



Corruption and Corruptibility

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Summary. — The expressed “norms and values” of both citizens and street-level officials explicitly condemn the giving or taking of bribes. However, citizens respond to extortion by officials, and officials respond to temptation by clients. This paper is based on over 6,000 interviews with the public and over 1,300 with “street-level” officials in four postcommunist countries (the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Ukraine) who were questioned about (i) their values, (ii) their hypothetical/conditional behavior if exposed to extortion or temptation, (iii) their personal experience of extortion or temptation, and (iv) their actual behavior with respect to bribes.

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1. INTRODUCTION

“Bureaucratic encounters” in postcommunist Europe—the interactions between citizens and “street-level” officials—provide a useful focus for thinking about corruption and corruptibility more generally. A close study of these “bureaucratic encounters” suggests that the problem of corruption is not so much the morally corrupt few as the behaviorally corruptible many.

There are widespread allegations that citizens make extensive use of contacts, presents, and bribes to influence officials in postcommunist Europe. But it is not only “what” happens in these bureaucratic encounters that is important. Equally or even more important—for understanding, for interpretation and for reform—is “why” it happens.

Does it reflect the internal values of officials and their clients or does it reflect the external pressures they face? In the real world where clients and officials face pressures—or resistance—from the other side we cannot expect values to dictate behavior. At best, values may influence behavior. At worst, values may exist only in a world of ideals and self-delusion, without much impact on actual behavior. We need to measure values independently of behavior, and then weigh the impact of these internal values against the impact of external pressures on actual behavior.

This paper is based on 26 focus-group discussions, over 6,000 interviews with the public, and

over 1,300 with “street-level” officials in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Bulgaria, and Ukraine.¹ The interviews covered (i) values, (ii) hypothetical behavior if exposed to extortion or temptation, (iii) personal experience of extortion or temptation, and (iv) actual behavior. Interviews with street-level officials consisted of at least 240 interviews with officials in each of the five categories of public service: health services, education, welfare services, the police, and a mixed bag of legal services (court, passport, and customs officials) (Miller, Grødeland, & Koshechkina, 2001, pp. 26–28).

These surveys indicate that both citizens and officials explicitly condemn the use of bribes. Nonetheless many confess to giving or taking them, and still more confess that they would give them if necessary, or would take them if the opportunity occurred. This is not because their values are irrelevant but because their internal values have to contend against external pressures. Citizens respond to extortion; and officials respond to temptation—and these external pressures have more impact than internal values. Consequently, both citizens and officials should be viewed more as corruptible than corrupt.

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2. INTERNAL VALUES

Both citizens and officials were asked whether they considered "the use of money, presents, favors, or contacts to influence officials"² to be

(i) "bad for (country-name), and for those involved?"

(ii) "bad for (country-name), but unavoidable for people who have to live here?" or did they...

(iii) "prefer it that way because, when you need a favor from an official, you can get it?"

The second option combines condemnation of corruption itself with some excuse for those who have to practice it. Noonan (1987, p. 685, 693) notes that "necessity" is a frequent excuse though the evidence "does not show that bribery is necessary," rather that it is "thought to be necessary." As one focus-group participant put it: "you cannot do anything another way." The third option represents a positive preference for: "the main thing is the result," "it is normally more important that the problem is solved than that money is paid for it." Only 10% of the public or officials expressed such a preference, though a third regarded bribery as "bad but unavoidable" (Table 1).

Consistent with findings drawn from other surveys (Gilman & Lewis, 1996, p. 520; Smeltz

& Sweeney, 1999, p. 9), there is little evidence of great cross-national differences between citizens—though rather more between officials. So the data support Noonan's (1987, p. 702) assertion that bribery is not merely "widely" but "universally shameful" (Table 1).

3. CORRUPTIBILITY

But would citizens give bribes if asked? Or officials accept them if offered? Citizens were asked: "If you had an important problem, and an official asked you directly for money to solve it, would you (i) pay if you could afford it or (ii) refuse to pay even if you could afford it?" An unusually large number refused to give a straight answer to this question, but in every country except the Czech Republic, more confessed that they would pay than those who claimed they would refuse. Overall, only a third claimed they would refuse (Table 2).

On these figures, the public's attitude to explicit extortion was remarkably submissive. Much larger numbers would give bribes if asked than expressed a preference for a system of "presents and favors." And much larger numbers would give bribes if asked than had ever experienced explicit extortion.

Table 1. *Internal values: condemnation of the use of contacts, presents, and bribes*

	Average (%)	Czech Republic (%)	Slovakia (%)	Bulgaria (%)	Ukraine (%)
<i>Views expressed by the public</i>					
Bad	61	69	60	58	58
Bad but unavoidable	30	25	28	34	31
Prefer it that way	9	7	12	8	11
<i>Views expressed by officials</i>					
Bad	56	71	59	55	39
Bad but unavoidable	34	22	28	39	45
Prefer it that way	10	7	13	6	16

Note: "Don't know," "mixed/depends," etc. answers were recorded if given spontaneously, but never prompted; they have been excluded from the calculation of percentages.

Table 2. *Corruptibility: Would citizens pay bribes if asked?*

	Average (%)	Czech Republic (%)	Slovakia (%)	Bulgaria (%)	Ukraine (%)
Pay	44	30	41	46	58
Refuse	34	52	31	33	21
Depends	22	18	27	21	21
Difference = pay minus refuse	+10	-22	+10	+13	+37

Note: Since an average of 22% volunteered the reply that it "would depend upon the circumstances" we have not excluded them from calculations of percentages. "Don't knows" have been excluded as usual however.

Table 3. *Corruptibility: Would officials accept gifts if offered?*

	Average (%)	Czech Republic (%)	Slovakia (%)	Bulgaria (%)	Ukraine (%)
Would accept a small present	47	39	58	46	44
Would accept money or an expensive present ^a	17	9	18	18	25
It is right to accept something for "faster" work	53	40	51	56	64
It is right to accept something for "extra" work	60	53	59	61	67

Notes: "Don't know," "mixed/depends," etc. answers were recorded if given spontaneously, but never prompted; they have been excluded from the calculation of percentages.

^a At several points in the questionnaires, both citizens and officials were asked about their actual or hypothetical giving or taking. Usually there were two questions. The first focused on "a small present." Then that was followed by a second question about "money or an expensive present." This sequencing, as well as the explicit wording, allows us to interpret these questions as being about, respectively, small and large gifts.

Table 4. *Variations in corruptibility across institutions*

	Among officials in...				
	Health (%)	Education (%)	Welfare (%)	Police (%)	Legal services (%)
If offered by a client would accept...					
A small present	65	50	48	36	37
Money or an expensive present	28	13	14	15	14
It is right to accept something for "faster" work	53	64	43	49	48
It is right to accept something for "extra" work	60	75	52	55	52

Note: "Don't know," "mixed/depends," etc. answers were recorded if given spontaneously, but never prompted; they have been excluded from the calculation of percentages.

Similarly, officials were asked whether they would accept either "a small present" or a larger gift of "money or an expensive present," if it were offered by a client "for solving their problem."³ On average, 47% said they would accept "a small present" and 17% said that they would accept "money or an expensive present" (Table 3).

Across the five broad types of officials interviewed, those employed in police services were among the most reluctant to accept small presents though not outstandingly reluctant to take something more. At the other extreme, those in the health services were outstandingly willing to take both large and small gifts (Table 4).

4. EXTERNAL PRESSURES

External pressures cross-cut the values and norms of both citizens and officials. On the one hand, citizens experienced extortion, in the shape of explicit or implicit demands from officials. On the other, officials experienced temptation, in the shape of frequent offers from clients.

Citizens were asked whether in their recent dealings with officials "an official ever asked you or your family directly for money or a present" or "seemed to expect something." Only 6% said they had been "asked directly," but another 51% said they had been given the very clear impression that the official wanted something. Over half reported that officials had "made unnecessary problems in order to get money or a present for solving them"—and 29% said that this had happened to them "more than rarely" (Table 5).

Conversely, 30% of officials said that their clients had frequently offered them "a small present," and 10% said that their clients had frequently offered them "money or an expensive present" (Table 6). On at least "rare" occasions, 67% had been offered "a small present" and 27% had been offered "money or an expensive present." An official might resist occasional offers but succumb to more frequent offers. As one focus-group participant put it: "we have taught them...we take them things...the first and the second bring something, and the third cannot avoid bringing something."

Across the five broad types of officials interviewed, those employed in health services were

Table 5. *External pressures: citizens' recent experience of extortion*

	Average (%)	Czech Republic (%)	Slovakia (%)	Bulgaria (%)	Ukraine (%)
In these last few years, did an official ever ask you or your family directly for money or a present, or not ask directly but seem to expect something?					
Asked directly	6	2	4	7	11
Seemed to expect	51	44	64	39	56
Neither	43	54	32	54	33
How often did these ^a officials make unnecessary problems for you or your family in order to get money or a present for solving them...					
Usually or sometimes	29	19	30	24	42
Rarely	25	25	27	25	25
Never	46	56	44	52	33

Note: "Don't know," "mixed/depends," etc. answers were recorded if given spontaneously, but never prompted; they have been excluded from the calculation of percentages.

^a This particular question closely followed an introduction: "We have talked about officials in general. But *now* I want you to think about *your own or your family's personal experiences* of dealing with officials in the last few years—let us say approximately the last four or five years."

Table 6. *External pressures: officials' recent experience of offers from clients*

	Average (%)	Czech Republic (%)	Slovakia (%)	Bulgaria (%)	Ukraine (%)
Over the last few years (say the last five years) did the people you dealt with as part of your official duties usually, sometimes, rarely, or never offer you...					
<i>A small present?</i>					
Usually or sometimes	30	24	43	23	30
Rarely	37	36	34	44	35
Never	33	40	22	33	35
<i>Money or an expensive present?</i>					
Usually or sometimes	10	7	14	9	11
Rarely	17	16	17	18	17
Never	73	77	69	74	72

Note: "Don't know," "mixed/depends," etc. answers were recorded if given spontaneously, but never prompted; they have been excluded from the calculation of percentages.

by far the most likely to receive frequent offers of small presents from their clients. But larger offers, of money or more expensive presents, were as frequent in the police service as in the health service (Table 6).

Within institutions however, the frequency of offers varied very sharply between different occupations. Within the health services, doctors were three times as likely as nurses to report frequent offers of money or expensive gifts. Similarly, within the police, traffic police were three times as likely as police-in-offices to report frequent offers of money or expensive gifts. And within legal services, customs officials were over five times as likely as passport officials to report frequent offers of money or expensive gifts. So very specific occupations, rather than institutions as a whole, were subject to sharply different degrees of temptation. Significantly,

within the same institution, the variation in values across different occupations was much less than this variation in temptations.

5. CORRUPT BEHAVIOR

The vast majority of citizens in every country condemned the use of presents and bribes to influence officials. But at the same time, a plurality of citizens in every country except the Czech Republic said they would pay a bribe if asked. Similarly, the vast majority of officials in every country except Ukraine condemned the use of presents and bribes to influence officials. But at the same time, almost half were willing to accept at least a "small present" if offered, and over half were willing to justify accepting direct payments from clients for "fas-

ter" or "extra" work. What had they actually done?

On average, 42% of citizens confessed they had offered a small present to an official in recent years and 24% confessed that they had offered money or an expensive present (Table 7). And the more frequently they offered small gifts, the more likely they were to also offer large gifts.

Officials were asked three questions, in quick succession, about their actual experience of gift taking. Each question was put to the full sample, irrespective of their previous answers. Thus, many who had originally denied taking anything went on to confess whether they had taken "before or after" or something "large or small." By the end of the sequence, we had almost doubled the numbers who confessed. (Although officials who initially denied taking anything at all were relatively unlikely to confess to taking anything more than a "small present.")

- "In the last few years—say the last five years—did you ever accept a present from someone whose problem you dealt with as part of your official duties?" Of those who gave a straightforward "yes" or "no" answer, 30% said "yes."

- "If you did accept something, was that only after you had solved the client's problem?" In reply, 43% now confessed that they

had accepted something either "before" (8%) or "after" (35%) solving their client's problem.

- "If you did accept something, was that only a small present—flowers, chocolates, or a bottle, for example—or was it something more than that?" Now 58% confessed that they had accepted either "a small present" (53%) or "something more" (5%) (Table 8).

Of course, some may fail to confess what they have done (perhaps out of embarrassment), and others may confess to what they have not done (perhaps out of bravado or a desire to please the interviewer).

Across the five broad types of officials interviewed, those employed in police services were among the least likely to confess accepting small presents though among the most likely to confess accepting larger gifts. At the other extreme, those in the health services were outstandingly likely to confess that they had accepted both large and small gifts (Table 9).

Within institutions however, confessions (like temptations) varied very sharply between different occupations. Within the health services, doctors were eight times as likely as nurses to confess that they had accepted money or expensive gifts—despite the fact that nurses declared themselves even more willing than doctors to accept such gifts. Similarly, within the police,

Table 7. *Corrupt behavior: citizens' confessions to offering gifts 'in the last few years'*

	Average (%)	Czech Republic (%)	Slovakia (%)	Bulgaria (%)	Ukraine (%)
<i>Ever offered...</i>					
A small present	42	23	56	33	57
Money or an expensive present	24	11	31	19	36
<i>More than rarely offered...</i>					
A small present	25	11	34	15	39
Money or an expensive present	13	6	17	7	24

Note: "Don't know," "mixed/depends," etc. answers were recorded if given spontaneously, but never prompted; they have been excluded from the calculation of percentages.

Table 8. *Corrupt behavior: officials' confessions to accepting gifts "in the last few years"*

	Average (%)	Czech Republic (%)	Slovakia (%)	Bulgaria (%)	Ukraine (%)
<i>Confess to accepting...</i>					
Nothing	42	45	29	45	49
Only a small present	53	53	64	51	45
Something more than a small present	5	2	7	4	6

Note: "Don't know," "mixed/depends," etc. answers were recorded if given spontaneously, but never prompted; they have been excluded from the calculation of percentages.

Table 9. *Variations in corrupt behavior across institutions*

	Among officials in...				
	Health (%)	Education (%)	Welfare (%)	Police (%)	Legal services (%)
<i>Confess to accepting...</i>					
Nothing	22	42	41	53	53
Only a small present	69	55	57	41	45
Something more than a small present	9	3	2	6	2

Note: "Don't know," "mixed/depends," etc. answers were recorded if given spontaneously, but never prompted; they have been excluded from the calculation of percentages.

traffic police were six times as likely as ordinary "on-the-beat" police to confess that they had accepted money or expensive gifts. And within legal services, customs officials were infinitely more likely than passport officials to confess that they had accepted money or expensive gifts (since not one passport official confessed that they had accepted a large gift)—despite the fact that passport officials declared themselves even more willing than customs officials to do so.

These dramatic occupational patterns of confessions reflect the occupational patterns of temptation (i.e., frequent offers) rather than the occupational patterns of basic values or even the occupational patterns of willingness to accept.

6. INTERNAL VALUES VERSUS EXTERNAL PRESSURES

Condemnation was widespread, among both citizens and officials, but so was readiness to submit to extortion or temptation. And significant numbers confessed they had actually given or taken bribes. So did condemnation really matter? Did clients' and officials' values and

norms have a significant impact on behavior? Or was their condemnation merely a ritual expression without much relevance to actual behavior?

To answer these questions we can correlate the giving of bribes ("large gifts"—that is, "money or an expensive present") with both internal values and external pressures. If we accept at face value citizens' answers to whether or not they had given a "large gift" then bribe giving correlates at 0.15 with values and at 0.35 with the external pressure of extortion within our merged four-country dataset (Table 10).

On the other hand, perhaps we should recognize the inherent ambiguity—or even dishonesty—of claiming to have offered "only a small gift." To avoid that ambiguity, we can restrict the analysis to those who either confessed to giving a large gift or denied giving anything at all, even a small present. Restricting the analysis in this way sharpens the analysis. Bribe giving then correlates at 0.20 with values and at 0.43 with extortion. But either way, no matter whether we sharpen up the analysis or not, the impact of extortion on bribe giving appears over twice as powerful as the impact of values (Table 10).

Table 10. *Internal values versus external pressures: bribe giving—correlations with values and extortion*

	Within merged dataset ($r \times 100$)	Czech Republic ($r \times 100$)	Slovakia ($r \times 100$)	Bulgaria ($r \times 100$)	Ukraine ($r \times 100$)
<i>Correlation with...</i>					
Values: "bribes are bad"	-15** (-20**)	-19** (-23**)	-16** (-20**)	-19** (-22)	-6 (-10)
Extortion: "officials asked for/expected bribe"	34** (43**)	29** (33**)	23** (29**)	37** (45**)	34** (44**)
Extortion: "officials made unnecessary probs"	35** (43**)	31** (36**)	38** (45**)	33** (39**)	28** (37**)

Note: $r \times 100$ is (Pearson) correlation coefficient times 100.

Figures in brackets calculated after excluding citizens who confessed to giving "only a small present."

* Significant at the 5% level.

** Significant at the 1% level.

Similarly, if we accept at face value, officials' answers to whether or not they had accepted a "large gift" then officials' bribe taking correlates at 0.15 with values and at 0.34 with the external pressure of temptation. Excluding officials who admit accepting "only a small gift," once again sharpens the analysis remarkably. Bribe taking then correlates at 0.25 with values and at 0.51 with the temptations provided by frequent offers. But again, no matter whether we sharpen up the analysis or not, the impact of external pressure (i.e., temptation) on bribe taking appears over twice as powerful as the impact of internal values (Table 11).

In percentage terms, extortion by officials "making unnecessary problems" increased the rate of clients giving "money or an expensive present" by 35%, while extortion by direct requests increased the rate of clients giving "money or an expensive present" by 46%

(within our merged four-country dataset). On the other side, frequent offers from clients increased the rate of officials accepting "more than a small present" by 24%. But condemnation only reduced citizens' bribe giving by 21% and officials' bribe taking by 10%. Again, if we sharpen the analysis by excluding ambiguous givers or takers who gave/accepted only a small present, all these measures of impact increase. The impact of extortion by "unnecessary problems" rises to 46%, and by direct requests to 58%. The impact of temptation rises to 46%. But the impact of values remains at half those levels—28% for citizens' values, 24% for officials' values (Table 12).

The correlations between bribe giving/taking and extortion/temptation are so strong that they raise the question whether values had any really independent impact at all. We can test this using multiple regression. Judged by

Table 11. *Internal values versus external pressures: bribe taking—correlations with values and temptation*

	Within merged dataset ($r \times 100$)	Czech Republic ($r \times 100$)	Slovakia ($r \times 100$)	Bulgaria ($r \times 100$)	Ukraine ($r \times 100$)
Correlation with...					
Values: "bribes are bad"	-15** (-25**)	-13 (-24*)	-14* (33**)	-10 (-16)	-18* (-25*)
Temptation: frequent offers of small gifts	23** (43**)	10 (21*)	21** (48**)	29** (50**)	26** (40**)
Temptation: frequent offers of money/exp gifts	34** (51**)	19** (29**)	43** (64**)	37** (62**)	30** (39**)

Note: $r \times 100$ is (Pearson) correlation coefficient times 100.

Strictly speaking, statistical significance tests are not applicable to quota samples and are indicated here for heuristic purposes only.

Figures in brackets calculated after excluding officials who confessed to accepting "only a small present."

* Significant at the 5% level.

** Significant at the 1% level.

Table 12. *Internal values versus external pressures: the impact on bribe giving and bribe taking*

Within the merged four-country datasets	Citizens had offered a "large gift" (%)	Officials had accepted a "large gift" (%)		
By values: among those who said the use of bribes was...				
Bad	20 (24)			2 (4)
Bad but unavoidable	30 (38)			6 (14)
Prefer it that way	41 (52)			12 (28)
By extortion/temptation	By unnecessary problems	By direct demands	By offers from clients	
Never	10 (11)	9 (10)	1 (2)	
Rarely	28 (38)	36 (47)	10 (26)	
Frequently	45 (57)	55 (68)	25 (48)	

Note: "Don't know," "mixed/depends," etc. answers were recorded if given spontaneously, but never prompted; they have been excluded from the calculation of percentages. Figures in brackets calculated after excluding all ambiguous respondents, that is, those who had given/taken only a small present.

Table 13. *Internal values versus external pressures: multiple regression estimates of their impact*

	Within the merged four-country datasets		
	Citizens had offered a "large gift"	Officials had accepted a "large gift"	
	Beta $\times 100$	Beta $\times 100$	Beta $\times 100$
Impact of values	-14** (-17**)	-11** (-13**)	-12** (-19**)
Impact of external pressures (extortion/temptation)	34** (41**)	33** (41**)	31** (45**)
RSQ	14 (21)	13 (20)	12 (26)
	Extortion measured by unnecessary problems	Extortion measured by direct demands	Temptation measured by offers from clients

Note: Betas are the "standardized regression coefficients" or "path coefficients" in the multiple regressions.

RSQ is the "squared multiple correlation" $\times 100$, or "percent of variation explained."

Figures in brackets calculated after excluding all ambiguous respondents, that is. those who had given/taken only a small present.

** Significant at the 1% level.

the beta-coefficients in the merged four-country datasets, external pressures had between two and three times the impact of values on both bribe giving and bribe taking. Nonetheless, values retained a statistically significant independent impact on citizens' behavior (Table 13).

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR REFORM: REFORM SITUATIONS RATHER THAN PEOPLE

In focus-group discussions, the most frequent suggestion for reforming the relationship between citizens and officials was a better quality of officials. In Ukraine especially there were calls for officials to "change their psychology," become "more responsible," exhibit more "conscience," more "understanding," more "culture," and indeed more "honesty."

This notion that "more honest" officials (and perhaps "more honest" clients as well) would solve the problem of petty corruption is seductive. If honesty is defined in terms of behavior, then it is indeed the solution—by definition, but only by definition.

But if honesty is defined in terms of what Ukrainian participants called "psychology," then the analysis suggests that honest officials and clients are not the solution. Public information campaigns to convince either officials or clients that petty corruption is "bad" are unlikely to be effective against widespread petty corruption. The data suggest that 90% of officials and clients already agree that it is "bad for the country," and a majority of them also believe it is "bad for those involved." Propa-

ganda campaigns aimed at the remaining hard core of 10% who consciously support a system of bribes and favors are unlikely to change their "psychology." The real problem of petty corruption is that so many citizens and officials who genuinely condemn it are pressured or tempted into practicing it.

The data highlight both the overwhelming "psychological" or moral condemnation of petty corruption and the widespread corruptibility (in terms of potential and actual behavior) of both citizens and officials in the face of external pressures. Not every citizen who was "asked directly" by an official for a gift actually gave one. And not every official who was offered a gift by a client actually accepted it. Indeed focus-group participants not only told stories of refusing to give "when asked" but, more remarkably, tales of having their offers of gifts to officials politely but firmly refused. Nonetheless other stories reveal the powerful impact of external pressures on behavior, despite the reluctance and even resentment of the participants. And the statistical analysis suggests these external pressures have much more impact on behavior than internal values, even if the impact of values is by no means negligible.

Moreover, the correlation and regression analysis is corroborated by the very detailed occupational patterns of bribe taking that emerged: high rates of accepting large gifts among hospital doctors (but not among nurses), among traffic police (but not among other police), and among customs officials (but not among passport officials). That surely reflects the bargaining power and opportunities

of certain specific occupations rather than the "psychological" or moral culture within the health service or the police. Indeed it links traffic police who work within an institutional culture which is exceptionally antagonistic toward bribery to doctors who work within an institutional culture which is exceptionally indulgent toward bribery.

The implication for reform is that specific bargaining relationships encourage clients to make explicit offers and encourage officials to make explicit requests, and both offers and requests have a powerful impact on behavior—an impact that is over and above the moral stance or economic circumstance of the individuals involved. However upright and poor they may be, citizens find it difficult to resist extortion. And however upright and well paid they may be, officials find it difficult to resist temptation.

That emphasizes the need to focus on the situations rather than on the participants involved in petty corruption—situations in which the client has an unusual amount at stake, where the interaction between client and official is unusually private or monopolistic and where, in consequence, the client is particularly at the mercy of the official. Rather than wishing for "more honest" officials, or prioritizing stricter controls and penalties (as do the public) or higher salaries (as do officials) as solutions to the problem of corruption—the analytic findings point to the importance of reducing the situations in which corruptibility is most likely to be translated into corruption.

Reforming situations means providing clients with alternative access points and better appeal procedures. It means more clearly and publicly set out rights for clients on the one hand and more clearly and publicly set out user charges, tariffs or "price lists" on the other. And it im-

plies a more public setting for client-official interactions. All of these are designed to stiffen clients' resistance to extortion and to reduce their incentive to offer gifts. Such measures do "go with the grain" of public opinion. Very few of the public pick them as their top priority because they underestimate the impact of situation or circumstance, and overestimate the impact of personal values on actual behavior. But very few of the public—though rather more officials—oppose such reforms.

It is undoubtedly difficult to open up activities that typically take place in closed settings. In the American context, Lipsky lamented the fact that interaction between office bureaucrats and clients usually took place in private offices under norms of confidentiality. Teaching was done in classrooms where principals and supervisors did not normally enter without giving prior warning. Only a suspect or a partner, who would usually shield them from criticism, normally observed police officers in action (Lipsky, 1980, p. 169). Judges were among the few officials in Lipsky's study that tended to operate in public.

But although Lipsky was concerned about competence and fairness, he did not identify corruption as a major concern. Where corruption is a problem, the problem of openness is even greater. There are incentives to hide the specifically corrupt part of the transaction (the giving and taking of bribes) even though the rest of the interaction takes place in a more public setting. That is especially true where a bribe has been given only to secure fair treatment for the client (as is so often the case in postcommunist Europe), and the treatment itself can therefore be given quite openly—a bribe to secure a just verdict in court, or proper treatment in a hospital, for example.

NOTES

1. We chose the two countries that had differed most in terms of public expectations of fair treatment by officials in our earlier five-country postcommunist values survey (Miller, White, & Heywood, 1998): Ukraine and the Czech Republic. We added Slovakia and Bulgaria, which were historically and culturally close to the Czech Republic and Ukraine, respectively, without being quite the same in either case. In fact, our findings do suggest that Slovakia and Bulgaria may be regarded as "intermediate cases" between the extremes of the Czech Republic and Ukraine—though the relative ranking of

Slovakia and Bulgaria varies in our survey as it does in other surveys of corruption in east Europe.

2. Local field-work agencies in the four countries first translated the questionnaire from English. Their translations were checked by native speakers in Glasgow and queries raised with the translators in the field-work agencies before a final version was agreed. Copies of the full questionnaires in English (the master copy), Czech, Slovak, Bulgarian, Ukrainian, and Russian (for use especially in eastern Ukraine) are available in the

Technical Report deposited in the ESRD Data Archive at the University of Essex.

3. Corruption theorists like to draw a sharp distinction between gifts given "before" and gifts given "after." Aware of this we asked several questions about gift timing—and about the interpretation of gift timing. Our respondents proved to be rather more sophisticated than the theorists, however. In their view, gifts given "after"

were more likely to indicate "gratitude" but those given before were more likely to indicate "politeness." Fully 69% said gifts given "before" were given under pressure from the official. Only 34% said gifts given "after" were given under pressure from the official—but another 23% said gifts given "after" were given because the giver might need help from the same official again. So a total of 57% said that even gifts given "after" were given under direct or implied pressure from the official!

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