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How to Combat Corruption: Assessing Anti-Corruption Measures from a Civil Servant's Perspective

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Abstract

The Baltic States have overhauled legislation to detect wrongdoing and conducted anti-corruption campaigns. However, little attention has been given to the evaluation of the effectiveness of the measures and the possible trade-offs in relation to democracy and the rule of law. On the basis of more than 1,500 interviews, civil servants' perception of the effectiveness of increased detection, punishment for corrupt officials, and conducting campaigns and ethical training are mapped. Across the three countries, the civil servants find an increase in punishment most effective and recommendable although campaigns and ethical training should not be overlooked. Furthermore, it is found that civil servants' perception of anti-corruption measures is influenced by their sensitivity to the extent of misuse within their country and gender in addition to national differences between the countries.

Keywords: anti-corruption; public administration; punishment; detection; ethical training

1. Introduction

Considering the gravity of corruption, the methods applied in Singapore, in the form of extraordinary means such as the reversal of the burden of proof, increased punishment or extraordinary investigation rights, are discussed across the world as instruments in the fight against corruption (Klitgaard 1988, 94-97). However, the fight against corruption raises the question of balancing measures. While corruption circumvents democratically made decisions in the interest of private actors and bends principles of equality, fairness and impartiality of the rule of law, anti-corruption measures may likewise distort democratic virtues of human rights and respect for the individual. This is particularly so when applying the reverse burden of proof as an anti-corruption instrument, assuming guilt before a case is proved. But granting police or special anti-corruption units extraordinary investigation rights may also conflict with private integrity. The risk is particularly high if the judiciary lacks independence and is non-transparent. Moreover, increasing punishment also has its limits as penalties should reflect the severity of the crime if they are to be found legitimate by society.

Throughout the 1990s, international organizations recommended corruption-prone countries to strengthen the institutional framework for anti-corruption policies (Lambsdorff 2007; McCoy and Heckel 2001). The focus has been on the development of anti-corruption agencies to coordinate efforts and increase the risk of detection, generate training courses and advice, as well as on the content of legal regulations, including the level of punishment. At the turn of the millennium, a number of Central and Eastern European countries, including the Baltic States, signed and ratified the Council of Europe corruption conventions, and Latvia and Lithuania also established anti-corruption agencies. All three countries have overhauled legislation, requested personal information from bureaucrats and politicians to detect wrongdoing, and conducted anti-corruption campaigns (Johannsen and Pedersen 2011a and b). On the other hand, based on an analysis of how presidents frame corruption in their speeches, Estonians stress moral and ethics framing corruption as essentially un-Estonian while Latvian and Lithuanian presidents focus on individual wrongdoing (Pedersen and Johannsen 2012).

Although corruption is given international attention, and many states follow suit, there are, as Smilov states, still no "reliable comparative evaluations of the performance of [anti-corruption] institutions" (2010, 69). Moreover, as pointed out by Schmidt, systematic and comparative studies of anti-corruption instruments themselves are generally missing (2007, 216).

This article addresses the effectiveness and, by association, the legitimacy of different anti-corruption instruments from the point of view of civil servants themselves. The data covers more than 1,500 interviews with public officials conducted in April 2011. The setting is a most-similar-system design comparing the three Baltic States. At the macro-level, choosing the Baltic States eliminates explanations related to the Soviet occupation, thus highlighting the last twenty years of independence.

The following section discusses the theoretical thoughts behind the comprehension of effective anti-corruption instruments. The second section provides a brief account of the research design, methodology and data. The third section develops the analysis in a stepwise manner. First, the civil servants' perception of corruption is identified. This section constructs the independent variable. Second, the civil servants' appreciation of different anti-corruption instruments is revealed, and it is discussed how the perceived effectiveness goes together with the perceived desirability or legitimacy of the instrument. Finally, the third section retraces the relation between context and perceived effectiveness. In the conclusion, the implications of the different anti-corruption strategies are discussed.

2. How to combat corruption: The choice between the carrot and the stick

Corruption, defined as the "misuse of public office for personal gain",[1] focuses on the individual civil servant as a key actor. Although institutional settings and cultural factors matter, it is an individual decision whether or not to engage in a corrupt deal influenced by *exceptional temptations* seen against *public ethics* (Caiden and Caiden 1977, 302, emphasis added). Consequently, the root to combat corruption lies in changing the incentive mechanism causing the act. The fundamental choice to change individual incentives lies in using either a carrot to induce the desired behavior or a stick to suppress or eliminate the undesired behavior. In this light, anti-corruption instruments fall into three categories: i) discouragement, ii) detection and iii) awareness and ethics. The first two categories aim to increase the negative consequences of *exceptional temptations* through either increased punishment or extraordinary investigation rights. In contrast, the third category aims to change the individual's sense of *public ethics* and thus, through values, make corrupt behavior unacceptable and even unthinkable.

These considerations about how to design individually targeted anti-corruption instruments are embedded in new institutionalism, which emphasizes individual behavior as a product of rational choice or the logic of appropriateness (March and Olson 1989; Thelen 1999). Neither approach sees individual behavior as context-free. The debate on corruption in post-Soviet societies relates causes for corruption either to the transition phase or the communist past (e.g. Karklins 2002). On the one hand, rational institutionalism argues that weak and unstable institutions during the often chaotic transition enhanced temptations and increased possibilities to engage in corruption. On the other hand, leaning on sociological institutionalism, it is argued that the communist system created a culture that nurtured corruption as acceptable behavior by defining, for example, when it was appropriate to ignore legally prescribed regulations and/or to bribe an official (Cepl 1997; also Holmes 2006; Sandholtz and Taagepera 2005; Miller et al. 2001). In both cases, however, a post-communist context creates the sphere within which individual calculations about being corrupt or not is made. Using a Schilling diagram, economists model the temptations to engage in corrupt deals as an effect of the number of people expected to be corrupt: Simply put, if an otherwise honest official believes that many people in society are corrupt, he is more likely to agree to a corrupt deal. (Bardhan 1997, 1332).

In organizational and management theories, institutional design serves to facilitate individual behavior. Weberian bureaucratic organizations and later developments of principal-agent models view civil servants as rational and self-interested individuals who are to be monitored and controlled in order to make them act according to the objectives, even if these are not necessarily compatible with the civil servant's immediate self-interest (e.g. Downs 1967; Dunleavy 1991). With a principal-

[1] This definition is the most general and used by, for example, Transparency International and the World Bank. Some scholars prefer to add the qualifier that corruption also means a welfare loss to society (Karklins 2002). However, this qualifier mixes the conceptual definition with its consequence and questions whether a corrupt act is per definition only corrupt if it has immediate and negative consequences.

agent perspective, Robert Klitgaard sees corruption as a function of the agent's monopoly and discretion over decisions subtracting the degree of accountability and thus the risk of being caught (1988, 75). The link between the individual's root causes to engage in corrupt deals and anti-corruption measures seems obvious. However, whereas monopoly is generally a question of producer-provider splits and linked to ideas and policies about who should provide public services and how (Johannsen and Pedersen 2008), the degree of discretion is a question of administrative structure, for example whether and how responsibilities are delegated to subunits. Both issues are indisputably linked to possibilities for the individual civil servant to engage in corrupt deals, whereas the degree of accountability is the cornerstone in individually targeted anti-corruption measures.

The rational-choice perspective for increasing accountability stresses the risk of detection and formal punishment. This is what Smilov (2010) terms the prosecutorial and investigative powers of anti-corruption agencies. An increase in the penalties for both bribe taker and bribe giver will undoubtedly change the cost-benefit calculation of the individual civil servant. However, this will only work if the risk of being caught is sufficiently high. Consequently, both aspects are analyzed in the following, but a distinction is made between discouragement implemented as the increase in penalties for both bribe giver and bribe taker and detection defined by extraordinary investigatory rights and by changing the burden of proof. The effect of the stick, i.e. punishing behavior, is disputed and particularly so in organizational management. Although punishment in laboratory experiments is found effective to reduce or eliminate undesirable behavior, "positive" reward systems are often found more desirable in organizational settings because they generate a sense of belonging and contribute to higher productivity (Arvey and Ivancevich 1980). Thus, taking a sociological perspective on accountability will stress changes in the agent's cognitive perception of corruption as incorrect and unacceptable behavior. Through teaching programs, the agent internalizes norms for forming a professional ethic that, according to Weberian traditions include impartial and equal treatment of citizens with respect to achieving the public good.

The civil servants' opinion on the choice between the stick and the carrot matters. First, the civil servants' view provides feedback to just how good the theoretical expectations are. Second, if the stick increases organizational distrust, it may be dysfunctional, seen from a management perspective, and highly undesirable, seen from an employee perspective. The civil servants may certainly see the carrot as being more desirable but not necessarily especially effective. Finally, implementation studies have repeatedly shown that expecting detachment or neutral competence in bureaucracies is not sufficient in implementing policy (Barker and Wilson 1997). The "departmental view", i.e. the prevailing consensus within the department, not only has a bearing on policy advice but also whether resistance, i.e. the obfuscation of anti-corruption reform from the civil servants, is to be expected. However, before we turn to opinions, a few comments on the study at hand are in place.

3. Research design and survey

The breakdown of the Soviet Empire did not give social scientists a perfect sample of similar countries for studying social transformations. As discussed at length elsewhere (Bunce 1995; Johannsen and Pedersen 2009), the new states emerging after 1990 in many ways constitute very different historical, economic and social cases. The three Baltic States constitute a micro-cosmos of post-communist countries sharing background variables that make them suitable to a most-similar-system design. As occupied countries, they were fully integrated into the Soviet political and economic system and were consequently subject to whole-scale transitions, including political and economic reorientation and state and nation building. Placing the root causes of corruption on either the Soviet legacy or the extraordinary temptations fostered by the transition processes themselves, the Baltic countries are an exceptionally good case for exploring the perceived effectiveness of anti-corruption instruments. While corruption in former Soviet republics is indeed endemic, the perceived commonality of corruption has decreased in the Baltic Countries, although more so in Estonia than in Latvia and Lithuania (Transparency International 2011). The most-similar-system design at hand automatically controls for standard variables associated with commonality of corruption, such as economy, parliamentarism versus presidentialism, and federalism (for a discussion, see Treisman 2000).

Most studies on corruption and anti-corruption address the issue statistically through comparative country studies or by single cases (Treisman 2000; Seligson 2002; della Porta 2001). Few corruption studies look into the micro-level motivations of civil servants (notable exceptions are Tavits 2010; Miller et al. 2000), and no one has, to our knowledge, linked perception and experienced corruption to perceived effectiveness and desirability of anti-corruption measures. The data used in this article comes from a survey conducted in the three Baltic States in April 2011.[2] The survey encompasses approximately 50 questions relating to administrative practices, corruption and anti-corruption policies. In addition, respondents were asked a number of control questions, such as work position, gender, salaries and religion. The survey questions were formulated in English and translated into Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian and Russian. Subsequently, the translations were verified by back-translations.

Respondents encompass approximately 1,500 civil servants evenly distributed between countries. Although the survey discriminates between those who hold staff responsibility and those who do not and is designed to capture the central and regional/local administrations, the group of respondents is selected among public servants with management responsibilities and thus does not include street-level officials such as police officers, nurses or school teachers, who are often exposed to small-scale bribery or gratitude gifts. The response rates are 37 percent for Estonia, 76 percent for Latvia and 24.8 percent for Lithuania. In Estonia, the survey was carried out as an Internet survey while telephone interviews were used in Latvia and Lithuania. The

2 The survey carried out by TNC-Gallup International Denmark and national Gallup offices was made possible by The Danish Research Council grant no. 10-080446.

comparably high response rate in Latvia may be explained by a more extensive and persuasive introduction note than used in the two other countries. Suffice it to say that the difference in survey methods raises questions about the validity. However, analyzing the data does not support bias suspicions, and throughout the analysis, data on each country is reported and commented upon if the differences in data collection is likely to have an impact on the interpretation. Knowing that corruption is a sensitive issue, the survey used split ballots and other experimental methods to increase reliability. The concrete use of split ballots in this study will be discussed in context.

4. Anti-corruption measures – an analysis in three steps

4.1 Corruption – perceptions of commonality versus self-experience

Surveys are often used to measure the level of corruption, tapping the degree to which the respondents perceive the extent of misuse or bribery in a given country. This method has an inbuilt bias as respondents may overestimate, because of hearsay, the latest scandal, or there may simply be general mistrust of politicians and administrators alike (Rose and Mishler 2007).Thus, perceived corruption does not necessarily reflect the actual degree of corruption even if one cannot disregard at least some consistency with reality, in particular when compared across time (Pedersen and Johannsen 2006). An alternative way to tap the commonality of corruption is to ask the respondents about their own experience with corruption. This may, in turn, underestimate the actual level as respondents will refrain from reporting their own actions despite anonymity. The actual level of corruption may thus be over- or underestimated depending on the battery and nature of questions employed. The present survey taps the commonality of corruption, using two questions. One is targeted at the respondent's perception of misuse in the respective country, and the other asks whether the respondent has any experience with someone trying to bribe him or her (for the wording of the questions, see Appendix I).

The first question resembles the wording commonly used in other surveys and reflects the general definition of corruption as "misuse". However, a reasonable critique against employing the concept of "misuse" is that it conceptually stretches corruption proper, as "misuse" can imply acts that are not acceptable for public service but do not necessarily imply corruption. For example, a lavish dinner party at the office is misuse of public funds but not corruption. In order to test the connotation of "misuse" for the respondents, we used a split ballot. Approximately half of the respondents were asked about the extent to which they agree that misuse of public position takes place, disregarding the latest corruption scandals. Giving respondents the frame of "disregarding the latest corruption scandal" will lead them to consider "misuse" as related to corruption in their answer. A second group was asked the same question but not given the opportunity to disregard the latest corruption scandals before they answered .The answers to the two questions do not differ substantially, which implies that "misuse" is in fact synonymous with "corruption".

The second question focused on their own experience with bribery. The respondents were not asked whether they had accepted bribery as this might not produce reliable answers, despite anonymity. Thus, asking if they had any experience with bribery attempts did not reveal if they themselves had taken part in corruption but only that they had hands-on knowledge about the nature of the phenomenon. Moreover, first-hand experience places corruption directly within the organization and makes it a problem close to the individuals' own morality and touches upon dilemmas implied when someone you have professional contact with advances an improper proposal.

Table 1: **Experience with bribery and perceptions of misuse (by country, total)**

		Mean	Std.D	Distribution (percent)								
				1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total	N
Estonia	Experienced bribery	1.22	0.57	82.3	14.9	1.9	0.6	0.3	0.0	0.1	100.0	700
	Perceived corruption	4.12	1.65	3.6	15.3	19.8	21.6	17.4	12.0	10.5	100.0	334
Latvia	Experienced bribery	1.67	1.07	59.6	26.2	7.4	3.0	2.8	0.4	0.6	100.0	500
	Perceived corruption	5.05	1.53	3.2	3.6	8.0	17.7	24.1	24.5	18.9	100.0	249
Lithuania	Experienced bribery	1.57	0.97	63.9	23.9	7.2	2.4	2.0	0.2	0.4	100.0	498
	Perceived corruption	5.27	1.47	1.6	2.9	8.2	14.8	25.0	22.1	25.4	100.0	244
Total	Experienced bribery	1.46	0.88	70.2	20.8	5.1	1.8	1.5	0.2	0.4	100.0	1698
	Perceived corruption	4.74	1.65	2.9	8.1	12.8	18.4	21.6	18.7	17.4	100.0	827

Note: A Likert scale from 1 (never/totally disagree) to 7 (always/totally agree) was used. The differences in the number of respondents are due to the experiment with the misuse question. See appendix for wording of questions.

Table 1 reveals that civil servants perceive misuse as much more widespread than the frequency with which they themselves have been offered a bribe. Some country differences need commenting. Estonians stand out as seeing less corruption in society and having the least experience with bribe offers. This supports the general impression by Transparency International (2011). In contrast, Lithuanians seem to see corruption "everywhere" although they do not experience bribe offers as frequent as Latvians, highlighting the general question of the validity of perception indexes.

Looking at the three countries together, a full 70 percent report that they have never personally experienced bribery attempts. The flip side of the coin is that, on average, 30 percent have in fact had such encounters, with approximately 17 percent Estonians and no less than 36 percent Lithuanians and 41 percent Latvians. Only two percent have, on average, experienced bribery attempts as more frequent than not (categories 5 to 7). In contrast to experienced bribery attempts, a clear majority believe that misuse, disregarding the latest corruption scandals, takes place. Here, some 57.7 percent opted for the last three categories, and less than three percent find that misuse never takes place. Thus, while corruption is common in the societal context, only few have actually experienced bribery themselves. This is also corroborated by another survey question. Asked to indicate if they perceive corruption to be common in general, in their own organization, at the political top level, at the administrative top level, among local politicians, in local administrations, courts, health service and in the police, respondents find corruption more prevailing in society in general than within their own organization, reflecting Matthew 7:3:[3] The closer the questions about corruption are to yourself, the less you see.

The question is whether anti-corruption measures are seen as more or less effective by the respondents if they perceive corruption as a common phenomenon in society or if they have personal experience with bribe givers. Presumably, those who find corruption a common problem will support incentive changes such as increased punishment and detection because only a change of the ground rules will eradicate the problem. In contrast, having had corruption close to you, that is, having experienced bribery, punishment and detection may be thought of as neither effective nor desired. A reason could be that first-hand experience by nature implies a personal relation with the wrongdoer. Accordingly, the respondents may find it more helpful for a training program in ethics, awareness and administrative reform preventing corrupt situations to take place. Before pursuing these questions, we extend the argument by first looking into the options, i.e. which instruments can be recommended and deemed effective.

4.2. Anti-corruption instruments – effectiveness and desirability

The survey operates with a battery of seven different anti-corruption measures. Anti-corruption instruments may be attractive because they are either effective or legitimate, but effective instruments may not necessarily be legitimate, and legitimate instruments may not necessarily be effective. The distinction between effectiveness and desirability is caught through an experiment in which half of the respondents were asked if they thought the anti-corruption measures were effective while the other half were asked whether the same measure would be recommendable. Using a split ballot, the bias that could arise if the same respondent was to evaluate anti-corruption measures both as effective and recommendable is avoided. However, the split ballot does not detect whether respondents in their evaluations find the instrument as something that *ought* to be applied or an instrument they would cherish within their own organization (for a general discussion of the distinction between *desirable* and *desired* in interpreting survey questions, see Hofstede and Minkov 2010, 28-29). Yet, the analysis in the next section takes care of this problem to some degree. Tables 2 and 3 report the mean scores for, respectively, the effectiveness and desirability (recommended) for each of the measures grouped according to the function,[4] i.e., whether it is intended to discourage, detect or increase public ethics.

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3 "Why do you look at the speech of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye?" (Matthew 7:3).

4 The respondents were asked to evaluate each measure in a random order and not according to how the measures are grouped here.

Table 2: **Effective instruments in the fight against corruption**

	Estonia		Latvia		Lithuania		Total	
	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
I Discourage								
Increase punishment for civil servants	334	5.43	243	5.91	247	5.73	824	5.66
Increase punishment for private firms and actors	332	5.32	245	5.76	246	5.70	823	5.56
II Detection								
Grant extraordinary investigation rights	295	4.32	245	4.62	235	4.43	775	4.45
Change the burden of proof	285	3.43	238	4.63	235	4.34	758	4.09
III Awareness and ethics								
Courses in ethics	336	4.12	245	5.21	246	4.65	827	4.60
Increase awareness through campaigns	337	4.63	245	5.33	244	5.32	826	5.04
Administrative reform to increase transparency	331	5.31	244	5.63	244	5.43	819	5.44

Note: All questions run from 1 to 7, where 1 indicates "not at all effective" and 7 indicates "very effective" on the items tapping the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures.

Table 3: **Recommended instruments in the fight against corruption**

	Estonia		Latvia		Lithuania		Total	
	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean	N	Mean
I Discouragement								
Increase punishment for civil servants	311	5.22	248	6.00	251	5.81	810	5.64
Increase punishment for private firms and actors	318	5.38	247	5.89	250	5.80	815	5.67
II Detection								
Grant extraordinary investigation rights	285	3.75	245	4.73	244	4.79	774	4.39
Change the burden of proof	287	3.09	245	4.94	239	4.83	771	4.22
III Awareness and ethics								
Courses in ethics	324	5.23	250	5.30	252	5.42	826	5.31
Increase awareness through campaigns	331	5.38	249	5.34	249	6.08	829	5.58
Administrative reform to increase transparency	323	5.57	246	5.85	249	5.57	818	5.65

Note: All questions run from 1 to 7, 1 indicates "not recommended" and 7 indicate "definitely recommended".

The last columns reveal that "changing the burden of proof" as an extraordinary means to increase detection is considered to be the absolutely least effective and attractive means, with mean scores just over 4 on the scale from 1 to 7. A second glace will reveal that instruments to discourage, i.e. to increase punishment are found almost equally effective and recommendable, whereas courses in ethics are thought more desirable than effective. This structure reflects rational thought and the awareness that softer policy instruments for increasing public ethics, i.e. conducting campaigns and providing courses in ethics for civil servants, could reflect that these are necessary initiatives, but that changing morals and establishing good codes of conduct is difficult and thus a less effective instrument.

Although this pattern is reflected in all three countries, it should be noted that there is a unique difference between Estonia on the one hand and Latvia and Lithuania on the other hand. Even if some of the mean differences are not statistically significant to both Latvia and Lithuania, it is telling that Estonians find all measures less effective.[5] Conducting a similar analysis with respect to whether the measures can be recommended[6] and comparing the two sets, it is found that Estonians cherish but are more skeptical towards the effectiveness of the sociological measures and less supportive of rational measures than Latvians and Lithuanians. Nowhere is this more evident than with respect to support for the semi-authoritarian solution to change the burden of proof. Whether this outcome can be explained by the fact that Estonians perceive corruption to be less widespread and have fewer encounters with bribery attempts or whether it is an artifact of a (more) Estonian democratic culture is but one of the questions answered in the following analysis.

4.3. Forming opinions about the effectiveness of anti-corruption instruments

Instead of using the seven measures individually, three indices were formed, making it possible to detect if preferences towards rational incentives – discouragement and detection – versus sociological incentives – awareness and ethics – are formed by the individual's perceptions of the commonality of corruption and/or the experience with bribe offering. The first index – discouragement – collapses the two questions on increased punishment for the bribe giver as well as the bribe taker. The second index –detection and control – combines the question of 1) extraordinary investigation rights and 2) if the burden of proof should be reversed. The third index taps the sociological dimension in which individual incentives are formed by moral and personal integrity enhanced through campaigns and courses highlighting examples of right- and wrongdoing. In the previous section, the question on "administrative reform to increase transparency" was categorized together with questions

5 A Bonferroni test shows significant differences to both Latvia and Lithuania with respect to a) increased punishment for private persons and firms, b) changing the burden of proof, c) courses in ethical conduct and d) awareness campaigns.

6 A Bonferroni test shows significant differences to both Latvia and Lithuania with respect to a) increased punishment for private persons and firms, b) changing the burden of proof and c) granting extraordinary investigation rights.

on courses in ethics and increasing awareness as the item did load together with ethics and awareness in a confirmative factor analysis. However, increasing transparency through administrative reforms does not necessarily fit under the umbrella of sociologically based incentives, as it could just as well be interpreted as increased detection through civil society and thus be a rationally based measure. This substantial difficulty in interpreting the question under the theoretical headlines suggested that the item should not be included in any of the three indices. This assumption was supported statistically in the reliability test as leaving out administrative reform as an item with the Awareness and Ethic index increased Cronbach's Alpha substantially.

In Table 3, three regressions are subsequently made with the indices as the dependent variables. The independent variables include the individual experience with bribery attempts, the civil servant's perception of misuse in his/her own country as well as system variables; administrative responsibility measured by staff responsibility or not, employment in state or regional administrations, gender, and country.

Overall, Table 3 demonstrates that the more misuse you believe there is in your country, the more you favor an increase in discouragement, e.g. the penalties for participating in bribery, and the more you support detection as the more authoritarian solution. However, exposure to bribery attempts has no significant effect on the belief in the effectiveness of detection and discouragement. The wording "misuse in country" is skewed towards the central administration and the political level and collaborates with the previous discussion that the closer you are to an organization, the less corruption you see. Thus, the finding corresponds with the expectation that if you have a personal distance to and thus do "not know" the likely perpetrators, it will increase your distrust in others and thus the attractiveness of increasing accountability through the individual's rational calculation of the costs and benefits to engage in corrupt deals. This may also be the reason why awareness and ethics are not seen as efficient measures.

In contrast to perceived misuse, personal experience does not matter to the respondents' evaluation of anti-corruption measures. That personal experience is not linked to discouragement or detection can be paralleled to de Graaf's (2010) observation that whistleblowers sometimes refrain from reporting corruption because they do not want to be or feel responsible for the wrongdoer's punishment. Thus, having experienced attempts of bribery is often a result of bribe givers' selection mechanism. As Lambsdorff notes, wrongdoers do take a risk in trying to bribe a civil servant, and to minimize the risk, he or she develops a personal relationship before the bribery attempt. In this way, the bribe giver can act – or choose not to – based on information about the civil servant's value system, thereby reducing the risk of being reported once the attempt is made (Lambsdorff 2007, 139-141).

With respect to awareness and ethics, neither experience nor perception of misuse has any significant effect on the evaluation of these instruments as effective. That neither hearsay nor experience matters to the evaluation of awareness and ethics may not surprise but supports the assumption that although soft measures are found necessary, it may not necessarily be because they contribute directly to combat corruption.

Table 4: **Predictors of the effectiveness of discouragement, detection, and awareness and ethics**

	Discourage			Detection			Awareness and Ethics		
	B	Std. E		B	Std. E.		B	Std. E.	
Constant	3.424	.347	***	1.688	.407	***	3.297	.406	***
Experienced bribery attempts (1-7)	.031	.066		.142	.077		-.004	.078	
Misuse of public position in country (1-7)	.153	.036	***	.140	.044	**	-0.16	.042	
Staff responsibility	.003	.135		-.327	.165	*	.309	.160	
State vs. Regional/local	.291	.127	*	.265	.153		.122	.149	
Gender	.377	.115	***	.645	.136	***	.423	.135	**
Latvia	.483	.137	***	.814	.164	***	.952	.162	***
Lithuania	.274	.163		.488	.197	*	.539	.192	**
N	624			561			626		
Adj. R2	.084			.120			.075		
F test	.000			.000			.000		

Coeffients are unstandarized. Note: staff responsibility (0.1) 1= staff responsibility; State vs. regional/local (1.2) 2 = regional/local; Gender (1.2) Female =2; Countries = Estonia serves as reference group. The indices are additive and adjusted to the 1 (never) to 7 (always) point scale – in effect averaging the scores of the index's subcomponents. *** =<0.001 **0=<0.01 *0<0.05.

Among the system variables, the picture is rather mixed. First, having staff responsibility turns out to be a significant negative component in relation to increasing detection rights. A likely explanation is that the rejection is based on personal considerations since office managers are most likely to get into a tight corner if the principle of reversal of the burden of proof is adopted and extraordinary investigation rights employed. It would certainly put them at risk both in addition to the intrusion and in complicating the affairs of their office. This explanation to some extent seconds the comments made on the missing link between personal experience and evaluations on detection and discouragement. In addition, the negative opinion can be based on a broad perception of the damage to democracy that these instruments can cause, and staff managers may have a broader understanding of these issues than their underlings.

Second, employment in state or regional administrations does have some importance. Regional administrators are more positive towards increased penalties. Whether this is due to differences in value systems or differences in administrative reforms between the central and regional/local administrations is a question for further research.

Gender turned out to be an important variable. Across all regressions, women believe more in the effectiveness of sanctions, control and awareness instruments than men do. Notice that the gender difference is neither an artifact of placement within the hierarchy nor the frequency of experienced bribery attempts – let alone the perception of misuse, as this is included in the regressions. Apart from the proposition that women have greater integrity, as argued by Sung (2003), the likely explanation is that women are, in general, more vulnerable to the costs of corruption as they take the primary responsibility for the household and therefore depend more on public services (UNIFEM 2008). This finding seconds Swamy et al. (2001), who showed that women are more disapproving of bribery than men and, for that matter, also less involved in bribery.

The last control variable compares the three Baltic countries. Estonia serves as the reference group in the regressions. Compared to Estonia, Latvia varies on all parameters while Lithuania only differs from Estonia in finding detection more effective. Estonians' exceptionality is not related to a lower degree of corruption, as this is already included in the regression. This finding is in all probability influenced by differences in national sentiments and values of right and wrong instruments. It is in all likelihood also an effect of trust in political institutions. According to Eurobarometer (2009), Latvians are less trusting in their political institutions than Lithuanians and Estonians. Thus, the positive signs with respect to the country dummies correspond closely to the proposition that corruption undermines relationships of trust and thereby more easily invokes calls for rational instruments, including sanctions and tough measures, such as reversing the burden of proof. This could indicate that the respondents recognize that changes in the burden of proof and giving extraordinary investigation rights come at the expense of justice and democracy, which should be reserved to authoritarian or semi-authoritarian regimes like Singapore and not to consolidating democracies like the Baltic States. However, it may also indicate that increased detection rights would force corrupt relationships further underground than they already are and thus become even more difficult to target (Kugler et al. 2005), or reflect that hands-on experiences with bribery attempts makes respondents recognize that proving oneself innocent is extremely difficult.

5. Conclusion: Anti-corruption instruments from the civil servant's perspective

The root causes of corruption link civil servants' cost-benefit calculation and sense of public ethics with extraordinary temptations and morality given societies' institutions and culture. The gravity of corruption raises questions about which instruments may be effective, but also about whether these instruments are desired when judged by higher goals such as the democratic standard of the country or management's considerations with respect to achieving the organizational goals.

Awareness and ethics addressing the individual's moral and professional ethos are highly desired, but these instruments are not seen as very effective means. The civil servants are, in turn, less positive with respect to raising the stakes when it comes to detection. Although some respondents do approve of instruments, such as the change of burden of proof and increased investigation rights, these are the least recommended and also seen as the least efficient. The latter may come as a surprise because establishing facts about corruption is difficult. Here, it is suggested that the resistance towards increased detection is partly influenced by the strong wording of the question pointing directly to more authoritarian solutions than options in a viable democracy.

Most consistency is found between the effectiveness and desirability of increased penalties. Thus, discouraging likely perpetrators from corrupt acts by raising the cost, if caught, will rank among the best solutions if civil servants were to give advice. But they also find soft instruments worth considering. Although not necessarily effective on their own, civil servants recommend these instruments as they increase knowledge and awareness. Thus, soft instruments may go hand in hand with management considerations developing professionalism specifically focusing on public ethics.

Despite general agreement, some distinct differences between those who perceive different anti-corruption instruments to be efficient must be highlighted. Supporting the theoretical claim, the analysis finds that personal distance to corruption matters. It also matters in the expected way, meaning that if a civil servant finds misuse common in society, i.e. placing the act at a certain distance, he or she also welcomes anti-corruption measures that affect the individual cost-benefit calculation directly through deterrence and detection. Somewhat surprising, having placed corruption as a general societal problem, awareness and ethics are not found effective. This is, however, in line with the Schilling diagram. Based on a rational argument, the diagram foresees that widespread corruption will encourage otherwise honest civil servants to engage in corruption. Accordingly, anti-corruption instruments must change the individual cost-benefit calculation, which is not done by ethical considerations and trust in the public good.

If corruption is experienced first-hand and thus close to you, the hands-on knowledge about situational dilemmas discourages the view of any measure to be effective. However, the fact that civil servants with staff responsibilities look upon strong detection methods as definitively ineffective supports the assumption that the evaluation of anti-corruption mechanisms not only shows how common corruption is but also how to manage and control civil servants' performance. Thus, while awareness and ethics form an element of cognitive self-control, increased detection rights might work contradictory through creating a sphere of distrust and suspicion.

Corruption is an illicit act difficult to combat and as old as the state and public bureaucracy itself. The perspective taken from civil servants in the three Baltic States reveals that when corruption is seen as a general phenomenon, discouragement will be the most effective instrument, and many believe in the detection instruments even though they are in opposition to democratic virtues. This is, however, not to say that courses in ethics and awareness campaigns are a waste of time. As it takes two to tango, a corrupt relation also requires at least two persons. And increasing knowledge about what is right and wrong on behalf of both bribe giver and bribe taker may be a road to lasting solutions.

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Appendix I: Survey questions

Scale 1 "never" to 7 "always".

Corruption and misuse of public positions are a problem in many countries. Using a scale from 1 to 7, where "7" means "totally agree" and 1 means "totally disagree", if you disregard the latest corruption scandals, do you agree or disagree that misuse of public position takes place in your country?

Using a scale from 1 to 7, where 7 means "often" and 1 means "never", how often have you experienced bribery attempts to favor specific firms, groups, or individuals?

I will read out some statements in the following. Using a scale from 1 to 7, where 7 means "definitely recommend" and 1 means "not recommend", to what degree would you recommend that the following measures against corruption should be taken?

I will read out some statements in the following. Using a scale from 1 to 7, where 7 means "very effective" and 1 means "not at all effective", how effective do you think that the following measures would be in the fight against corruption?

1) Increased punishment for public servants when corruption is revealed and sentenced
2) Extraordinary investigation rights to independent anti-corruption agencies
3) Change of the burden of proof, so that the potentially corrupt must demonstrate their innocence
4) Increased awareness about corruption as morally unacceptable through public campaigns
5) Administrative reforms increasing transparency in public administration
6) Courses in ethical conduct for all public servants
7) Increase punishment for private persons and firms engaged in corruption

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