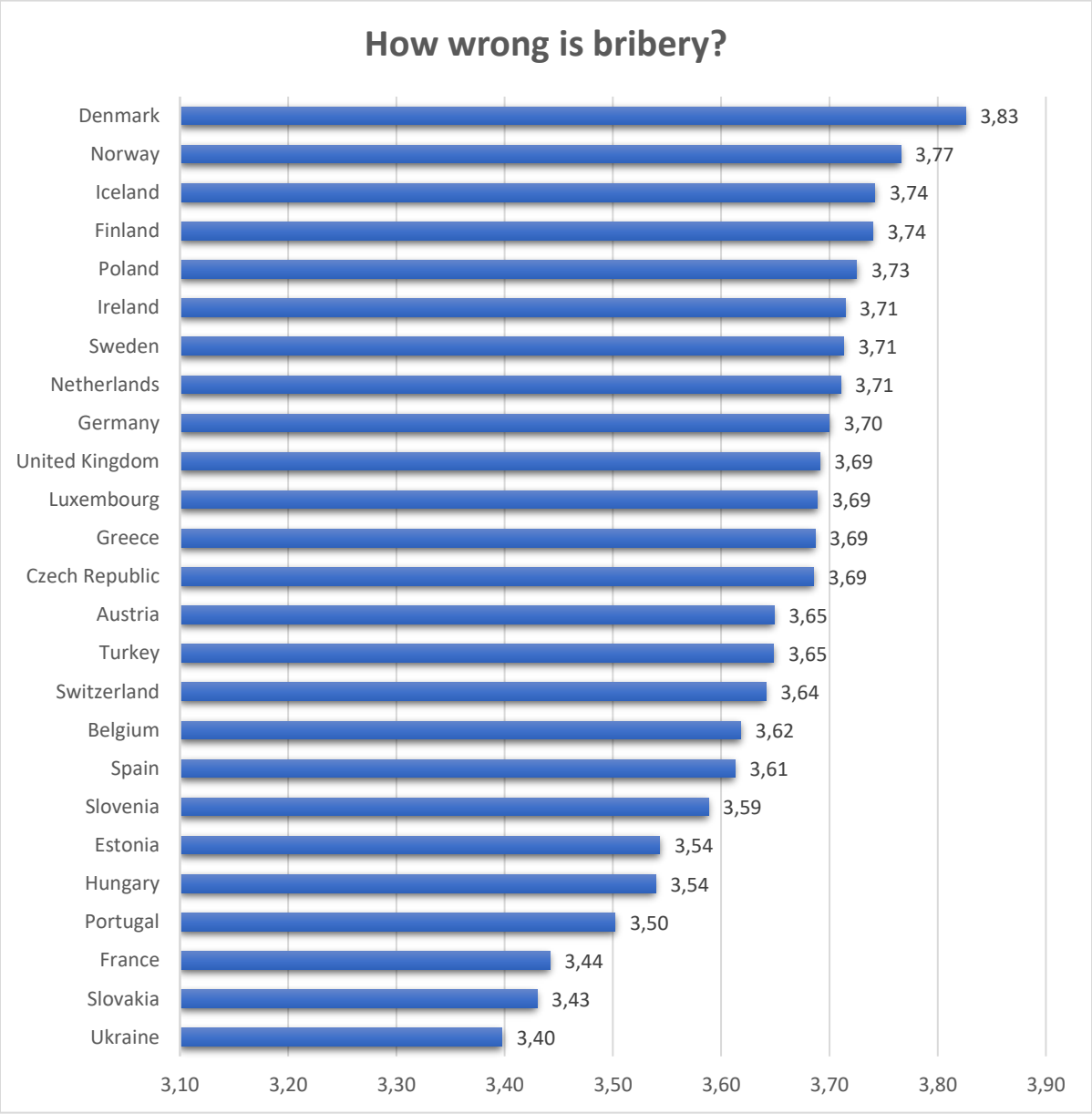


Figure 2.3: Respondents scoring how wrong bribery is in European countries. ESS round 2. N = 25



Corruption perception and experience correlation

There is a strong correlation between what business elites and experts assess (CPI) and what regular people reporting experiences of corruption (asked for a bribe) (r = 0.80, Table 3). These scores also correlate well with trust in public officials (r = 0.71 and 0.70). Attitudes to corruption also correlate as one would expect, but these attitudes are not always clearly related to perceptions (CPI) and experiences of corruption or to the trust in public officials.

The strong correlation (r = -0.80) (Table 3) between corruption reported by business elites in the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) and corruption reported by regular people in the ESS (being asked for a bribe) shows evidence of similarities in the reports of corruption at the level of countries. People, whether they be international businesspeople or regular citizens, can recognize corruption in its form and to report on it with reasonable accuracy. If a country has had many reported incidents of bribery extractions from public officials, the Corruption Perception Index will likely be lower than when there was reported few incidents of bribery. In support for this type of consistency, we find some of the best scoring CPI countries, including Northern European countries such as Denmark, Finland, Sweden, and Norway, plus the Netherlands and Switzerland (Figure 3.1). These countries have excellent scores on the Corruption Perception Index, and they also have few incidents of bribery requests from public officials compared to the rest of Europe. In contrast, countries like Greece, Turkey, and Hungary, have poor ratings on the CPI, but they also have relatively low incidents of bribery reported by the general population. Ukraine stands out, having the poorest score on corruption perception and the highest incidents of bribery of all the countries. Still, compared to other countries, they have more incidents of bribery reported by the general population than their corruption perception index suggests. There is the possibility that such apparent inconsistencies between corruption reported by business people and other elites versus the general population reflect that corruption takes different forms in different parts of Europe. If so, in Ukraine, corrupt officials tend to abuse the general population rather than the business environment. In contrast, in countries like Greece, Turkey, and Hungary, corrupt officials tend to take advantage of the business environment. The correlation between business elite's corruption assessment and regular people's reporting of their trust in public officials has a strong positive correlation (r = 0.71) (Table 3). The finding suggests that people's belief that public officials are more trustworthy with when corruption perception

assessments made by the business elites in their country. Notable exceptions in this correlation are Ukraine, Greece, the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, Turkey, Hungary, and Austria. These countries are interesting since they are all from different geographical locations across the European continent. However, many of the Eastern European countries are represented, suggesting they have more trust in public officials than the corruption perceptions would allow (Figure 3.2). Contrary, the UK, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Finland are all represented as having a high corruption perceptions score (meaning clean of corruption), but not trusting their public officials to the extent of which the correlation would suggest.

There is a high negative correlation between the experience of regular people being asked for a bribe and their trust in public officials (r = -0.70) (Table 3). This suggests being asked for a bribe is viewed by those experiencing it as a negative experience, lowering their trust in public officials in general. Two countries are especially noticeable outliers in this correlation: Ukraine and the UK (Figure 3.4). Ukraine stands out by having the most people being asked for a bribe (1.7), but still having a relatively hight trust in public officials (2.6), even though it is the lowest of all countries involved. The UK on the other hand is an outlier for being low on average trust in public officials (2.9) when having very few bribery incidents (1.0).

The causal relationship between trust in public officials and the prevalence of corruption may work both ways. The most plausible explanation might be that widespread corruption tears down the trust in public officials. But we can also imagine that high trust can be abused by public officials. Having low trust in public officials could be a mechanism for keeping them in check, perhaps that is what is happening in the UK (Figure 3.2 and Figure 3.4). Going further with this, perhaps high trust in public officials in Slovakia could have made it easier for public officials to exploit their position to their own advantage (they had high prevalence). It is possible that these differences may be related to the fact that the UK is an old democracy and that Slovakia is a relatively young democracy in a European context.

For the correlation between business elite's perception of corruption and regular people's trust in public officials there is a moderate positive correlation, though not as strong as the previous variables (r = 0.61) (Table 3). Countries with people thinking bribery is increasingly wrong will have a higher corruption cleanliness, though there are many exceptions here. Ukraine, Greece, Turkey, Czech Republic, and Poland are all outliers, having more people respond that bribery is wrong according to their corruption perception score. In contrast, France, Switzerland,

Sweden, and Finland are on the other side, having less people thinking bribery is wrong than their corruption perception score would suggest. (Figure 3.3).

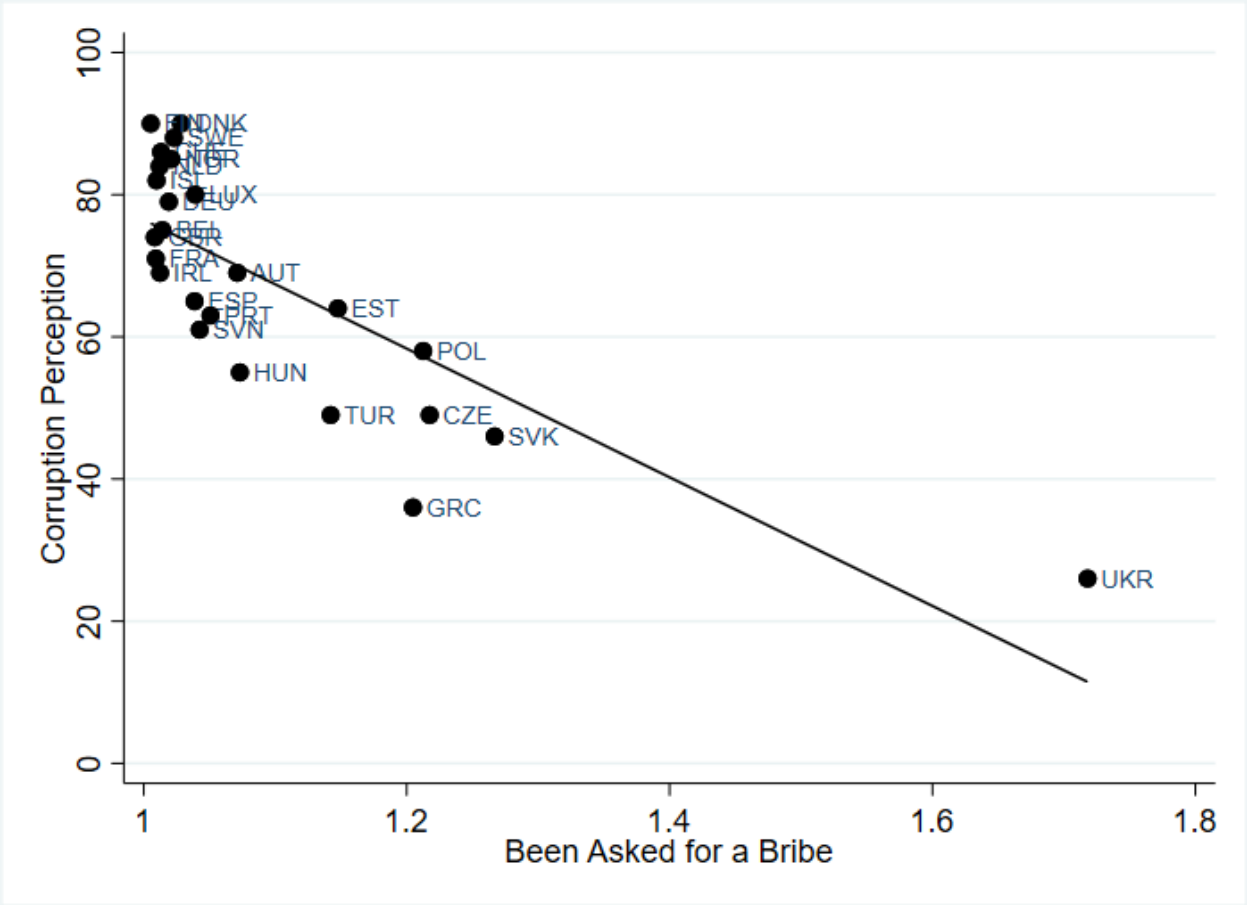
When checking correlation between regular people's assessment of how wrong bribery is and people's experience of being asked for a bribe there is a moderate negative correlation (r = -0.53) (Table 3). Being asked for a bribe could be related to people thinking it is less of a problem. If people are met with petty corruption every day, they might not see it as much of an issue. Countries where being asked for a bribe is a rarity (example Denmark) might develop high moral stances on bribery.

On people assessing how wrong bribery is and their trust in public officials there is a weak positive correlation (r = 0.39) (Table 3). A normative/moral stance on how wrong corruption is does not seem to have a large impact how much people trust their public officials to deal honestly with them.

Table 3: Correlation between all our corruption variables. N = 25

	CPI 2012	Been Asked for a Bribe	Trust in Public Officials	How Wrong is Bribery?
CPI 2012	1.00			
Been Asked for a Bribe	**-0.80**	1.00		
Trust in Public Officials	**0.71**	**-0.70**	1.00	
How Wrong is Bribery?	**0.61**	**0.52**	**0.39**	1.00

Figure 3.1: Corruption perception and being asked for a bribe, presented as a scatterplot with a regression line (r = -0.80). N = 25



(See Table A in Appendix for country code explanations)

Figure 3.2: Correlation between corruption perception and trust in public officials, presented as a scatterplot with a regression line (r = 0.71). N = 25

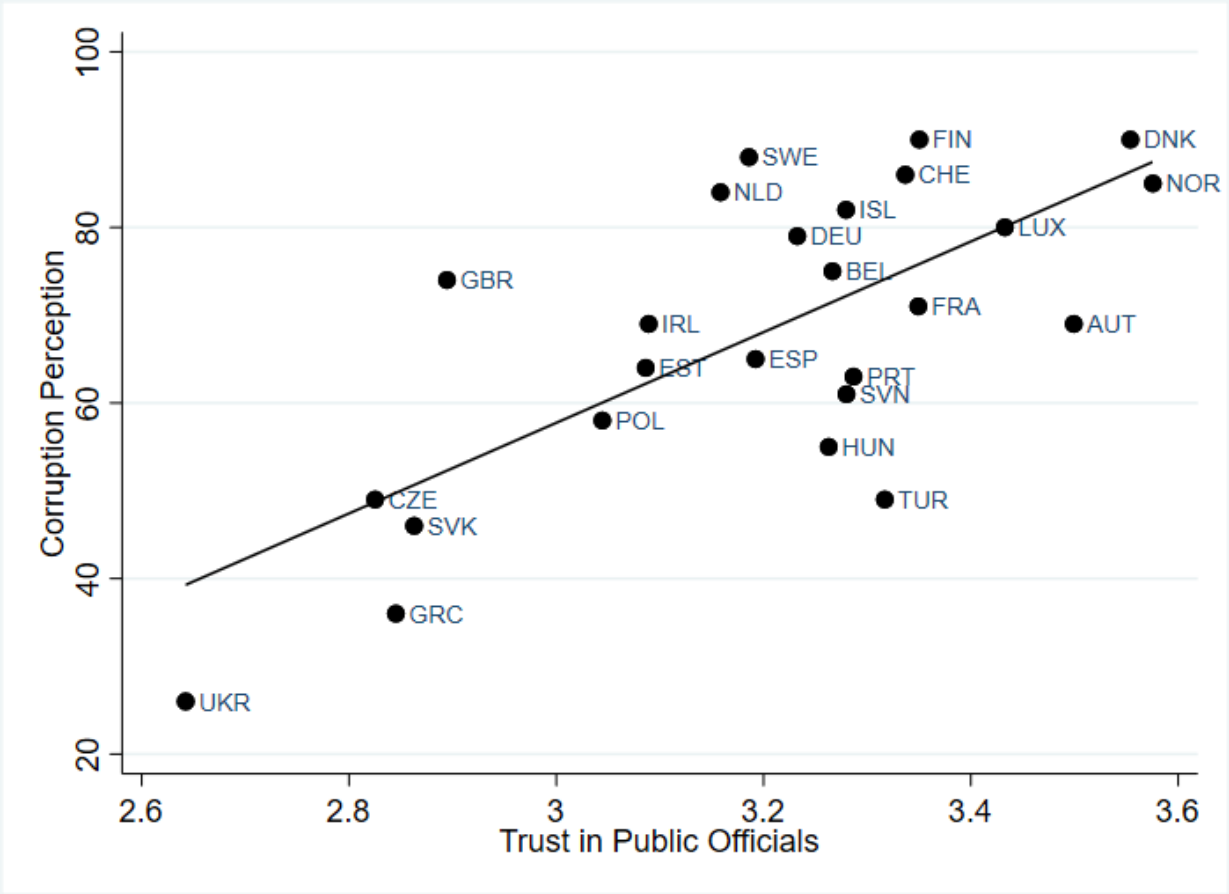


Figure 3.3: Correlation between corruption perception and how wrong respondents think bribery is, presented as a scatterplot with a regression line (r = 0.61). N = 25

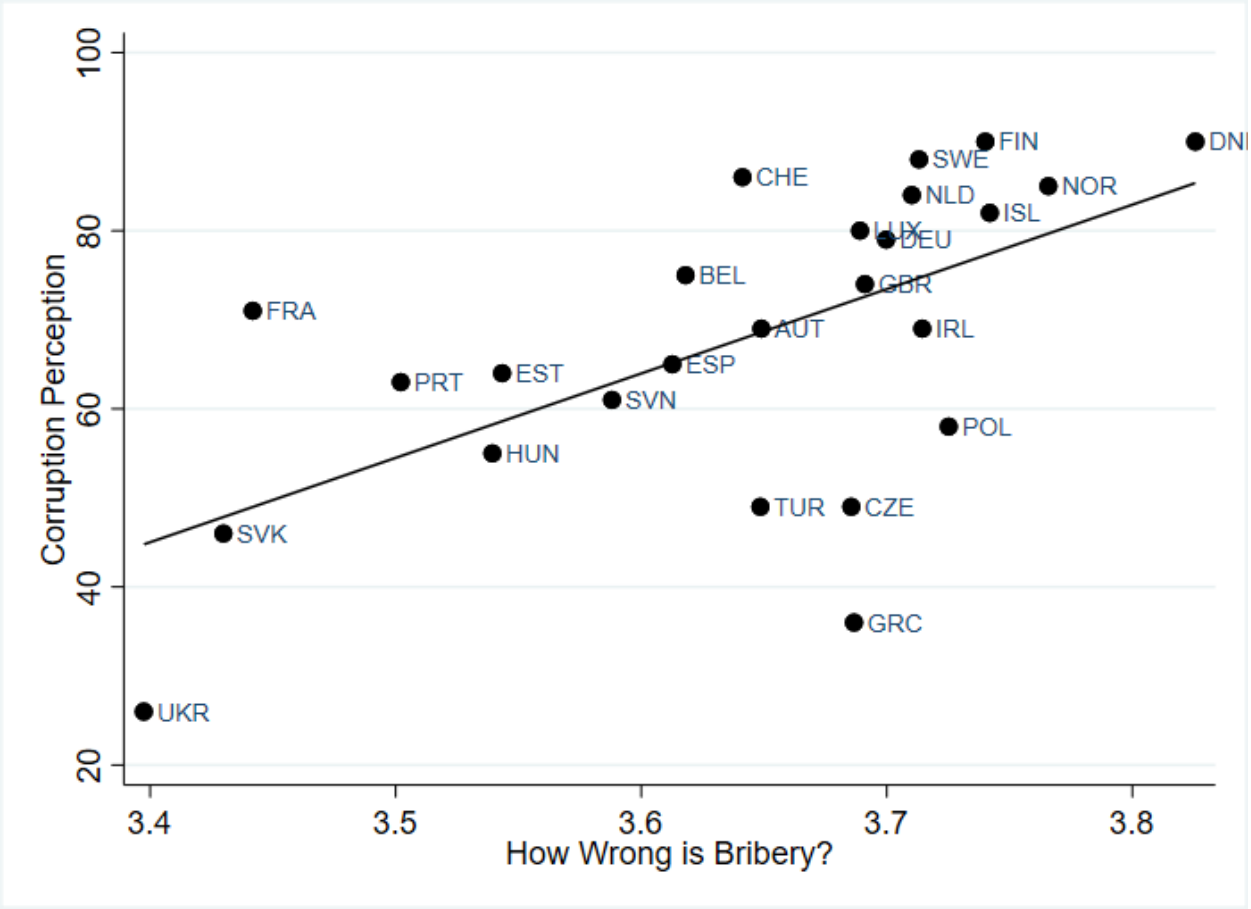
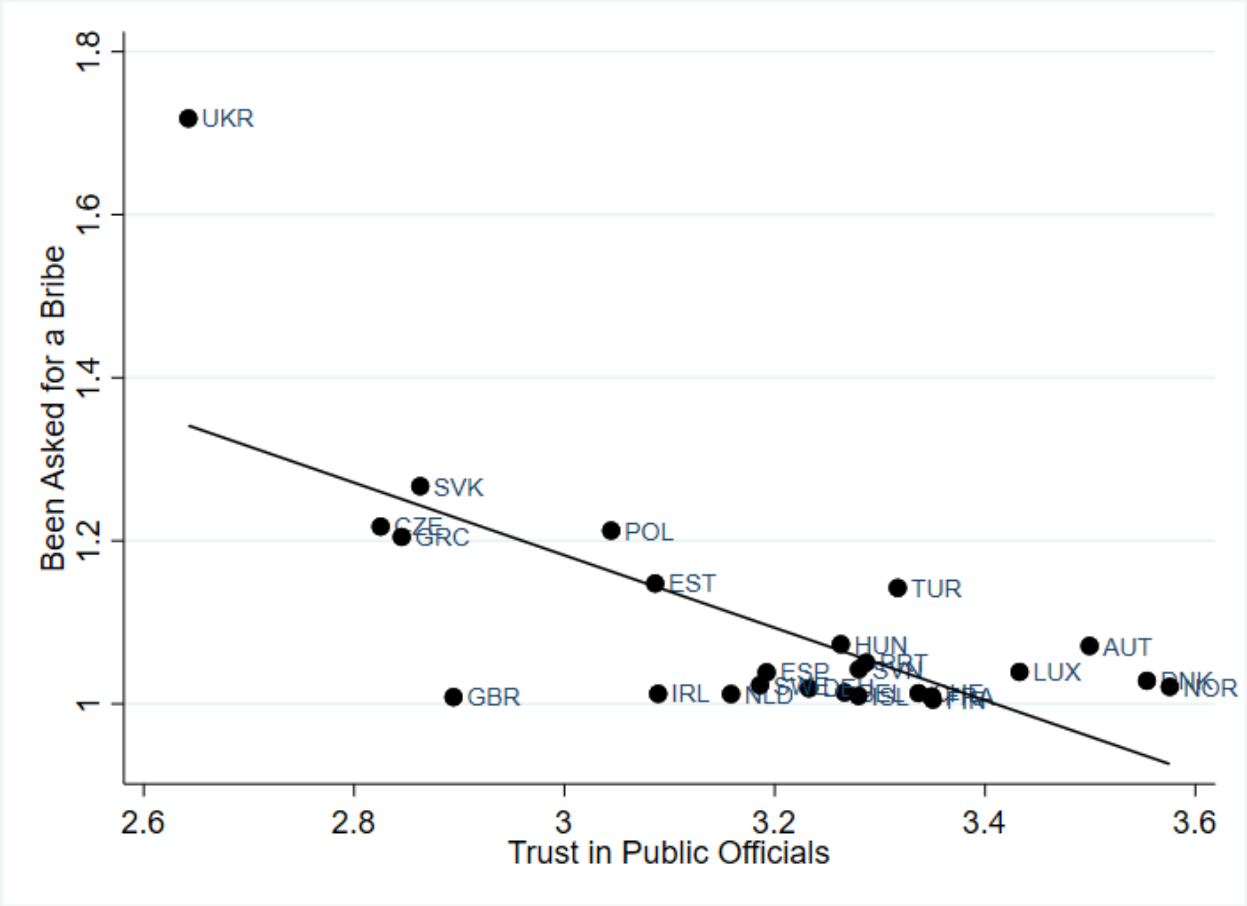


Figure 3.4: Correlation between respondents being asked for a bribe and trust in public officials, presented as a scatterplot with a regression line (r = -0.70). N = 25



Civic engagement

The principle explanatory variable, hypothesised to limit corruption, is an active civil society which is following news and current affairs in the media. The European Social Survey includes questions covering several aspects of civic engagement including people's behaviour following news and current affairs, and respondents' interest in politics. First, we use data from European Social Survey rounds 4 and 5 to compare with CPI 2012. Then, we use the same questions about news from ESS rounds 1 and 2 to compare with corruption experience from ESS round 2.

We investigate the correlation between the rounds for the variables (Table 4.3). Following news and current affairs in the ESS rounds 1-2 and 4-5 correlate strongly with each other ($r = 0.86$). The percentage not following the news or current affairs from ESS rounds 1-2 and 4-5 also have a strong correlation ($r = 0.91$). Deviations from perfect correlations can have a few reasons. One reason in measurement error when estimating the news and current affairs between samples of typically 1500 respondents from each country for each wave. Another reason can be that how far people follow the news and current affairs changes differently between countries.

News and current affairs

To measure civil society's engagement regarding behaviour which intends to combat or foster corrupt behaviour in public officials, we attempt to use people's actual behaviour. This means we have measures of individuals' self-reported following of news and public affairs. European Social Survey (ESS) have conducted several surveys with the topic of media use in their questionnaires. Here we use data from rounds 4 and 5 (2008-2009 and 2010-2011), section A on media. The questions were similarly phrased in both rounds.

The first item on media usage asked, "On an average weekday, how much time, in total, do you spend watching television?" with the eight possible response, starting with: "No time at all", and followed by "Less than ½ hour", "½ hour to 1 hour", etc. "

Those responding spending some time ("Less than ½ hour" or more but not "No time at all" were asked the following question: "And again on an average weekday, how much of your time watching television is spent watching news or programmes about politics and current

affairs[7]?" There were eight possible responses: "No time at all", "Less than ½ hour", "½ hour to 1 hour", "More than 1 hour, up to 1½ hours", "More than 1½ hours, up to 2 hours", "More than 2 hours, up to 2½ hours", "More than 2½ hours, up to 3 hours", "More than 3 hours", plus "(Don't know)" (set to missing).

Similar sets of questions were also asked about time spent listing to the radio and time spent reading newspapers, with introductory questions about total time. Then, eight possible responses for the time spend listing to new current affairs for both the radio and newspapers respectively. Hence, we have scaled measures for the time spent on news and current affairs for three different media platforms: television, radio, and newspapers.

We constructed a summary index for the three media platforms indicating total time spent following news and current affairs on the three media platforms. The index ranges from 0 – 10 with half an hour intervals of time spent on news and current affairs in the three media platforms. Example: 0 = no time at all, 1 = less than ½ hour, 2 = ½ hour to 1 hour, 3 = 1 hour to 1½ hours, etc. Because a small number of respondents spend very much time following news and current affairs, we set this time to a maximum of approximately five hours per day (as indicated by 10 or higher on the index, corresponding to 2.4% of the sample).

Time spent following news and current affairs is correlated with age as older people have more time to spend on such activities than younger adults ($r = 0.25$). We do not believe that older people represent more critical civic engagement because they spend more time watching the news and current affairs. We believe that the correlation with age merely reflects that older people have more time available for such activities. Hence, when calculating the mean values for the countries, we adjust these mean values for the possibility that the age composition also affects country-level comparison using the same random effects models as we did for our dependent variables (incidence of bribery, thrust toward public officials, how wrong is bribery) estimated in the ESS. We used a linear term with age and random effects for the countries, and we adjusted the latter with its mean value at the level of individuals. We then aggregated the individual-level data (N = 85.000) to country-level data (N = 29). The age-adjusted and non-adjusted mean levels for the 29 countries are still highly correlated ($r > 0.99$).

[7] European Social Survey defines «politics and current affairs» as: «about issues to do with governance and public policy, and with the people connected with these affairs.»

When comparing European countries following the news and current affairs, the age-adjusted country-level mean values vary from 2.57 (2.57 * 30 minutes = up to 77 minutes) to 4.9 (up to 147 minutes) (Table 4.1). The mean for all 29 European countries on following news and current affairs is 3.72 (up to 112 minutes a day following news and current affairs) (Table 4.1). There are 16 countries below the mean level, mostly featuring Eastern and Southern parts of Europe, except Switzerland and the UK. The 13 countries above the mean level mostly contain Western and Northern geographically located European countries, with the exceptions of Poland, Romania, and Estonia. Israel is also represented above the mean level, but is not geographically a part of Europe. Norway, Ireland, Estonia, and Denmark have the highest amount of people following news and current affairs in Europe on average, all above two hours or more time spent (Figure 4.1). Norway is on top with a mean of 4.9, with Ireland, Estonia, and Denmark following with means of 4.65, 4.65, and 4.63, respectively (Figure 4.1). At the bottom is Greece, with a mean of 2.57, with Russia at the second lowest with a mean of 2.88 (Figure 4.1). The third lowest country on the means of following news and current affairs is Ukraine, with a mean of 3.15 (Figure 4.1).

Using the same data from ESS about news and current affairs we also construct an index of people not following any news or current affairs. We create a percentage measure for those who almost do not follow news measured as less than half an hour per day from all three media platforms. The same adjustment is done for age here as with following news and current affairs for the possibility that the age composition affects country-level comparison using the random effects models estimated in the ESS. We also aggregated the individual-level data (N = 85.000) to country-level data (N = 29) for this variable. The age-adjusted and non-adjusted mean levels for the 29 countries are still highly correlated ($r > 0.99$).

The age-adjusted country-level mean values vary from 5.5 per cent to 38 per cent of the adult population not following the news or current affairs (Table 4.1). Greece is on top with 38 per cent, and Norway is at the bottom with 5.5 per cent (Figure 4.2). In Greece, much more people are not follow the news or current affairs than the second highest country; Russia with 27.5 per cent, making them almost 10 percentage points from each other. The mean for all European countries is 17 per cent (Table 4.1). Northern European countries, Norway, Denmark,

Finland, and Sweden all have comparatively low percentages of their population not following news (Figure 4.2). However, though there is some variance between Norway's 5.5 per cent and Sweden's 9.7, with Denmark and Finland in between (6.36 and 7.76 per cent, respectively). Estonia also has a comparatively low percentage of people not following news (7.84) (Figure 4.2). These countries are also represented in the top of the list for people following news and current affairs (Figure 4.1).

Table 4.1: Sum of observed European countries' following news and current affairs and those who do not follow the news or current affairs. N = 29

	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
News	29	3.72	0.56	2.57	4.9
No News	29	17	7.3	5.5	38

Figure 4.1: Comparing European countries following the news and current affairs. ESS 4-5. N = 29

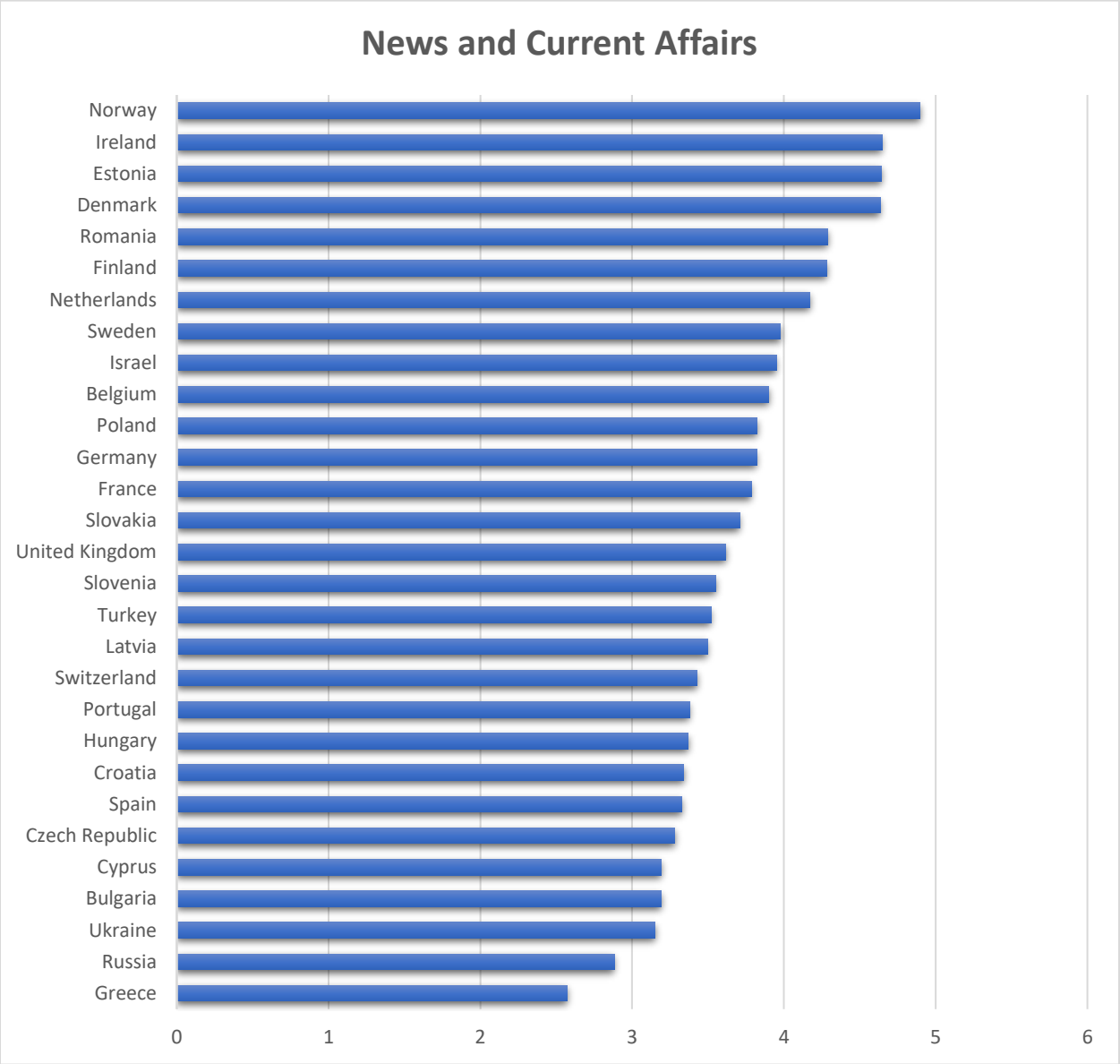
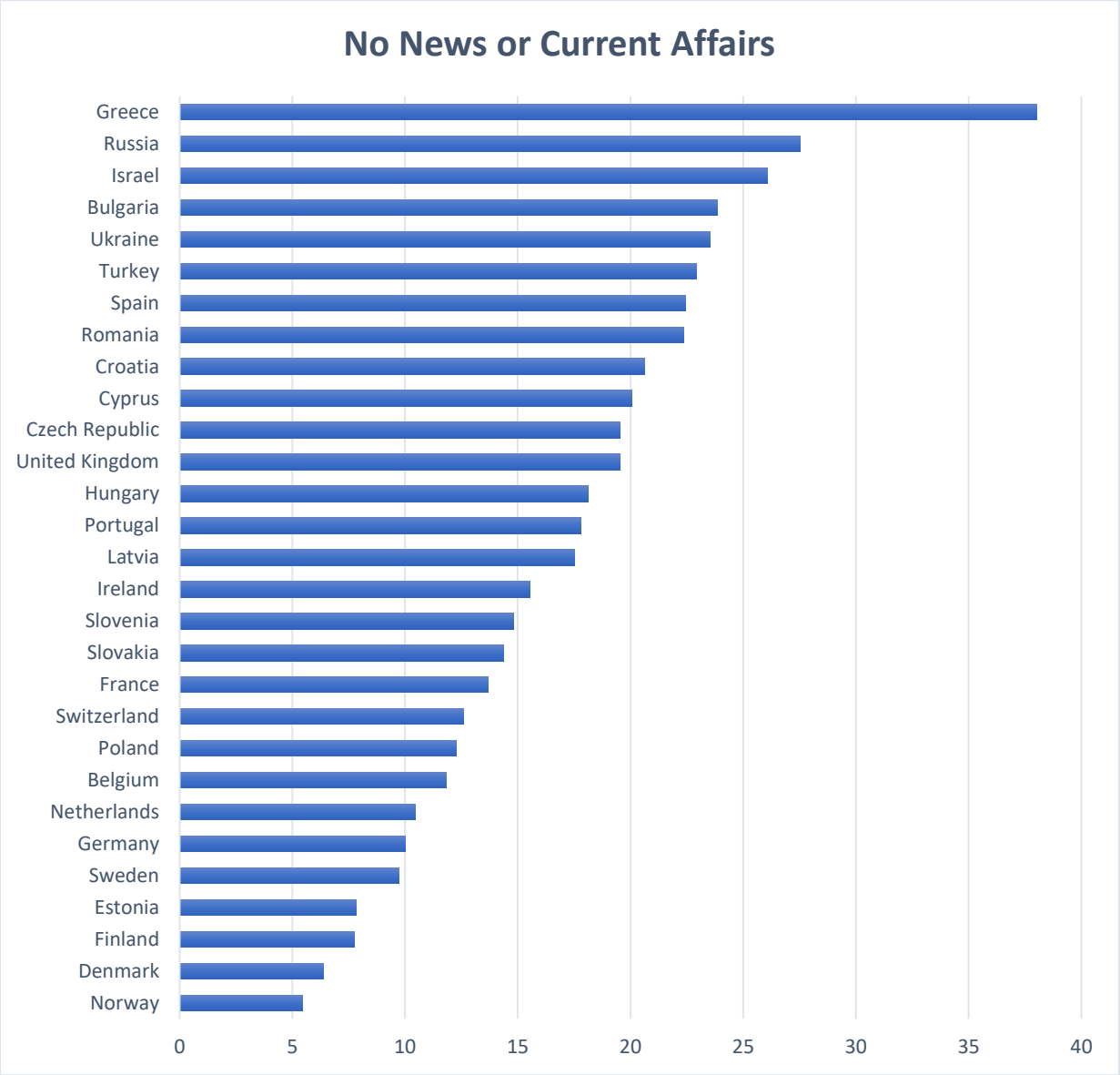


Figure 4.2: Comparing European countries respondents not following news in percentages. ESS 4-5. N = 29



Because we will compare experienced corruption with news consumption, we also collected data on news and current affairs from the European Social Survey rounds 1 and 2 (2002-05). This was done because the data on corruption experience from the ESS was only available in one of the rotating modules for round 2 on economic morality. The items on the news and current affairs

were collected in the same way for rounds 1 and 2 as rounds 4 and 5 - individuals' self-reported following of news and public affairs.

We adjusted the mean values for the countries for the possibility that the age composition affects country-level comparisons using the same random effects model we used for news and current affairs in rounds 4-5. We also used a linear term with age and random effects for the countries, and we adjusted the latter with its mean value at the level of individuals. We then aggregated the individual-level data (N = 73.000) to country-level data (N = 27). The age-adjusted and non-adjusted mean levels for the 27 countries are still highly correlated ($r > 0.99$).

When comparing European countries following the news and current affairs in the ESS rounds 1 and 2, the age-adjusted country-level mean values vary from 2.83 (up to 85 minutes) to 5.21 (up to 156 minutes) (Table 4.2). The mean for all 27 European countries on following news and current affairs is 4.11 (up to 123 minutes a day following news and current affairs) (Table 4.2). All these values are higher for rounds 1 and 2, than rounds 4 and 5 of the ESS (Table 4.2 and 4.1). This finding suggests that people spend more time following the news and current affairs in 2002-2005 than they did a few years before in 2008-2011. It supports the argument that news following goes down over time (Aalberg et al. 2013).

There are 13 countries above the mean level, mostly Western and Northern European countries, with the exceptions of Ukraine and Estonia. Israel is again also represented above the mean level. The top countries, Norway, Ireland, Denmark, and Israel all have above 140 minutes following news and current affairs (Figure 4.3). Norway is on top with a mean of 5.21 (up to 156 minutes following the news), with Ireland, Denmark, and Israel following with means of 4.81, 4.79, and 4.7, respectively (Figure 4.3). The United Kingdom is right on the mean level (4.11). There are 13 countries under the mean level, mostly contained to Eastern and Southern Europe, with France, Switzerland, and Belgium as exceptions. At the bottom is Greece with a mean of 2.83 (up to 85 minutes). The second lowest country is Italy with a mean of 3.62 (up to 109 minutes). Interestingly, Ukraine has a mean of 4.34 (up to 130 minutes a day), compared to ESS rounds 4-5 where they had 3.15 (up to 95 minutes a day).

Using the same data from ESS 1-2 about news and current affairs we construct an index of people not following any news or current affairs. We create a percentage measure for those

who almost do not follow news measured as less than half an hour per day from all three media platforms. The same adjustment is done for age here as with following news and current affairs for the possibility that the age composition affects country-level comparison using the random effects models estimated in the ESS. We also aggregated the individual-level data (N = 73.000) to country-level data (N = 27) for this variable. The age-adjusted and non-adjusted mean levels for the 27 countries are still highly correlated ($r > 0.99$).

The age-adjusted country-level mean values vary from 2.06 per cent to 28.79 per cent of the population not following news or current affairs (Table 4.2). The mean for all European countries is 10.73 per cent (Table 4.2). There are 15 countries above the mean, mostly belonging to Eastern and Southern geographically located European countries, but also a few Western European countries: Ireland, the UK, Belgium and France. The 12 countries below the mean mostly contain the geographical North or Western Europe, except for of Estonia and Poland. Greece is on top with 28.79 (Table 4.2) per cent of people responding they did not follow any news or current affairs (Figure 4.4). The second highest country is Turkey with a mean of 22.44 per cent, followed by Spain with 18.33 per cent of people not following news and current affairs. At the bottom is Norway, with a mean of 2.06 per cent (Table 4.2). All the other Northern European countries follow Norway from the bottom up, starting with Finland, Denmark, Sweden, and then Iceland (Figure 4.4).

Table 4.2: Sum of observed European countries' following news and current affairs and those who do not follow news or current affairs. N = 27

	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev	Min	Max
Time following the news	27	4.11	0.47	2.83	5.21
Percentage not following the news	27	10.73	5.85	2.06	28.79

Figure 4.3: Comparing European countries following the news and current affairs. ESS 1-2. N = 27

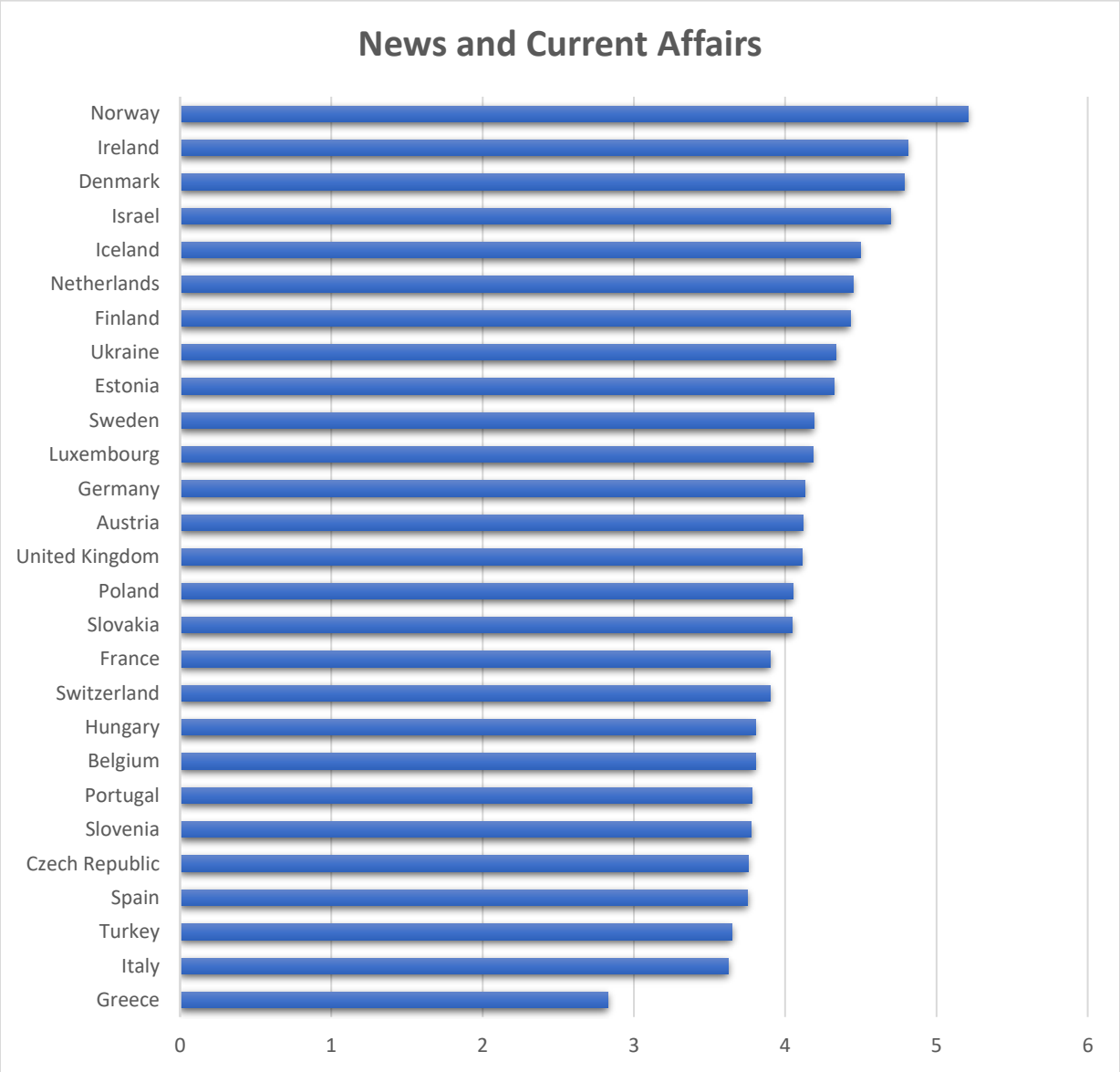


Figure 4.4: Comparing European countries respondents not following news in percentages. ESS 1-2. N = 27

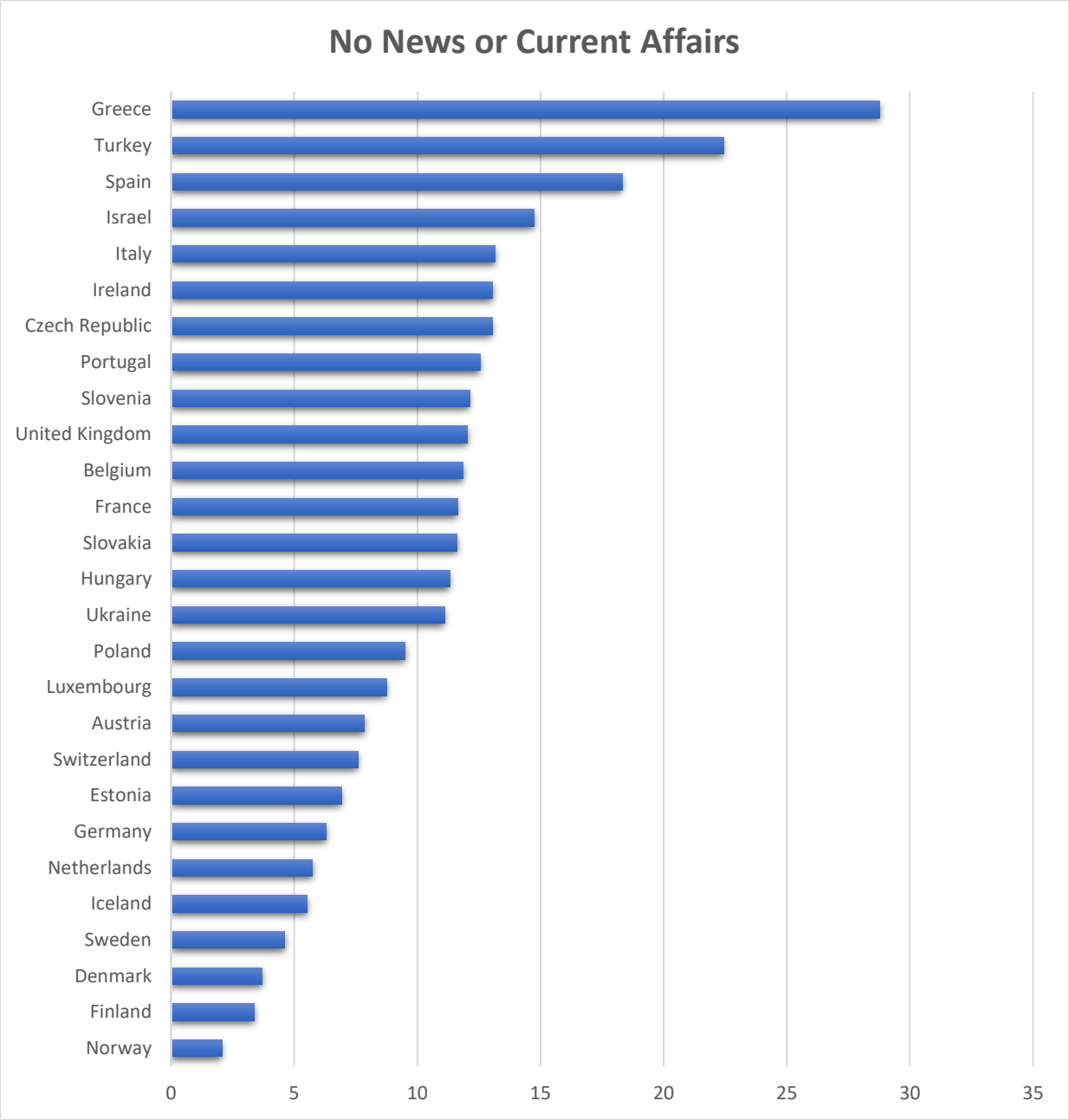


Table 4.3: Correlation between all news measures, from the ESS rounds 4-5 (2008-2010), and rounds 1-2 (2002-2004). N = 23

	News 2008-10	No News 2008-10	News 2002-04	No News 2002-04
News 2008-10	1.00			
No News 2008-10	**-0.78**	1.00		
News 2002-04	**0.86**	**-0.61**	1.00	
No News 2002-04	**-0.70**	**0.91**	**-0.72**	1.00

When using self-reported data on news exposure it is important to mention that these can be over-exaggerated (Prior 2009). People might respond that they watch much more news than they actually do, perhaps because it is hard to remember exactly how many minutes and hours they spend watching the news and current affairs. People might also want to report high levels of news exposure, as it is regarded as "positive social behaviour" to follow news and current affairs (Ringdal 2014). However, the questions in European Social Survey are asked in such a way to attempt to counter this by asking first about regular media usage, such as 'how many hours do you spend watching television/listening to radio/reading newspapers'. Watching television can be argued to be seen as negative social behaviour and might therefore be under-reported. Radio and newspapers are perhaps more nuanced. Nevertheless, believing that the European Social Survey news reporting is free from over- or under-reporting is naïve.

Political interest

Civic engagement also includes political interest. The European Social Survey rounds 4-7 (2008-2014) included items on political interest, efficacy, trust, electoral and other forms of participation, party allegiance, socio-political orientations". The item on political interest was phrased exactly the same way in all rounds 4 to 7: "How interested would you say you are in politics – are you…" Four response categories varied from "very interested", "quite interested", "hardly interested", and "not at all interested?", plus "(don't know)" (set to missing).

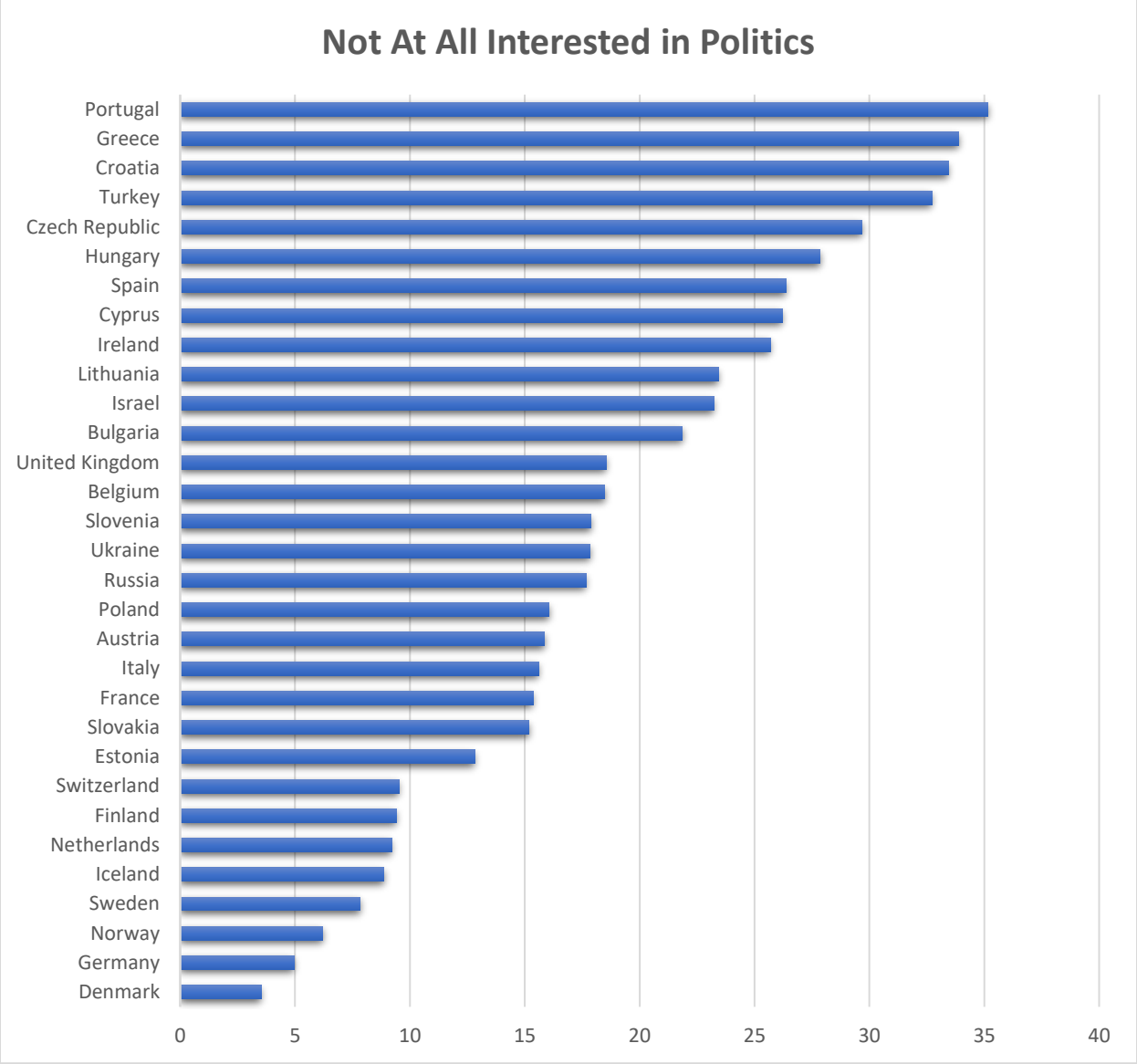
We compare how many people who answered "not at all interested" in politics and present them as a percentage of the respondents from each country by aggregating the individual-level data (N = 31.900) to country-level data (N = 31) (Table 5.1). Again, we adjust for the age composition of the countries among respondents between the age of 20 and 70. We removed those who answered "don't know" on being interested in politics from these calculations. Then we adjust the percentage of those with no interest in politics for a linear age term in linear regression models with random effects for the countries. As this analysis focuses on countries and not individuals, we merged the data from individuals to countries.

Political interest very a lot between European countries. Those not at all interested in politics vary from 3.5 per cent to 35.2 per cent of the adult populations (Table 5.1). On top is Portugal (Figure 5), with 35.2 per cent of their adult population not at all interested in politics, followed by Greece, Croatia, and Turkey. At the bottom we find Denmark with 3.5 per cent (Figure 5), with Germany, Norway, and Sweden just above. The mean for all the countries is 18.7 (Table 5.1), with 12 countries above it, all either geographically Eastern European or Southern European countries, except for Israel and Ireland. Interestingly, Ukraine and Russia are slightly below the mean (Table 5.1) with 17.9 and 17.7 per cent, respectively. This is notable, as these two countries have been located either at the top or bottom of every other result so far (for Ukraine and Russia, see Figure 1, 4.1, and 4.2. For Ukraine, see Figure 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3).

Table 5.1: Summary of individuals and countries who are not interested in politics.

Variable	Observations	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
No Interest (Individuals)	**31900**	**17.58**	**38.1**	**0**	**100**
No Interest (Countries)	**31**	**18.72**	**9.08**	**3.53**	**35.17**

Figure 5: Countries who had respondents not interested in politics presented in percentages. ESS 4-7. N = 31



There is a high correlation between media use and political interest (Table 5.2). Not following news and having no political interest correlates at 0.74. There is a strong negative correlation between following news and not following news (r = -0.81), which also makes sense. Following news and having no political interest has a more moderate negative correlation (r = -0.60). This seems also sensible, seeing as people with no political interest would likely not be interested in watching the news or current affairs. However, since news are not necessarily always political, so even if people are not interested in politics, they still might want to follow other forms of news and current affairs.

Table 5.2: Correlation between following news and current affairs, not following news and current affairs, and having no political interest at all. ESS rounds 4-5 for news, rounds 4-7 for political interest. N = 27

	Time Following News	Not Following News	No Political Interest
Time Following News	1.00		
Not Following News	**-0.81**	1.00	
No Political Interest	**-0.60**	**0.74**	1.00

Civic engagement and corruption

We have hypothesised that civic engagement will curb corruption. We investigate this hypothesis by investigating the correlations between measures of corruption and measures of civic engagement. First, we will investigate bivariate correlations, and later we will also investigate some multivariate correlations. The latter is more difficult because both civic engagement and corruption are also correlated with other potentially important factors (e.g., wealth and income distribution), and linear regression models cannot distinguish between when comparing a relatively small number of European countries.

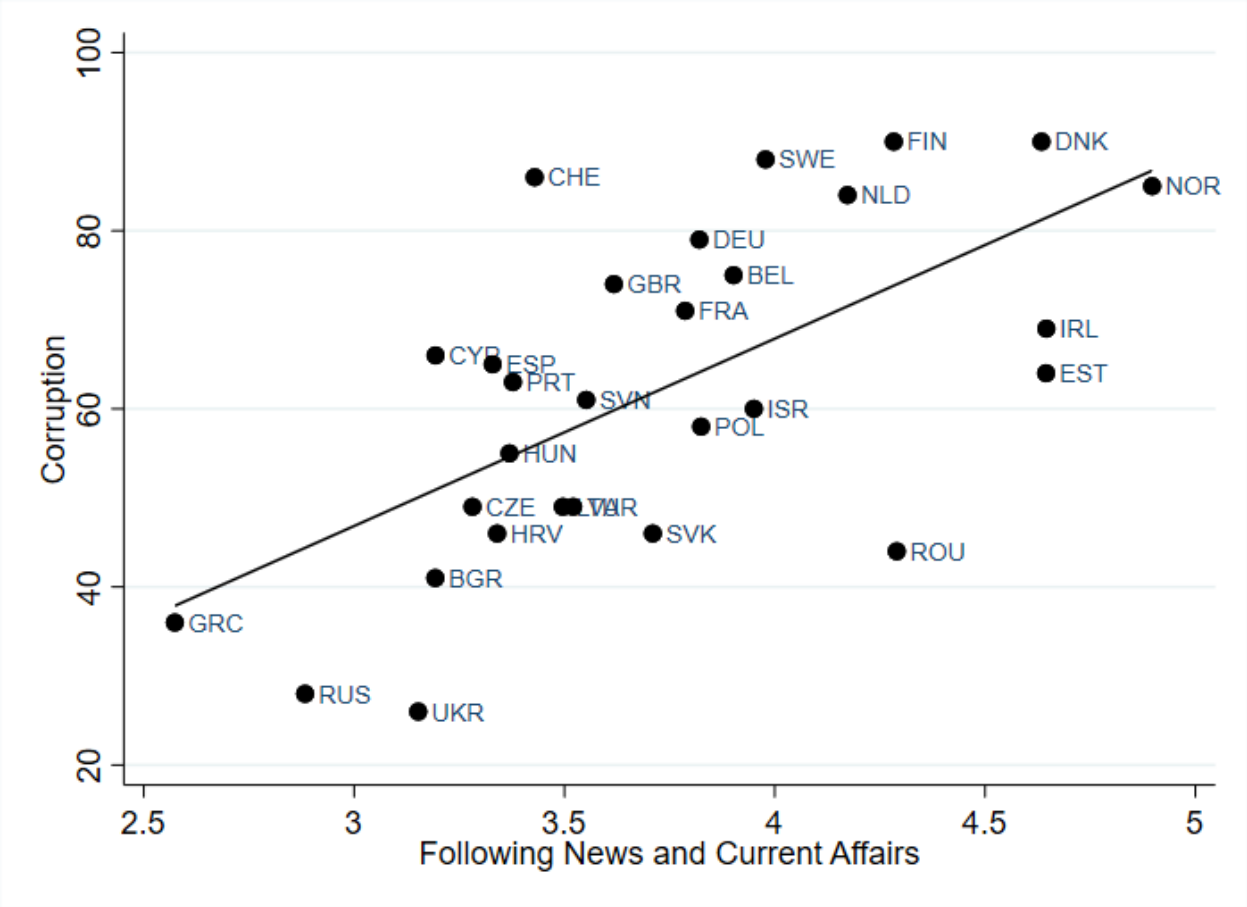
A first issue investigated is the role of time spent watching the news and current affairs for halting corruption. We find a positive correlation of 0.64 between the hours spent following the news and current affairs in the ESS and the corruption perception index (CPI) of Transparency International (Figure 6.1). The graph shows some clusters formed with countries of geographical proximity. Greece, Russia, and Ukraine are at the bottom of both the corruption perception index (Figure 1) and the time spent following the news and current affairs (Figure 4.1), placing them at the bottom of the regression line of our graphical analysis (Figure 6.1). Russia, Ukraine, and Romania are outliers, being further up on following news and current affairs relative to their corruption perception score. On the lower middle of the regression line, we find mostly Eastern European countries: Hungary, Czech Republic, Bulgaria, Slovakia, Latvia, Croatia, and Turkey[8]. Hungary and Slovenia are located almost perfectly on the regression line (Figure 6.1). The rest of these Eastern European countries score somewhat better on following news and current affairs than a perfect correlation would suggest, as do Poland and Israel, but with better scores in each variable.

Contrary to the Eastern European countries, there are three Southern European countries relatively good corruption perception scores compared to their news following: Cyprus, Spain, and Portugal (Figure 6.1). Southern and Eastern European countries seem to spend about the same amount of time following news and current affairs, but they differ in corruption perception. The UK, Germany, France, and Belgium (Western European) cluster together with more CPI

[8] Although only 3 per cent of Turkey is located in Eastern Europe, with the rest being located in Asia, they are members of the EU, NATO, and the European side of Turkey has a population of 10 million people.

than their news following would suggest, deviating slightly from the regression line (Figure 6.1). Switzerland is also an outlier, with a very high score of corruption perception (86), but middling scores of following news and current affairs, on par with Eastern and Southern European countries. Mirrored to Switzerland's score, Romania is an outlier with very high news participation scores (4.3, Figure 4.1), but a low corruption perception score (44, Figure 1). Ireland and Estonia are represented together with very high news participation, but relatively low corruption perception (Figure 6.1). The Northern European countries, together with the Netherlands, form the upper echelon of the corruption perception scale (Figure 1), but some follow more news than others. Sweden, Finland, and the Netherlands have high news participation, but with comparatively even better scores on the corruption index. Norway and Denmark line up pretty well in these. In conclusion, there seems to be a linear strong linear correlation between corruption perception and following news and current affairs in European countries ($r = 0.64$), with Eastern and Southern European generally towards the bottom and Western and Northern European countries trending towards the top – diagonally (Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1: Comparing European countries' perception of corruption (CPI) from Transparency International (2012) with hours spent watching the news or programmes about politics or current affairs ESS rounds 4 and 5 (2008-2010). (r = 0.64). (Turkey and Latvia are on top of each other and hard to make out). N = 29

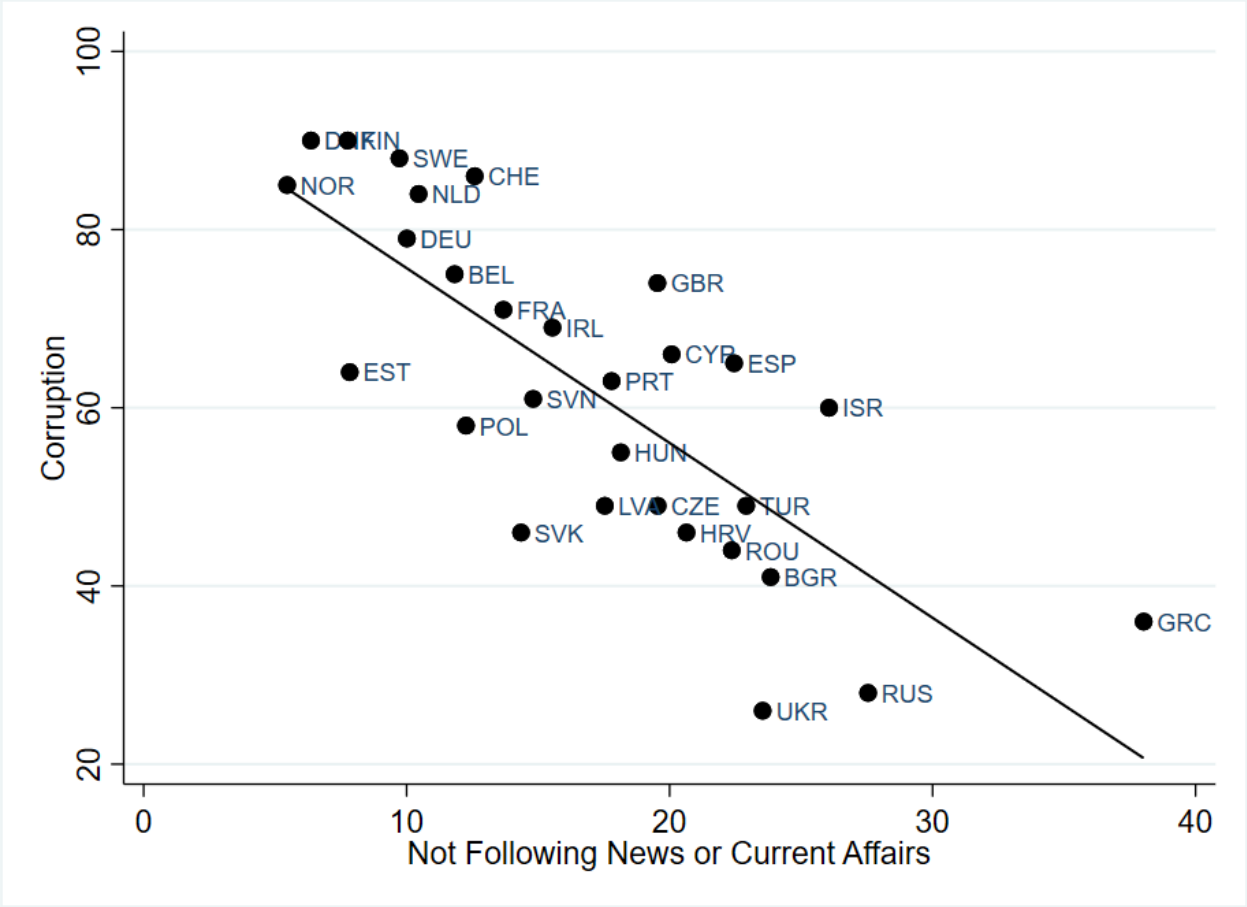


The correlation between the corruption perception index and the percentages of people not following news and current affairs is even higher (-0.78; Figure 6.2) than the correlation between corruption and the time spent on watching the news and current affairs (0.64; Figure 6.1). This result suggests that countries with a high percentage of people not following the news could be more important for curbing corruption than the time spent following the news. The graph shows clearer evidence here (Figure 6.2) for a Northern European cluster than with "following news and current affairs" (Figure 6.1). At the top of the regression line, we find Norway, Denmark, Finland, and Sweden (Figure 6.2).

The main deviations from the near-linear relation between the percentage not interested in the news and current affairs versus corruption are in the Eastern and Southern Europe. The

Eastern European countries have comparatively few people not interested in the news but still a relatively poor score on the corruption index. In contrast, the Southern European countries, together with the UK and Israel, score comparatively better on the corruption index than they do on the percentage not following news. Estonia is one example, with a fairly news interested population (Figure 4.1 and 6), similar to many Northern European countries, but still scores relatively lower on the corruption perception index (Figure 1). Poland, Slovakia, Ukraine, and Russia also follow this deviation, but to different degrees, such as Ukraine and Russia being very low on the corruption perception index, but still having the same amounts of people not following the news and current affairs as Spain or Israel. An example from the contrasting sides outliers is Greece, having the highest percentage of people not following the news or current affairs, but with a better corruption perception score than Russia or Ukraine (Figure 6.2).

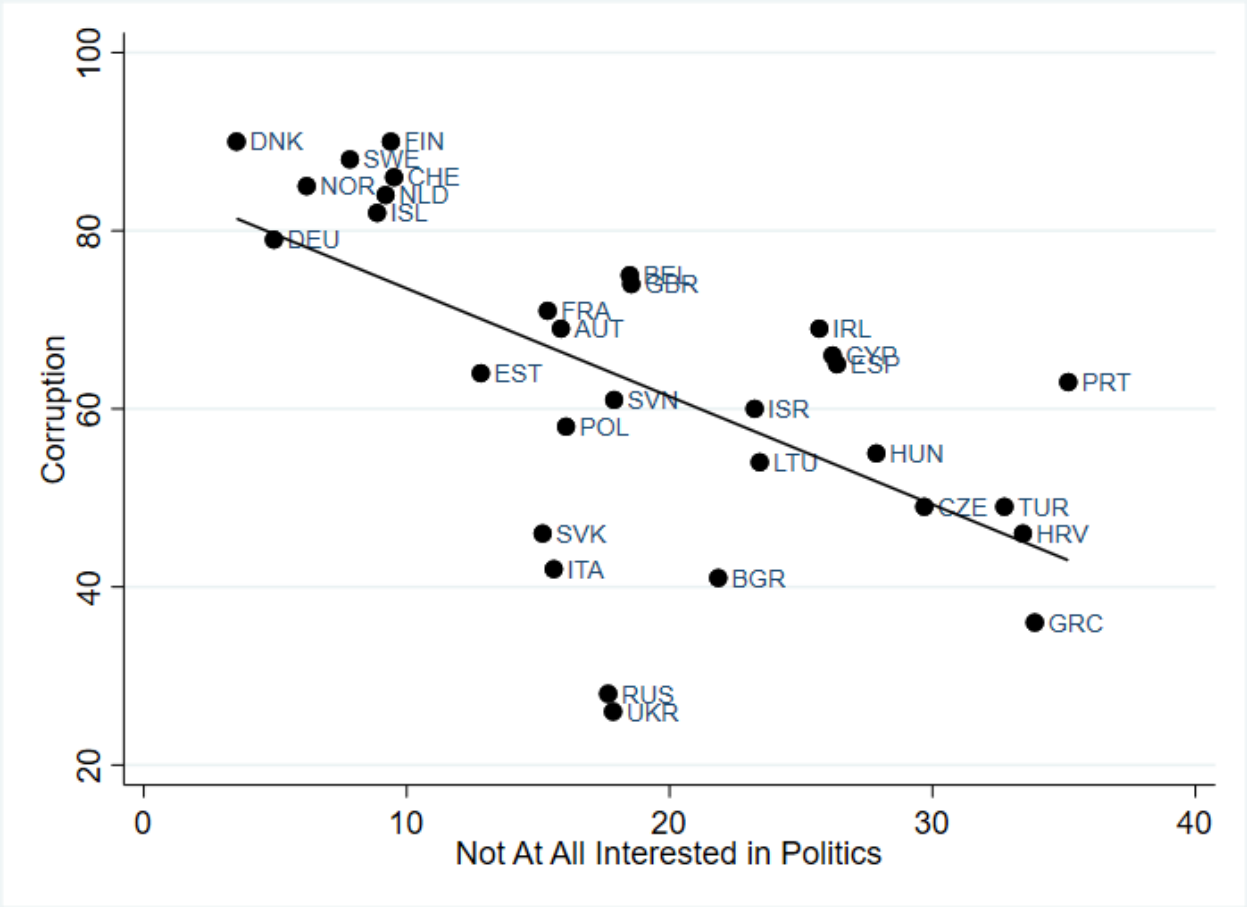
Figure 6.2: Comparing European countries' perception of corruption (CPI) with percentages of the population not following the news or current affairs. (r = -0.78). N = 29



We find a negative correlation between perceived corruption and percentages of populations that are not interested in politics (-0.60; Figure 6.3). There is a linear correlation between the two variables, but there are some countries which deviate from our regression line. These countries are outliers because of their poor scores on the corruption perception index despite the fact that the population in these countries are interested in politics (pushing the regression line down a little; Figure 6.3). The clearest examples of this is Ukraine and Russia, and then Italy, Slovakia, and Bulgaria. These countries These countries make the correlation between corruption perception and political interest lower than for the links between following the news and current affairs, and not following news and current affairs (Figure 6.1 and 6.2).

Why are these countries, where people claim to be interested in politics, so poorly scored on the corruption perception index? One answer may be that it is not enough to be interested in politics if you also do not follow news and politics. Perhaps this shows that behaviour is a more valid measure of civic engagement than interests and attitudes. Behavioural data can be better measures of preferences than attitudinal data, especially when the phenomenon of study is socially desirable or associated with costs (time spent), such as being engaged in the news and current affairs. There is also a possibility that there is something wrong with the corruption measures themselves, such as different countries have different forms of corruption.

Figure 6.3: Comparing 31 European countries' perception of corruption with percentages of the population not interested in politics. (r = -0.60).



Civic engagement and bribery

The previous chapter investigated the relationship between civic engagement and corruption using the Corruption Perception Index (CPI) from Transparency International. This scale builds mostly on the perceptions of business elites. We will now investigate similar relationships between corruption as the report of actual requests for bribery in the general population as reported in the European Social Survey. We use data on news and current affairs, and on corruption experiences, from the European Social Survey rounds 1 and 2 (2002-04).

The two indicators on news consumption, the time people spend following the news and current affairs and the percentage not following the news were similarly correlated in the ESS rounds 1 to 2 (2002-04) ($r = -0.79$; Table 6) as they were in the ESS rounds 4 and 5 ($r = -0.81$; Table 5.2).

There are relatively low correlations between people's direct experience with bribery (asked for a bribe) and how much time they spend following the news ($r = -0.14$); Table 6) as well as with the percentage not following news and current affairs ($r = 0.26$; Table 6). These findings could seem like a surprise given the much higher correlations between news consumption and the corruptions perception index among business elites. It appears that experiences of bribery are not strongly affected by people following news in a country. However, there is the possibility that causality runs both ways. Many people spending time following the news and current affairs could lead to less corruption, even in terms of requests for bribery toward ordinary people. There is also the possibility that an opposite effect somewhat balances this first effect if many requests for corruption lead more people to follow the news and current affairs. On the other hand, there is also the possibility that the news and current affairs tend to cover corporate and other large-scale corruption scandals in contrast to everyday requests for bribery that may go unnoticed in the media.

Theory suggests that bribery should lead to lower trust in public officials. The ESS data strongly support this hypothesis as the correlation between requests for bribery and trust in public officials is as high as -0.70 between the 25 countries participating in the ESS rounds 1-2. We believe that this effect is causal because being asked for a bribe by a public official would likely make people trust them less.

Table 6: Correlation between following news, not following any news, trust that public officials deal honestly with you, having been asked for a bribe, and how wrong you think being asked for a bribe is. ESS rounds 1-2. N = 25

	Time Following the News	Percentage not Following the News	Trust in Public Officials	Been Asked for a Bribe	How Wrong is Bribery
Time Following the News	1.00				
Percentage not Following the News	**-0.79**	1.00			
Trust in Public Officials	**0.34**	**-0.44**	1.00		
Been Asked for a Bribe	**-0.14**	**0.26**	**-0.70**	1.00	
How Wrong is Bribery	**0.34**	**-0.28**	**0.39**	**-0.52**	1.00

Alternate explanations

This analysis has revealed strong correlations between how far ordinary citizens follow the news and current affairs and the corruption perception index from Transparency International. We have also found a strong relationship between how far ordinary people have been asked for a bribe and how far they trust public officials, even at the level of European countries. Theory suggests that these correlations are causal, that an actively watching citizenry following the current affairs is likely to reduce the incidence of corruption. Theory also suggests that the experiences of requests for bribery are likely to erode trust in public officials and public institutions.

Our results are, to some extent, driven by a seemingly consistent geographical pattern of well-functioning countries in the Northern part of Europe in contrast to the less well-functioning countries in the Eastern and Southern pars of Europe. These countries are different concerning several other characteristics as well, including national wealth, income distribution, and education level. So, the last analysis will investigate how these main results from our empirical analyses are consistent for these background variables as well.

We have collected data on national wealth using the gross domestic product (GDP), income distribution, and education level from the United Nations Human Development Report for 2010[9]. The Human Development Report (HDR) creates an index (the Human Development Index) for human development from three dimensions and four indicators. The three dimensions are health, education, and living standards. The four indicators include life expectancy at birth, mean years of schooling, expected years of schooling, and gross national income per capita. The Human Development Report sees these basic dimensions of human development as a measurement of the richness of human life, not only the richness of the economy in which the people live[10].

The HDR relies on international data agencies to collect and compile data on their specific indicators. Gross domestic product (GDP) per capita data is collected by the World Bank. The data is converted into purchasing power parity (PPP) to eliminate the difference in national price levels so to better compare across countries.

[9] The Human Development Report 2010: http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/reports/270/hdr_2010_en_complete_reprint.pdf
[10] http://www.hdr.undp.org/en/humandev

Data on income distribution are based on data on gross national income (GNI) per capita from the World Bank's World Development Indicator's database. Again, to eliminate the differences in national price levels, the data is converted into PPP in order to better compare standards of living across countries. The GNI estimates were based on price data from the 2005 International Comparison Program (ICP), covering 146 countries and areas. The World Bank gather data on GDP and GNI from reports by the Bank's country management units and data obtained from official sources.

Data on education levels is based on expected years of schooling from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) Institute for Statistics. The estimates are based on enrolment by age at all levels of education and population of official school age for all levels of education by age. Data collection from UNESCO on education is done by using information included in the National Reports on the Development of Education, with supplements from other data sources.

We have found a clear geographical pattern that North and West European countries have more active citizens in that they follow more news and current affairs than citizens in South and East Europe. However, these countries also differ in other characteristics, including economic development (GDP), income distribution (GNI), and educational levels. The causal order between these factors may go several ways. For example, it is possible that the level of education affects how many people follow the news and current affairs, and it is possible that the distribution of income affects how many who do not bother to follow the news and current affairs. Perhaps because they do not feel like full citizens, disregarded from society. It is also possible that many of these processes are driven by more general modernization processes.

The results of our linear regression analysis show that education levels have surprisingly low importance, and that income distribution matters most for the incidence of corruption in the CPI (Table 7.1 & 7.2). This finding corresponds with You & Khargram (2005) who argue that income inequality increases corruption because inequality creates groups with different interests, with the beneficiaries of corruption not wanting change. You & Khargram (2005: 153) argue for a reciprocal causation between inequality and corruption, where greater inequality causes higher levels of corruption and higher levels of corruption intensifies corruption. It is economic conditions (prosperity and distribution) and an alert public that appear to play a major role in

reducing corruption (Table 7.1 & 7.2). When it comes to economic conditions (prosperity and distribution), we believe that causality can go both ways. There is good reason to believe that corruption weakens the economy and produces a more uneven distribution of income (Mauro 1995; You & Khargram 2005). But there is also reason to believe that a well-functioning economy, or factors that are correlated with a well-functioning economy, reduces corruption. Treisman (2002) suggests lower economic development, by itself, increases corruption. This is done by checking for a correlation between GDP and latitude toward the Equator, since the latter cannot be affected by corruption (correlating at 0.69). Treisman (2002) found that latitudinal location was significantly related to corruption levels with a coefficient of -0.09, significant at the 0.01 level.

The correlation between news and current affairs is quite robust when controlling for structural characteristics of the countries. In the full model (4), it is on a par with national wealth (GDP per capita) when investigated as time spent on news and current affairs (Table 7.1). However, when the role of news and current affairs is investigated as the percentage not following the news, it is seemingly even more important than national wealth and on a par with income distribution (Table 7.2).

These high correlations between corruption and news and current affairs, on the other hand, might be because an active citizenry helps to limit corruption in a society. There is no reason to believe that corruption should help people not keep up with news and current affairs. High levels of corruption would rather lead more people to follow the news and current affairs, based on the theories presented above and common sense.

In our results for the regression analysis between trust in public officials with incidents of bribery, education level, national wealth, and income distribution, we can see that being asked for a bribe shows much more robust similarities with trust in public officials than the other variables (Table 7.3). When controlling for trust in public officials, we find education levels have very low importance, while income distribution and national wealth has some explanatory value. Still, having been asked for a bribe seem to shape people's trust in their public officials to the greatest degree in the full model (4) (Table 7.3). It seems direct experiences are more valuable to explain trust in public officials than the other more structural features of the countries.

Table 7.1: CPI in 2012 related to news and current affairs, education level, national wealth, and income distribution. Standardised coefficients. N = 29

	Bivariate	1	2	3	4
News & current affairs	0.64**	0.44*	0.28*	0.28*	0.29**
Education level	0.50**	0.36*			-0.13
GDP per capita PPP	0.72**		0.71**		0.28*
Income distribution PPP	0.84**			0.72**	0.56**

*p < .05; **p < .01

Table 7.2: CPI in 2012 related to no news or current affairs, education level, national wealth, and income distribution. Standardised coefficients. N = 29

	Bivariate	1	2	3	4
No news or current affairs	-0.78**	-0.64**	-0.43**	-0.43**	-0.41**
Education level	0.50**	0.03*			-0.08
GDP per capita PPP	0.72**		0.60**		0.25
Income distribution PPP	0.84**			0.62**	0.46*

*p < .05; **p < .01

Table 7.3: Trust in public officials related to incidents of bribery, education level, national wealth, and income distribution. Standardised coefficients. N = 25

	Bivariate	1	2	3	4
Been asked for a Bribe	-0.70**	-0.76**	-0.54**	-0.75**	-0.72**
Education level	0.17	0.14			0.07
GDP per capita PPP	0.58**		0.28		0.49
Income distribution PPP	0.49*			0.07	-0.44

*p < .05; **p < .01

Discussion

Our hypothesis "*The incidence of corruption is lower in countries with an active civil society*" implies that a participating civilian sector is important to lower corruption, or to keep it low in any given country. Having a citizenry who keeps up with news and current affairs seem to be a better indicator than a more passive interest in politics.

Figure 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3 indicate that use of media might be more important than people's interest in politics for combating/preventing corruption. Following, and not following, news and current affairs had higher correlations with corruption than political interest (0.64 and -0.78 versus -0.60). A possible explanation for this is the measurement technique – people might be more inclined to report a higher interest in politics than reported hours following news and current affairs. Civic engagement in the form of following news and current affairs might be more important than having an interest in politics. Actually taking some form of action in following public questions and discussions can be more influential than just having an interest in politics – the behaviour trumps the interest. Being able to surveillance officeholders and constrain their exercise of power (corrupt behaviour in this case) through media is described as political accountability (Camaj 2013). A political actor is beholden to accountability only if he or she is caught in corrupt conduct. Thus comes the need for a free media to conduct faithful investigations into political actors so their behaviour can be judged and justified. Mass media reporting on corrupt behaviour "does arouse the ire of the public, which exercises another form of sanction: electoral defeat at the ballot box for a single elected office holder or an entire government" (Stapenhurst 2000: 4). But what some studies into medias role on curbing corruption fail to mention is if people are actively watching. Even though investigative journalists find evidence for corrupt behaviour or laws and regulation which can potentially breed corruption – are people hearing about it?

Both bivariate (Figure 6.1 and 6.2) and multivariate analyses (Table 7.1 and 7.2) shows us the relationship between people's hours spent following news and current affairs, and the proportion of those who do not keep up with the news. These results indicate that numbers of people not following the news has a higher correlation with corruption than the number of hours spent following the news and current affairs ($r = 0.78$ and 0.64 respectively in the bivariate analyses). These findings suggest that when people are apathetic towards what is going on in

news and politics, there could be more possibilities to act corruptly among people in trusted positions.

There are some important changes going on in the media landscape that have been pointed out in previous research (Prior 2005; Aalberg et al. 2013). People are choosing not to follow news and current affairs, because they have more and more chances to avoid it. The ability to follow as much news and current affairs as you want is more prominent than ever before, but so is the possibility to completely avoid it. A modern civil society, citizens, being capable of communicating their ideas and values in rational conversation, can have an effect on public official's behaviour. With people knowing what is going on around them, being active and taking part in civil society, that might stop public officials' access to corruption. A watching citizenry, who act on what they see or hear, can choose to vote out or protest behaviour they disagree with, which might be possible if enough people agree with them. Reaching out to the masses then becomes a task of the media, who set the agenda of what is to be discussed. It hinges on a free press to clearly lay out what issues might persist in modern society so people can discuss them.

The risk of getting caught and punished for corrupt behaviour is the most obvious cost for potential corrupt actors (Treisman 2000). The probability to be caught can depend on many factors. First of all, as our study suggests, having people participating in the political landscape by following what is going on in their country is important for a low corruption perception score. The risk of exposure in the media could potentially be a barrier for public officials and politicians to stay away from corrupt behaviour – because they know the citizens are watching, and that there is a potential for getting in trouble. When public officials lose their job in regards to being found guilty on corruption charges, they may experience a variety of reinforced deterrents to corruption (Stapenhurst 2000). This may include public humiliation, loss of prestige, social standing and income. This may also cause further strengthening among the public to continue to act against corruption. Having this happen is reliant on a civil society which acts against the acts they perceive as corrupt, or else they would not care. Such perceptions can be helped by watching the news – seeing what is going on. Greater civic engagement can lead to closer monitoring of corruption, especially if backed by freedom of association and freedom of the press (Treisman 2000).

There is also the possibility that more news-focused and political shows can use entertainment so to attract those interested only in entertainment. Shows such as Fiks Fare give us a look at such an idea, displaying satirical everyday corruption in Albania (Musaraj 2018). Late-night shows with political jokes are also a possibility, but there could be an issue with people not getting the jokes if they have not been following news and current affairs. An uncritical view of such shows could be unadvisable though, as shows which use politics and news for entertainment purposes could trivialise, misrepresent, and/or sensationalise to gain viewers. These shows are possibly also not held to the same standards as journalists are since it might be considered entertainment or satire. Shows like these could be considered to be 'news and current affairs' in the European Social Survey questionnaire.

Having a large percentage of the population not following news and current affairs may have the unfortunate effect that politics and public administration decay. Politics and public administration may fall to, or continue their unimpeded corrupt behaviour when they know a certain part of the citizenry, i.e. potential voters or otherwise punishers of corruption, are not watching them. A counteracting active civil society may form organisations for citizens to channel their preferences towards political elites and have their views represented (Rasmussen & Reher 2019). The civil society organisations may provide information in order to help people become better at interpreting politics and help policy-makers find out what public preferences are. Having people following the news and current affairs, which may be influenced by civil society organisations thus may lead people to see certain issues as important – such as corrupt public officials.

Contrary, there is some research to suggest that political accountability can partly skip citizens role in punishing politicians for their corrupt or immoral behaviour. Policy-makers rely on information from media reports, which they may interpret as the public opinion on matters (Pritchard 1992). Knowing this, the media can report on issues they are interested in changing, causing policymakers to believe they are hearing the people's voices even though it is only the voice of one journalist. The flow of information through media can be manipulated by vested interests (Fiorino et al. 2019). Politicians, owners of media, government control, new media regulations (such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter) can all manipulate the information flow in some ways, and some more obvious than others. In some post-communist European countries, journalism is plagued by corruption, used as an instrument for promoting private interests (Price

2019). Having a compromised media may cause the role of journalism, as the watchdog for society, to fail.

Price (2019: table 1) identifies several forms of journalistic corruption, parted into two brackets: individual corruption and institutional/organisational corruption. Individual journalistic corruption contains engaging in "black" Public Relations, arranging paid interviews or guest appearances, writing paid-for articles, accepting cash-in-hand, gifts or other perks, and exchanging personal favours with sources. Institutional/organisational journalistic corruption contains accepting state advertising and private sponsorship in exchange for withholding criticism, publishing hidden advertising, blacklisting or avoiding certain topics, conducting systematic and orchestrated smear campaigns on behalf of hidden sponsors, and blackmailing political and business actors. This gives a perspective on corruption and media in Eastern Europe that there might be issues with trust. Why watch the news if you know the media is corrupt and will only feed you what they want you to hear? Controlling the flow of information is a powerful tool, and could be detrimental to civil society participation if used for nefarious purposes.

Freedom of Information (FOI) laws are encouraged to combat corruption through transparency, but this has increased corruption perception, as noted by Costa (2012). Countries who have adopted the FOI laws saw an increase in corruption perception and a decrease in the quality of governance (Costa 2012). An increase in transparency may lead to better information on whom to bribe or connect with (Bac 2001). This lines up with the theory of 'sand in the wheels', arguing that corruption creates more incentives for bureaucracy (Myrdal 2007). Knowing who to bribe, and the public officials knowing they can extract bribes could lead to more corruption.

Fair and unfair news

Even though the media might be considered a watchdog of the political institutions, it is also a business, which means it is vital to have income. For media, this often means having people watching in order to serve them commercials. Having boring news that no one watches might then become an issue. As previous research teaches us, the media landscape of today is much

more varied today than before, and choices in exactly what people can watch is more prominent than ever (Prior 2005; Aalberg et al. 2013). This could mean a battle for ratings, and then more sensationalising of news. For state-run media one hopes to avoid this problem, but another arises. How can we be certain of the legitimacy of a state-run media channel to be unpartisan and critical towards its own employers – the government? Governments attempting to influence news content represent a threat to access to important and necessary information to the public, which in turn could affect the quality of democracy (Solis & Antenageli 2017).

Another issue with the media is bias and partisanship. Media can be controlled or influenced by vested interests, such as unions, political groups, or individuals. Having news stories about corruption tactically released around elections may cause voter loss for a given politician. Le Moglie & Turati (2019) show this in their assessment of biased media coverage around elections times in Italy. There is an incentive for politically biased news to show more wrongdoing in an election, as it may cause their political side to gain voters. It could also be that during elections, people are more willing to follow news and are thereby interested in such stories to inform them on who to vote for. Either way, this could cause problems for casual news followers since they now must also seek out to know if the information they are served is biased or not. Allegations of bias in news organisations because they cover stories of corruption can be hard to arbitrate. News worthiness and pursuing claims of corruption could become entwined with partisanship or other external influences (Tiffen 2004). As allegations of corrupt behaviour can cause great political harm to an individual, it is a great power to use against political opponents, even though it bears no evidence of truth. This could empower the beliefs of those who share political beliefs that fit the narrative.

Normative issues with international organisations

For all its praise, civil society may not be the saving grace many want it to be. International organisations with a normative political agenda, such as Transparency International, believe that governments are supposed to protect the public good and foster public trust, through their help (Bukovansky 2002). Through their consultation, the anti-corruption organisations are to provide

states with advice and incentives for institutional reform – to teach them the 'correct' norms of what it means to be a good state. As Bukovansky (2002) points out, this implies that governments have the capacity, or are able to be pressured by civil society in order to institute reforms compatible with the concepts of public trust, accountability, and transparency.

What these organisations may fail to consider is on who makes the decisions. In other words, can anti-corruption measures develop from the top-down or bottom-up? Are people in charge of changing their society through the community, or is it politicians and law-makers who shall create the laws they must adhere to? In an example from Georgia, there is a difficulty in finding a common narrative of success in the anti-corruption strategy employed (Di Puppo 2013). There are disagreements between the government of Georgia and international organisations if Georgia has been a success story in their battle against corruption. It might come down to the methodology used in a given country – if it works and lines up with what a particular organisation's ideals, it's a success story in their eyes. Again, in the example of Georgia, the World Bank supports Georgia's image as a reformer of corruption because it validates their methodology (Di Puppo 2013). Transparency International and the European Union disagrees because the changes made did not fit well into their narrative. If Georgia then is viewed as a success story, it may invalidate these organisations since their methodology was not used. This proves the need to understand international organisations as discursive objects which need to be studied, and not arbiters of the truth or objective representations of a subject.

Many of these non-government organisations base their normative stand against topics such as corruption on Western ideals. There is a notion of what corruption is, that it is bad, and that it must be fixed. This may not always line up with other cultures or societies. Some see public officials acting "corruptly" as part of the job, perhaps since the bureaucratic work is terribly paid, and therefore corruption perhaps can be seen as more of a tip than a moral slight – more like a benefit which comes with the job (Treisman 2000; Wedel 2015). If a country has a newly formed bureaucracy, for example, payment may be low, but as time increases, so does the opportunities for upward mobility for the bureaucrats. In China, the guanxi is normal procedure, even though much of it would be considered corruption in Western society (Andvig & Fjeldstad 2001). What constitutes corruption in any given society depends on where and how that particular society draws the line between the public and private spheres, as well as public and private roles (Bukovansky 2002). The unified, normative truth of what corruption is should be

scrutinised for its push to internationalise a moral standard. The anti-corruption movement has concealed much of its agenda in economic development, and underdeveloped countries may have little to no say in their assessments and participation. What is considered to be a guide for good governance by the international organisation may be considered a new imperialist movement by others.

Another point of contention is the funding for non-governmental organisations. Wedel (2015) points out the big-league corporations who have sponsored Transparency International, such as Bank of America, Enron, Exxon, Ford, General Electric, Merk, American International Group, and Arthur Anderson. So why would these large corporations sponsor the anti-corruption sector? It is probably in their best interest to combat corruption and open up countries for new markets. As we have seen, corruption can mostly be argued to be a hindrance for economic growth, and investments into highly corrupt countries can be inefficient (Rose-Ackerman 1997; Méon & Weill 2009). Not only does combating corruption open up new markets, it also makes the corporations look good.

Differences in countries

Northern European countries have all a high score of corruption cleanliness, as well as having an active citizenry following news and current event, plus having a high percentage of the population interested in politics. Northern European countries are noted for high amounts of social capital in terms of trust, associational membership, and informal interactions (Rothstein & Stolle 2003). Perhaps it is the trust that the news they are getting is factual, or that people feel the need to be informed because everyone else is. It could also be tied to the countries being relatively small in population, and that the population is quite homogenous. The reasons why are most likely multivariate, but there seems to be something that makes Northern Europeans more participatory, at least in following news and politics.

Eastern European countries contrast the Northern European countries by mostly scoring on the low end of the Corruption Perception Index, media following, and political interest. This could be attributed by the legacy of communism which undermined civil society development in

Central and Eastern Europe, but according to Zakaria (2012) this argument is no longer plausible since it has been years since the first democratic transition took place. In fact, there is a new post-communist generation who never experienced communism who are now participating in civil society. The question then becomes: do these post-communist youths act differently than the previous generation? Zakaria (2012) argues that the new generations in Eastern and Central Europe does not differ much from previous generations, staying apathetic towards civil society. As we see from the differences in Eastern European countries following news from European Social Survey rounds 1-2 (2002-2005) and rounds 4-5 (2008-2011), more people followed news in the older rounds than the new ones[11] (Figure 4.1 and Figure 4.3), so perhaps looking to the past generations for blame is wrong. The percentage of people not following news or current affairs have also risen in all Eastern European countries with data from both ESS 1-2 and 4-5 (Figure 4.2 and 4.4).

It could be that living conditions and declining macroeconomic conditions have contributed to distrust in civic organisations and political institutions. Citizens of post-Communist countries in Eastern and Central Europe have an attitude of scepticism towards civil society institutions, but trust is speculated to be slowly rising with gains in freedoms and fairness (Mishler & Rose 1997). Perhaps it comes down to a country's wealth – resources and skills. It has been noted that the more wealth a country has, the higher its share of group members is (Zakaria 2012). As we have seen, there are robust correlations between being asked for a bribe and trust in public officials, and it is higher than other structural characteristics in countries, such as wealth, income distribution, and education (Table 6.3).

The possibility that Eastern European countries may have trust issues is also considered. When countries are quite corrupt it may cause trust issues, which may make it hard for people to willingly join civil society groups. The issues of trust and perceptions of corruption influences peoples' trust in civil society (Zakaria 2012). There are many incidents of bribery in Eastern European countries in our findings (Figure 3.1), which means people will trust public officials less (Table 6.3).

[11] With the exception of Estonia which increased their news following from ESS 1-2 to ESS 4-5 from approximately 4.33 to 4.65

Policy implications

The findings of this study emphasize the importance for policy-makers to understand how the citizenry keeps up with news, and that if people do not follow news and current affairs there might be consequences. With more media choice and new media influences, such as independent news on YouTube, blogs, and social media, people can pick and choose exactly what they want to hear and see. This also means there might be an issue with political bias, where people only seek to reinforce what they already believe. However, it is argued that print and electronic forms of media remain important for the public to receive information and form opinions on topics (Masters & Graycar 2015).

As we have stated earlier, policy-makers must understand that the flow of information may be controlled by certain actors to front their agendas. Media can control what is being written and shown in order to influence both the public, if they are watching, and policy-makers. Media itself may also be corrupt (Price 2019), which destroys trust and credibility.

Policy-makers must also understand that the media can be biased. Partisanship may cause media to become an active participant in events, instead of just reporting on them. Having a media which influences could be detrimental to civil society and the public at large, since it would have media, or other market elites, steer the ship towards their own agenda (Masters & Graycar 2015).

There are different strategies for corruption reform: individual-level reward and punishment strategies, macro strategies of making changes in an entire society during a "big bang", and organisational-level strategies that address individual organisations (Prasad et al. 2019). The reward and punishment approach seeks to reward or punish agents (i.e. public officials). This strategy requires monitoring of possible corrupt actors, and thus gives importance to reporting of corrupt behaviour. The media can report corrupt incidents to citizens who then can vote or pressure in the "right people" into the "right positions" to get rid of unwanted behaviour. With this approach, there can be a prominent issue when the whole system is corrupt. So this approach may only work well in countries which are already relatively clean of corruption as a control mechanism (Prasad et al. 2019). This can also apply to corrupt media. If the media benefits from corruption, what would be their incentive to report on it?

The macro strategy for a massive change, referred to as a "big bang", targets systemic corruption in an attempt to change the entire system over a short period of time (Rothstein 2011; Prasad et al. 2019). Again, an issue here could be the question on who will bring in the "big bang" that cleanses the system of corruption? In a country that is systematically corrupt, where does change spring out from? Perhaps the citizens are fed up with it, and it sparks some form of revolution, or some form of intervening from other countries or organisations. International organisations could, for example, put pressure on countries they classify as corrupt in order to bring some form of change. This may be problematic as the views on corruption from an international organisation may differ from the alleged corrupt country's views. Targeting news would be a useful strategy for informing citizens in a corrupt country, especially in the modern media landscape, where people are able to follow international news (for example BBC or Sky world news, though there are many more choice here).

The third anti-corruption strategy points to relatively uncorrupted organisations in corrupted countries to be a good approach. Corruption-free organisations can influence their surroundings through networking and demands (such as demanding corruption free dealings in some sector of the economy), if they are powerful actors in some way (Prasad et al. 2019). This can lead to more and more organisations taking up non-corrupt practices, eventually leading to a "cleaner" society. Within this approach, we could argue that media, if uncorrupted, could lead the way in informing citizens and policy-makers to get rid of unwanted behaviour. Exposure of corruption could also lead to civil society activity, meaning people organising to fight for the change they want.

Conclusion

In this study we have focused on the correlation between corruption and news consumption. Perceived corruption from various elite's assessments of the issue is correlated with people's media use at the level of countries. If people follow the news and current affairs corruption cleanliness will usually be higher in their country. If the citizenry is not following news and

current affairs, corruption festers and grows. Corruption experience in the form of regular people's response to bribery incidents correlate less highly with our media variables.

We have also discussed some issues with using business people's assessments of corruption, noting that they may experience different types of corruption than regular people. There is also criticism of the CPI, mainly that it undermines the incredibly complex subject of corruption and simplifies it into a scale from 0-100 – granted this makes quantitative analyses much easier. Also, corruption perception can be important because it could have real implications on policy, even though experienced corruption might not be a "real" problem (Masters & Graycar 2015).

There are also some issues with normativity in the anti-corruption industry. Corruption is mainly seen as something bad with a society that must be fixed (Bukovansky 2002). What constitutes corruption may, however, depend on cultural factors. People may think corruption is negative in most places, but what they think of as corruption can differ – i.e. the discourse around corruption is culturally based (Gupta 1995). International organisations such as Transparency International or the World Bank may clash with other cultures assessments of corruption. What works in combating corruption in one area of the world may not work in another, or different organisations can assess victories over corruption as "not done right" because it was not done in the manner they believe it should have been done (Di Puppo 2013).

In the end, it comes down to what policy-makers decide to do about corruption. They can make mistakes by believing public assessments of corruption to be synonymous with what the media decides to cover. Media can have their own agenda, whether it be to keep society corrupt, cleanse it, or report on it for tribal political reasons.

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Appendix

Table A: Showing countries with their iso3 country codes. N = 34

Country	**Country Code (iso3)**		**Country**	**Country Code (iso3)**
Austria	AUT		**Latvia**	LVA
Belgium	BEL		**Lithuania**	LTU
Bulgaria	BGR		**Luxembourg**	LUX
Croatia	HRV		**Netherlands**	NLD
Cyprus	CYP		**Norway**	NOR
Czech Republic	CZE		**Poland**	POL
Denmark	DNK		**Portugal**	PRT
Estonia	EST		**Romania**	ROU
Finland	FIN		**Russia**	RUS
France	FRA		**Slovakia**	SVK
Germany	DEU		**Slovenia**	SVN
Greece	GRC		**Spain**	ESP
Hungary	HUN		**Sweden**	SWE
Iceland	ISL		**Switzerland**	CHE
Ireland	IRL		**Turkey**	TUR
Israel	ISR		**Ukraine**	UKR
Italy	ITA		**United Kingdom**	GBR