

MILAN ŠKOLNÍK  
University of Hradec Králové

## Where Have All the Non-Corrupt Civil Servants Gone? Corruption and Trust in Public Administration in European Countries

*Abstract:* This article deals with corruption and trust in the public administration of nine countries of the former Western bloc and neutral states, which underwent different institutional development compared to post-communist countries, which were susceptible to corruption due to a strongly centralized public administration with complex decision-making processes and the considerable power of officials. Despite the different institutional development of the public administration in Western countries, these countries are not always perceived by the public as trustworthy and not corrupt. This article reveals that in countries like Switzerland, Norway, and Finland, civil servants are perceived by the public as rather trustworthy and not corrupt, whereas in countries like Spain and France, the opposite is true. Using statistical methods, this article also demonstrates that the perception of the involvement of civil servants in corruption and their unequal treatment of citizens diminishes their trust in the eyes of the public. The experience of respondents with bribery on the part of civil servants reduces confidence in the public administration in only two states. In the other seven, this variable was statistically insignificant.

*Keywords:* administration, civil servants, corruption, public, trust

### Introduction

There are several debates about the possible effects of corruption. The first big debate is about the impact of corruption on the economy. Within this debate, there is discussion about how corruption relates to the international economic system, undermines national economies and public finances, as well as how it can hinder economic development (Bentzen 2012; Blackburn, Bose, & Haque 2006, 2010; Hanousek & Kočenda 2011; Kunieda, Okada, & Shibata 2016; Tsaturyan & Bryson 2010). The second debate is the impact of corruption on political participation. Within this debate, there is discussion about whether corruption has a deterrent effect on voters or, on the contrary, whether it mobilizes voters or street protests (Carreras & Vera 2018; Costas-Perez 2014; De Vries & Solaz 2017; Ecker, Glinitzer, & Meyer 2016; Escaleras, Calcagno, & Shughart 2012; Školník 2019, 2020b; Stockemer, LaMontagne, & Scruggs 2013). There is a third debate that revolves around the question of how corruption can affect the quality of democracy in a country (Morales 2009; Schneider 2003; Seligson 2002). A fourth debate considers the relationship between corruption and electoral systems. In other words, this debate looks at which electoral rules and systems are generally beneficial for corrupt candidates and vice versa (Buben & Kouba 2017; Chang & Golgden 2007; Myerson 1993; Persson, Tabellini, &

Trebbi 2003). The list can be extended to a final, fifth debate concerning the relationship between corruption and trust (Baboš 2015; Bowler & Karp 2004; Hetherington 1998; Naxera 2012; Rogge & Kittel 2014; Schneider 2003). Trust is usually distinguished between interpersonal trust and institutional (political) trust (Kubbe 2013; Mueller 2011; Olteanu 2005). More specifically, institutional trust refers to the degree of trust that citizens have in their government, parliament, judicial system, and other elements of the political system (Ares & Hernández 2017; Solé-Ollé & Sorribas-Navarro 2018; Zhang & Kim 2018).

Confidence not only in government but also its representatives working within state offices is important for the functioning of state administration. Citizens must often interact with these officials, and the actions and behavior of these officials can influence the public's view of the functioning of the state administration as a whole (Houston, Aitalieva, Morelock, & Shults 2016; Mersiyanova, Yaklimets, & Pakhomova 2012; Novelskaitė & Pučėtaitė 2018; Thomas 1998; Van Ryzin 2011). There is one study that directly addresses the impact of different forms of corruption on trust in civil servants, but it is geographically limited to post-communist Europe (Školník 2020a).

Between the Western bloc and the Eastern bloc, there is a certain contrast in the functioning of the public administration and the potential threat of corruption. While the West was dominated by a rather decentralized public administration, where corruption had a problem to become long-standing and systematic, in the east strong centralization and complex decision-making processes favored the bargaining position of officials with considerable power (Svendsen 2003). After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the former Soviet satellites embarked on a transformation into a market economy system accompanied by the extensive privatization of state property (Dvořáková 2019; Dvořáková & Vymětal 2014; Zagata, Hrabák, & Lošťák 2020). Many civil servants either came from the communist regime or were connected to a new political elite promoting the market economy. The public administration was thus characterized by high politicization, which had to be resolved in the following years, for example, by adopting service laws setting rules for admission to the civil service (Sootla 2001). Prior to these reforms, officials in the inherited public administration were provided favorable conditions to abuse the power entrusted to them for private purposes. This situation still persists within territorial self-government in many post-communist countries. Representatives of local governments have considerable powers, for example, during the implementation of costly investment projects (Čopík, Kopřiva, & Čmejrek 2019; Kopřiva, Čopík, & Čmejrek 2017). It is not surprising that corruption is often in the form of contracts awarded for large-scale investments being purposefully overpriced, which are nevertheless approved by the local authority who receives a bribe from the construction company.

However, the question remains whether corruption has had opportunities to manifest itself in the West and whether civil servants are perceived positively by the public in Western democracies, despite different developments in the functioning of the public administration in the West, compared to post-communist countries. So as not involved in corruption and generally credible.

This article fulfills two goals. The first is to assess the state of corruption among civil servants and the trust in them by citizens in selected European democracies (Former Western-bloc states and neutral European states that were not under Soviet influence).

The second objective is to investigate the relationship between corruption and institutional trust to see whether and, if so, in what direction selected forms of corruption affect the credibility of civil servants from the public perspective.

European democracies are represented by nine countries for which data was available, both for different forms of corruption in public administration and for trust in officials. Specifically, they are the Western-bloc and West-aligned countries of Belgium, France, Iceland, Norway, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom and the neutral European states of Finland and Switzerland.

The article is divided into several parts. First, its theoretical basis is introduced. Corruption is defined. A distinction is made between interpersonal and institutional trust. The possible relationship between corruption and trust is characterized as well as the possible implications of this relationship. In the methodological part data is presented. Lastly, the use of variables in the analysis is explained.

In the analytical part, four graphs concerning the issues of corruption and trust in public administration for each country are interpreted. Finally, the effects of individual corruption variables on trust in public administration, namely on its officials, are verified using statistical methods.

The main source of quantitative data for the analytical chapter comes from the International Social Survey Program ([International Social Survey Programme 2016](#)). The research is therefore conducted with data gathered from individuals. The study is unfortunately limited in the number of cases. The ISSP database does not include all European countries. It also does not include all countries from the former Western bloc. However, the aim of the study is not to generalize the results to all European countries, but to capture the specific situation in each country.

## Theory

### *Corruption*

Corruption can be defined as “behavior which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private regards (personal, close family, private clique) pecuniary or status gains, or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private influence” ([Nye 1967: 419](#)). Alternatively, it has been defined as the “abuse of entrusted power for private gain” ([Transparency International 2020](#)). The most frequent and widespread form of corruption is the use of reward to influence a person in a position of trust, in other words, bribery ([Amundsen 2019](#)).

### *Institutional Trust*

Corruption is selfish but rational when examined according to different aspects of human nature. The abuse of public power for private purposes is based on the need for personal enrichment and comfort. By contrast, trust expresses the human belief that other people are a part of their moral community. Trust is an essential element of social capital. Many authors have dealt with the issue of social capital ([Bourdieu 1986](#); [Coleman 1988](#); [Fukuyama](#)

2001). The most well-known definition of social capital formulated Robert Putnam is “the connections among individuals’ social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them” (Putnam 2000: 19).

Trust is based on the expectation that everyone is behaving as they should (Uslaner 2004). A distinction is made between interpersonal and political (institutional) trust. The second is based on the trust people have in the institutions and the representatives within the institutions that influence their lives. It can be used to assess citizens’ attitudes to the political system on the basis of their normative expectations (Hetherington 1998). This type of vertical trust is one of the key components of social cohesion and ensures the legitimacy of civil servants. The more institutional trust connects citizens with public institutions, the more efficient and legitimate the democratic governance is (Čermák & Stachová 2010). Institutional trust “is primarily conceptualized as trust in the rules, roles, and norms of an institution independent of the people occupying those roles. It is this institutional arrangement that provides the motivations for those acting out those roles to perform their tasks in an appropriate manner” (Smith 2011: 80). Institutional trust therefore “reflects evaluations of whether or not political authorities and institutions are performing in accordance with the normative expectations held by the public. Citizen expectations of how government should operate include, among other criteria, that it be fair, equitable, honest, efficient, and responsive to society’s needs. An expression of trust in government (or synonymously political confidence and support) is a summary judgment that the system is responsive and will do what is right even in the absence of constant scrutiny” (Miller & Listhaug 1990: 358). Civil servants, the employees of the public administration, are de facto representatives of the state and its will. Therefore, trust for the purposes of the article is perceived at the institutional level. Indeed, the definition of institutional trust can easily be applied to civil servants, that is, they are expected to treat all citizens equally in accordance with the law regardless of their social status, and they are expected to not use their position for private enrichment.

### *The Link between Trust and Corruption*

The impact of corruption on institutional trust is not entirely clear (Zhang & Kim 2018). Corruption can affect trust in both directions. On the one hand, it is argued that corruption helps maintain the stability of the political system in fragile states and developing countries by providing benefits to supporters of the regime (strong and widespread clientelist ties), which of course increases loyalty to the leaders of such a state. Corruption also has the potential to reduce sources of political violence and thus help social integration, a key component of trust (Bayley 1966; Pharr & Putnam 2000). On the other hand, there is the well-known argument that corruption goes against the public interest and reduces the government’s ability to manage public affairs equally, efficiently, and effectively. Corruption also reduces the ability of civil servants to provide public goods and services, leading to the erosion of public trust toward the government and public administration. Corrupt civil servants deliberately exclude citizens from public services and create an environment of their own clientelist networks. However, such an environment results in an inefficient, uncontrollable, and untrustworthy public administration (Warren 2015). To date, research on corruption and institutional trust has argued that corruption negatively affects the credibility

of political institutions and their representatives. Authors working in this area of research have worked with aggregated data from Transparency International and individual data from the Social Survey Program, World Values Survey, and other databases (Anderson & Tverdova 2003; Bauhr & Grimes 2014; Chang & Chu 2006; Habibov, Afandi, & Cheung 2017; Morris & Klesner 2010; Villoria, Van Ryzin, & Lavena 2013).

### **Methodology and Data**

The article works with data from the International Social Survey Program (ISSP). The ISSP is an international program that conducts annual surveys at the individual level. Surveys have been carried out since 1984. Research organizations, universities, and public opinion agencies cooperate on them. All data and related documentation are freely available for professional purposes. Social networks, environment, work orientations, or national identities are just some examples of the areas in which public opinion surveys focus. Each year a different thematic area that returns at regular intervals.

This article works with a dataset “The Role of Government” from 2016. This dataset provides specific data on the perception of corruption among civil servants, on the frequency that officials ask for bribes, and whether they treat all citizens equally in their work. This article tests whether and in what direction corruption variables in nine European democracies affect trust in civil servants.

### *Models*

This research uses Linear regression analysis (Ordinary Least Squares regression). Models were constructed for each country. The aim is to capture specific situations in individual states. The data file was weighed for model build purposes.

### *Dependent Variable*

A variable that aims to be explained with the help of independent variables is trust in civil servants. ISSP interviewers presented participants with the following statement: “Most government administrators can be trusted to do what is best for the country,” from which one of five answers could be selected (1 = Strongly agree to 5 = Strongly disagree).

### *Independent Variables*

How corruption affects the trust of civil servants was tested using three independent variables. The first concerns the perception of corruption: “How many government administrators are involved in corruption?” (1 = Almost none to 5 = Almost all). The second variable is based on direct experience of corruption: “In the last five years, how often have you or a member of your immediate family come across a public official who hinted they wanted, or asked for, a bribe or favor in return for a service?” (1 = Never to 5 = Very often). The last independent variable represents a question that may involve an indirect, potential form of corruption, as well as clientelism: “In general, how often do you think that the tax author-

ities treat everyone in accordance with the law, regardless of their contacts or position in society?" (1 = Almost always up to 4 = Almost never). With reference to the definition of corruption as the misuse of public authority for private purposes, such behavior by a civil servant could evoke the impression that they treat business people or politicians differently than ordinary citizens, as this may provide them with an advantage. This final independent variable further refers to the space created for clientelist ties, where government contracts are awarded based on acquaintances.

### **Control Variables**

The effect of corrupt independent variables on trust in civil servants is controlled using socioeconomic variables. These are gender, age, education (which uses a single international scale of education), place of living (from farm to big city), and finally employment. For a more detailed specification of all variables, see Appendix 1.

### **Results**

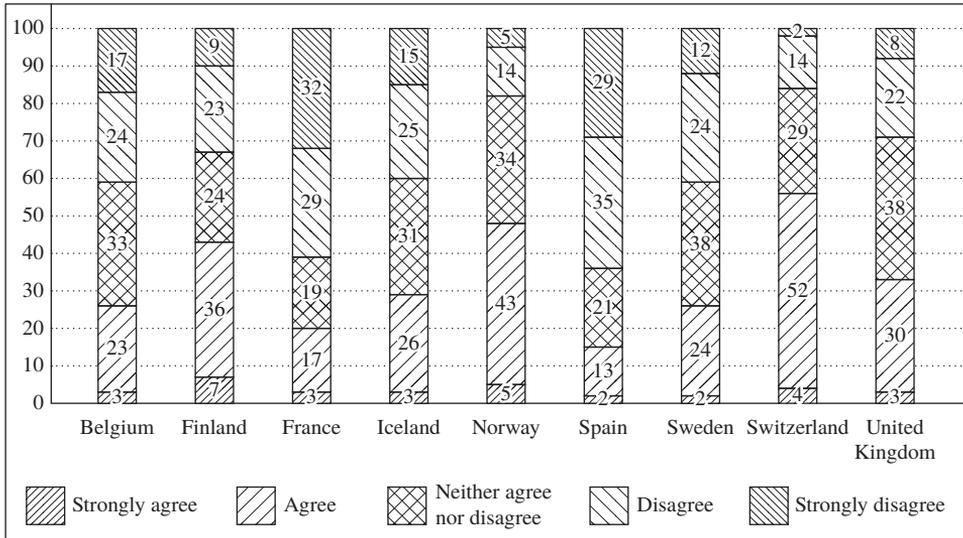
Four graphs were produced and interpreted in the first part of the analysis. In this section, confidence in civil servants in nine European democracies is compared. Furthermore, the first part examines whether and how much respondents perceive corruption in public administration. Equally, how often they have encountered situations where a civil servant has asked them for a bribe or a favor in return, for example, for performing an official act in a much shorter time than usual. The last graph relates to the potential creation of clientelist networks, in other words, whether the civil servants in the eyes of respondents treat everyone equally, as required by law, regardless of a citizen's position in society or their contacts.

In the second part of the analysis, nine regression models were compiled. Each model represents a country. It was tested whether and in what direction the selected corruption variables affect citizens' trust in civil servants.

From the first graph, it is clear that trust in civil servants varies according to each state. Most respondents disagree with the claim that most government administrators can be trusted to do what is best for the country in France and Spain. The values for both the "Strongly disagree" and the "Disagree" are around or above 30%. Thus, in these two countries, citizens have the least confidence in civil servants.

Most respondents with a vague view of government credibility occur in the United Kingdom and Sweden, where the values for the "Neither agree nor disagree" are around 40%. By contrast, in Norway and especially Switzerland the greatest percentage of respondents have confidence in civil servants. Moreover, Switzerland is the only country where the responses represent to one answer represent more than half of all participants to the question. Finland can also be considered a country with relatively high institutional confidence. Belgium and Iceland can be ranked alongside the countries with a rather vague attitude toward the credibility of public administrations, such as the UK and Sweden. Generally

Graph 1  
Citizens' Trust in Civil Servants



The graph illustrates the respondents' response to the statement "Most government administrators can be trusted to do what is best for the country." The data was collected in 2016. There were five possible answers. The data is given as a percentage of the total number of valid responses.

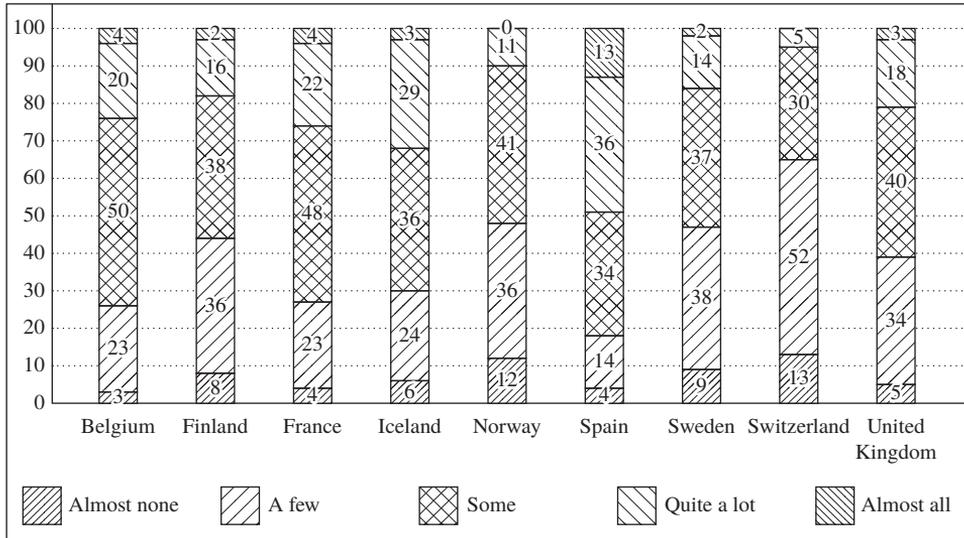
Source: ISSP. Processing: author.

speaking, among the public administrations of the nine countries, three enjoy credibility in the eyes of the public, two are seen as rather untrustworthy, and the remaining countries are somewhere between trust and mistrust.

The second graph shows that, for each country, a large percentage of respondents believe that "Some," "Quite a lot," or "Almost all" officials are involved in corruption compared with those who responded "Almost none" or "A few." Thus, the public in the examined countries views their government as an organization with a large number of corrupt employees. The only exception was Switzerland. As for the first question, there was a dominant response in excess of 50%, in this case, "A few." Along with Switzerland, Norway and Finland comprise the countries where the majority of citizens believe only a few officials are involved in corruption. Additionally, there was no Norwegian respondent that believed "Almost all" government administrators are involved in corruption. Spain, by contrast, was the country with the largest percentage of respondents who responded that "Quite a lot" of officials are involved in corruption. Following Spain are France and Belgium. By looking at this graph and the previous graph one may note that the Spanish and French public administrations are perceived not only as untrustworthy, but also as having a greater number of officials involved in corruption.

The third graph shows that, in all selected countries, there are only marginal percentages of respondents who have encountered a situation where a bribe was asked for by a civil servant. Only a minimal number of respondents stated that it happened "Seldom," "Occa-

Graph 2  
Civil Servants Involved in Corruption



The graph shows respondents' answers to the question "How many government administrators are involved in corruption?" The data was collected in 2016. There were five possible answers. The data is given as a percentage of the total number of valid responses.

Source: ISSP. Processing: author.

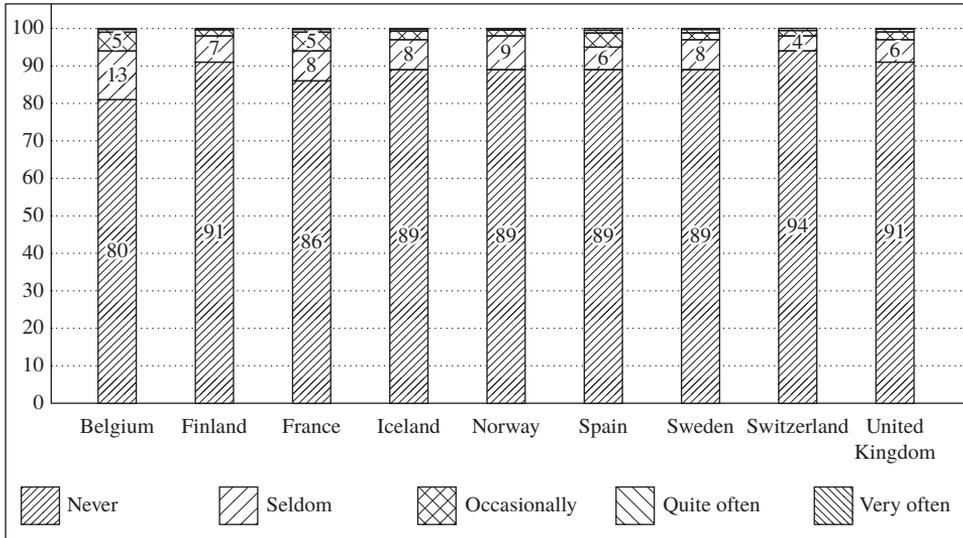
sionally," "Quite often," or "Very often." For all countries, the answer "Never" was the most frequent. Thus, within these countries there has been little direct experience of corruption. Over 90% responded "Never" in the United Kingdom, Finland, and Switzerland.

For the latter two countries, a trend may be noted. Both Switzerland and Finland are perceived by respondents as countries with a trustworthy public administration. A minimum number of officials are believed to be involved in corruption and, as this chart suggests, very few officials have openly engaged in the most common form of corruption, bribery. Belgium is the only country where over 20% of respondents claim they (or a family member) have been asked for a bribe by a civil servant. Nevertheless, the other 80% of Belgians have not encounter such a situation.

The last graph demonstrates that the equal treatment of citizens by tax authorities varies across states. In three countries (Norway, Switzerland, and Finland), the largest percentage of respondents chose "Almost Always." This graph shows these three countries continuing the trend found in the other graphs that their administrations are trustworthy with little corruption, with employees who treat all or nearly all citizens with respect.

For Sweden and Iceland, the most frequent response was "Often." In the cases of Belgium, France, and the United Kingdom, neither a negative view nor a positive view predominates. On the contrary, Spain continues its negative trend by being the country with the largest percentage of respondents who believe that their tax authorities do not treat everyone in accordance with the law, regardless of the social or other status of the citizen.

Graph 3  
**Frequency of Bribery in Public Administration**



The graph shows respondents’ answers to the question “In the last five years, how often have you or a member of your immediate family come across a public official who hinted they wanted, or asked for, a bribe or favor in return for a service?” The data was collected in 2016. There were five possible answers. The data is given as a percentage of the total number of valid responses.

Source: ISSP. Processing: author.

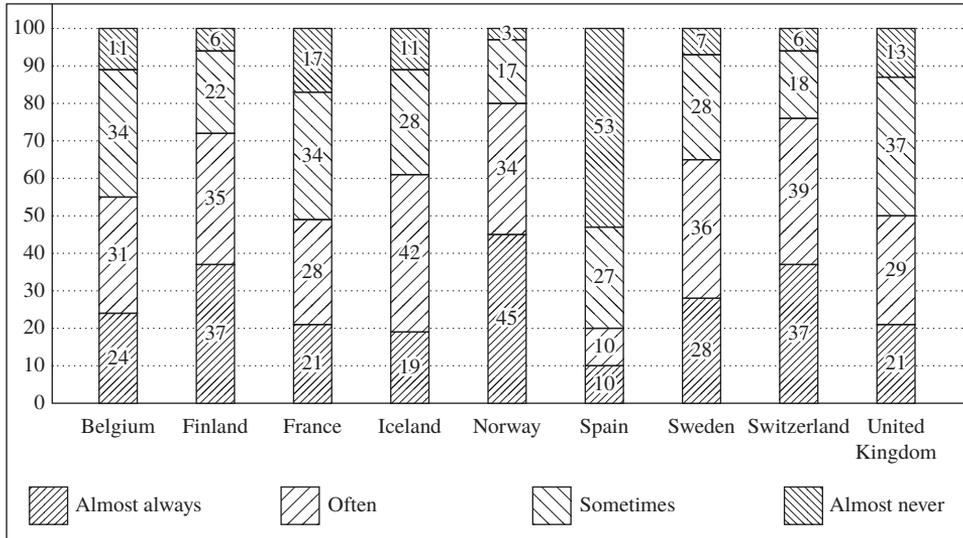
The response “Almost never” represents more than half of the Spanish responses to this question.

The results of the linear regression analysis reveal that there was a statistically significant variable representing the involvement of civil servants in corruption in all nine countries. The same was not the case for the variable that involves the question of how often a civil servant has asked for a bribe. The frequency of bribery was statistically reflected only in two models for the French and the Finnish. The equal treatment of citizens by tax officials variable is statistically significant in all models.

The first variable was shown to have a negative effect on trust in civil servants. In essence, the more civil servants were involved in corruption, as perceived by respondents, the less trust respondents had in them. Since this relationship was found for each model, it can be concluded that the perception of corruption generally negatively affects institutional confidence.

The second variable concerning bribery also negatively impacts institutional trust. In essence, the more often a respondent encountered a situation where a bribe was asked of them, the more likely they were to perceive civil servants as untrustworthy. However, since statistical relevance was only found for Finland and France, it cannot be concluded that the experience of corruption in public administrations in European democracies diminishes the credibility of the public administration.

Graph 4  
Tax Officials Treat Everyone the Same



The graph shows the respondents' answer to the question "In general, how often do you think that the tax authorities treat everyone in accordance with the law, regardless of their contacts or position in society?" The data was collected in 2016. There were four possible answers. The data is given as a percentage of the total number of valid responses.

Source: ISSP. Processing: author.

The third variable, which signals clientelism and, in the long run, potential systematic corruption has a negative effect in all regression models. This means that the more respondents believe civil servants do not treat everyone equally, the less confidence they will have in the public administration in general. This variable negatively correlates with trust for each regression. Consequently, it can be concluded that even clientelism, which can grow into corruption, negatively affects institutional confidence.

Regarding control variables, the gender variable was statistically significant in only two countries, Spain and France. Moreover, these are countries whose public officials are perceived rather negatively. In these countries, men tend to trust civil servants more than women. In general, men are more interested in public affairs than women (Burns, Schlozman, & Verba 1997).

The control variable age was statistically significant in seven models. The two regressions where age was insignificant were those for Spain and Britain. In all cases, greater age correlated with greater trust in civil servants. This result agrees with the theoretical argument that, with increasing age, the belonging to the state, in this case to the civil servants, increases (Steven & Hansen 1993).

The models also show that respondents with higher education have much greater confidence in civil servants than those with less education. However, this was only found significant among the Spanish, the Swedes, and the British.

Table 1  
 Linear Regression Analysis—Trust in Civil Servants

Variables	Belgium	Finland	France	Iceland	Norway	Spain	Sweden	Switzerland	United Kingdom
<b>Dependent variable: Trust in civil servants</b>									
Constant	1.995 (0.179)	1.571 (0.218)	2.284 (0.228)	1.517 (0.214)	1.716 (0.177)	2.679 (0.194)	2.1 (0.198)	1.843 (0.205)	1.715 (0.173)
Involvement in corruption	0.46 (0.034)	0.428 (0.04)	0.298 (0.039)	0.486 (0.036)	0.286 (0.034)	0.153 (0.027)	0.36 (0.037)	0.253 (0.036)	0.357 (0.03)
Frequency of bribery	0.084 (0.043)	0.228 (0.088)	0.165 (0.052)	-0.006 (0.066)	0.103 (0.061)	-0.01 (0.046)	0.086 (0.061)	0.037 (0.067)	0.096 (0.056)
Equal treatment	0.173 (0.028)	0.32 (0.039)	0.244 (0.032)	0.253 (0.036)	0.3 (0.034)	0.285 (0.027)	0.3 (0.036)	0.131 (0.032)	0.146 (0.027)
Gender	0.06 (0.053)	-0.017 (0.066)	-0.231 (0.062)	0.034 (0.062)	0.003 (0.054)	-0.113 (0.053)	-0.032 (0.06)	0.077 (0.055)	0.033 (0.051)
Age	-0.009 (0.002)	-0.009 (0.002)	-0.008 (0.002)	-0.005 (0.002)	-0.005 (0.002)	-0.003 (0.002)	-0.009 (0.002)	-0.004 (0.002)	0 (0.002)
Education	-0.031 (0.017)	-0.044 (0.025)	0.002 (0.02)	0.012 (0.022)	-0.029 (0.02)	-0.06 (0.016)	-0.047 (0.018)	-0.029 (0.024)	-0.045 (0.019)
Place of living	0.003 (0.024)	-0.02 (0.029)	0.092 (0.027)	-0.043 (0.03)	-0.017 (0.02)	0.02 (0.021)	0.032 (0.023)	0.046 (0.026)	0.008 (0.025)
Employment	-0.09 (0.059)	-0.077 (0.069)	-0.144 (0.069)	-0.03 (0.07)	0.034 (0.061)	-0.025 (0.058)	0.018 (0.07)	0.008 (0.064)	-0.16 (0.057)
N	1382	834	1179	899	987	1504	842	889	1244
R square	0.215	0.322	0.197	0.303	0.209	0.12	0.292	0.1	0.169

Note: The table shows the Beta coefficient values. Standard errors in parentheses. The variables in the gray fields were statistically significant (Coefficients  $p < 0.05$ ); the highest measured value of variance inflation factor (VIF) in all regression models was 1.384. Dataset is weighted by WEIGHT provided by ISSP.

Source: Author's calculations.

One's place of living was only found significant for France. French respondents living in rural areas are more likely to not trust civil servants, with trust increasing according to the size of a place, and is therefore highest in large cities. This can be explained by the fact that city dwellers are more often in contact with officials, as the vast majority of state authorities are located in cities. Institutional confidence thus has the opportunity to deepen in a way not possible in rural areas where there are no public administration offices.

The last control variable, employment, was statistically significant in only France and the UK. It was shown in these countries that people in paid work will trust their public administrations less than those who do not work. This could indicate that employees paying taxes do not have confidence in how civil servants deal with them. The unemployed, who do not pay taxes, may not have such doubts.

### Conclusions

This article had two goals. The first was to assess the state of corruption among civil servants and public trust in them and furthermore, to find out whether and how corruption affects institutional trust.

The first part of the analysis showed that the public perception of civil servants varies considerably in the selected countries of the former Western bloc and neutral states. There are public administrations that are perceived by the public as rather trustworthy (Norway, Finland, and especially Switzerland), public administrations perceived as rather untrustworthy (Spain and France), and others that are generally between trust and distrust.

Switzerland, Norway, and Finland are the countries with the highest number of respondents who perceive their civil servants as being involved in corruption. In contrast, in Spain and France, respondents believe that a substantial proportion of government employees are corrupt.

A positive finding compared with post-communist Europe is that only a marginal percentage of respondents have encountered situations where a civil servant has asked them for bribes. Up to 90% of respondents across the nine countries have not seen bribery in their dealings with public administration in the last five years.

In terms of equal treatment of citizens by tax officials, the public administrations of Norway, Finland, and Switzerland are again viewed most positively. By contrast, Spain continued again had the most negative perception. Among Spaniards, the greatest proportion of respondents answered they do not think civil servants treat everyone equally regardless of their social status.

The second part of the analysis consisted of nine regressions that first tested whether the perceived level of involvement of civil servants in corruption negatively affects their credibility. It was found significant in all nine states. By contrast, the frequency of bribery negatively influenced trust in government employees only in France and Finland. The effect of the last independent variable tested whether increases in perceived unequal treatment by tax officials negatively correlated with a decrease in trust in civil servants. This research has contributed to the debate concerning corruption and its potential negative impact on institutional confidence by investigating hitherto unexplored forms of corruption at the level

of public officials from a public opinion perspective (Anderson & Tverdova 2003; Bauhr & Grimes 2014; Chang & Chu 2006; Habibov et al. 2017; Morris & Klesner 2010; Villoria et al. 2013).

The article could not cover all variables that may or may not affect institutional trust and did not take into account determinants of culture and mentality of the people in individual countries (religion, wealth, climate, history, political situation, etc.). However, socioeconomic and political variables are gaining an importance in a number of studies (Cancela & Geys 2006; Haman & Školník 2020; Páček, Pop-Eleches, & Tucker 2009; Stockemer 2017), further research should therefore include more of them.

Particular attention needs to be paid to research at the national level, because there are significant differences between states. For example, Swiss civil servants are perceived positively and, on the contrary, Spanish civil servants are viewed negatively. Further research should try to explain these differences.

It is also necessary to compare the career systems, the criteria for recruitment of civil servants, etc. In general, therefore, determine the factors that make an administration trustworthy and not corrupt.

### Funding

This work was supported by the Philosophical faculty of the University of Hradec Králové, Rokitanského 62, 500 03, Hradec Králové, Czech Republic (Specific research grant “Corruption in relation to political participation and trust”).

### References

- Amundsen, I. 2019. Extractive and power-preserving political corruption, in: *Political Corruption in Africa: Extraction and Power Preservation*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, pp. 1–28.
- Anderson, C. J., & Tverdova, Y. V. 2003. Corruption, Political Allegiances, and Attitudes toward Government in Contemporary Democracies. *American Journal of Political Science* 47(1): 91–109. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3186095>.
- Ares, M., & Hernández, E. 2017. The corrosive effect of corruption on trust in politicians: Evidence from a natural experiment. *Research & Politics* 4(2): 1–8. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2053168017714185>.
- Baboš, P. 2015. Corruption Experience, Perception and Anti-Corruption Trust: Different Effects in Various Post-Communist States. *Romanian Journal of Political Sciences* 1: 107–128.
- Bauhr, M., & Grimes, M. 2014. Indignation or Resignation: The Implications of Transparency for Societal Accountability. *Governance* 27(2): 291–320. <https://doi.org/10.1111/gove.12033>.
- Bayley, D. H. 1966. The effects of corruption in a developing nation. *Western Political Quarterly* 19(4): 719–732.
- Bentzen, J. S. 2012. How bad is corruption? Cross-country evidence of the impact of corruption on economic prosperity. *Review of Development Economics* 16(1): 167–184. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9361.2011.00653.x>.
- Blackburn, K., Bose, N., & Haque, M. E. 2006. The incidence and persistence of corruption in economic development. *Journal of Economic Dynamics and Control* 30(12): 2447–2467. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jedc.2005.07.007>.
- Blackburn, K., Bose, N., & Haque, M. E. 2010. Endogenous corruption in economic development. *Journal of Economic Studies* 37(1): 4–25. <https://doi.org/10.1108/01443581011012234>.
- Bourdieu, P. 1986. The Forms of Capital, in: J. G. Richardson (ed.), *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. New York: Greenwood Press, pp. 241–258.
- Bowler, S., & Karp, J. A. 2004. Politicians, Scandals, and Trust in Government. *Political Behavior* 26(3): 271–287. <https://doi.org/10.1023/B:POBE.0000043456.87303.3a>.

- Buben, R., & Kouba, K. 2017. Proportional Representation, Large District Magnitude and Closed Lists, *World Political Science* 13(2): 151–191. <https://doi.org/10.1515/wps-2017-0007>.
- Burns, N., Schlozman, K. L., & Verba, S. 1997. The public consequences of private inequality: Family life and citizen participation, *American Political Science Review* 91(2): 373–389. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2952362>.
- Cancela, J., & Geys, B. 2006. Explaining voter turnout: A review of aggregate-level research, *Electoral Studies* 25(4): 637–663.
- Carreras, M., & Vera, S. 2018. Do Corrupt Politicians Mobilize or Demobilize Voters? A Vignette Experiment in Colombia, *Latin American Politics and Society* 60(3): 77–95. <https://doi.org/10.1017/lap.2018.25>.
- Čermák, D., & Stachová, J. 2010. Sources of Trust in Institutions in the Czech Republic, *Czech Sociological Review* 46(5): 683–718.
- Chang, E. C. C., & Chu, Y. 2006. Corruption and Trust: Exceptionalism in Asian Democracies? *The Journal of Politics* 68(2): 259–271. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1468-2508.2006.00404.x>.
- Chang, E. C. C., & Golgden, M. A. 2007. Electoral Systems, District Magnitude and Corruption, *British Journal of Political Science* 37(1): 115–137. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123407000063>.
- Coleman, J. S. 1988. Social Capital in the Creation of Human Capital, *American Journal of Sociology* 94: 95–120. <https://doi.org/10.1086/228943>.
- Čopík, J., Kopřiva, R., & Čmejrek, J. 2019. Mayors as a variable in typologies of local governments: a case study of the Czech Republic, *Local Government Studies*, 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2019.1699069>.
- Costas-Perez, E. 2014. *Political Corruption and Voter Turnout: Mobilization or Disaffection?* SSRN Electronic Journal. Barcelona. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2471065>.
- De Vries, C., & Solaz, H. 2017. The Electoral Consequences of Corruption, *Annual Review of Political Science* 20: 391–408. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-polisci-052715-111917>.
- Dvořáková, V. 2019. Regime Change as a Trigger of Corruption: Experience from Post-communist Countries, *Politologická Revue (Czech Political Science Review)* 25(2): 101–126.
- Dvořáková, V., & Vymětal, P. 2014. Postkomunistický stát a jeho kapacity: jak to změřit?, *Acta Politologica* 6(2): 140–153.
- Ecker, A., Glinitzer, K., & Meyer, T. M. 2016. Corruption performance voting and the electoral context, *European Political Science Review* 8(3): 333–354. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773915000053>.
- Escaleras, M., Calcagno, P. T., & Shughart, W. F. 2012. Corruption and Voter Participation: Evidence from the US States, *Public Finance Review* 40(6): 789–815. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1091142112446846>.
- Fukuyama, F. 2001. Social Capital, Civil Society and Development, *Third World Quarterly* 22(1): 7–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/713701144>.
- Habibov, N., Afandi, E., & Cheung, A. 2017. Sand or grease? Corruption-institutional trust nexus in post-Soviet countries, *Journal of Eurasian Studies* 8(2): 172–184. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.euras.2017.05.001>.
- Haman, M., & Školník, M. 2020. Socioeconomic or Political Variables? The Determinants of Voter Turnout in Czech Municipalities, *Sociológia* 52(3): 222–244. <https://doi.org/10.31577/sociologia.2020.52.3.10>.
- Hanousek, J., & Kočenda, E. 2011. Vazba korupce a hospodářské svobody na veřejné finance a investice nových členů EU, *Politická Ekonomie* 2011(3): 310–328.
- Hetherington, M. J. 1998. The Political Relevance of Political Trust, *American Political Science Review* 92(4): 791–808. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2586304>.
- Houston, D. J., Aitalieva, N. R., Morelock, A. L., & Shults, C. A. 2016. Citizen Trust in Civil Servants: A Cross-National Examination, *International Journal of Public Administration* 39(14): 1203–1214. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01900692.2016.1156696>.
- International Social Survey Programme. 2016. ISSP dataset The Role of Government. Retrieved January 10, 2020, from [www.issp.org/data-download/by-topic/http://www.issp.org/data-download/by-topic/](http://www.issp.org/data-download/by-topic/http://www.issp.org/data-download/by-topic/).
- Kopřiva, R., Čopík, J., & Čmejrek, J. 2017. Mechanismy rozhodování o investičních záměrech a rozpočtech obcí, *Sociologia (Slovakia)* 49(5): 482–506.
- Kubbe, I. 2013. Corruption and trust: a model design, *Zeitschrift Für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft* 7(1): 117–135. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12286-013-0159-4>.
- Kunieda, T., Okada, K., & Shibata, A. 2016. Corruption, Financial Development and Economic Growth: Theory and Evidence From an Instrumental Variable Approach With Human Genetic Diversity, *Economic Notes* 45(3): 353–392. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ecno.12061>.
- Mersyanova, I., Yakimets, V., & Pakhomova, E. 2012. Citizens' trust in public servants' performance, *Public Administration Issues* (4): 98–119.

- Miller, A. H., & Listhaug, O. 1990. Political Parties and Confidence in Government: A Comparison of Norway, Sweden and the United States, *British Journal of Political Science* 20(3), 357–386. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S000712340005883>.
- Morales, M. 2009. Corrupción y democracia, *Gestión y Política Pública* XVIII(2): 205–252.
- Morris, S. D., & Klesner, J. L. 2010. Corruption and trust: Theoretical considerations and evidence from Mexico, *Comparative Political Studies* 43(10):1258–1285. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0010414010369072>.
- Mueller, G. P. 2011. Coping with Low-Trust Situation in Eastern and Western Europe: On the Role of Justice and Corruption as Buffers of Interpersonal Distrust, *Polish Sociological Review* 174(2): 181–194.
- Myerson, R. B. 1993. Effectiveness of Electoral Systems for Reducing Government Corruption: A Game-Theoretic Analysis *Games and Economic Behavior* 5(1): 118–132. <https://doi.org/10.1006/game.1993.1006>.
- Naxera, V. 2012. Občanská společnost, korupce a (ne) důvěra—dílní příspěvek k pochopení povahy a dopadů korupce v postkomunistických společnostech, *Acta Fakulty Filozofické Západočeské Univerzity v Plzni* (3): 103–120.
- Novelskaitė, A., & Pučėtaitė, R. 2018. Public trust in civil service organizations and civil servants in Lithuania: Findings from a representative survey, *Public Policy And Administration* 17(1): 126–140. <https://doi.org/10.5755/j01.pppaa.17.1.20613>.
- Nye, J. S. 1967. Corruption and political development: A cost-benefit analysis, *American Political Science Review* 61(2): 417–427.
- Olteanu, T. 2005. Loss of trust: Corruption and democracy in eastern Europe, *OSTEUROPA* 55(10): 121–133.
- Pacek, A. C., Pop-Eleches, G., & Tucker, J. A. 2009. Disenchanted or Discerning: Voter Turnout in Post-Communist Countries, *The Journal of Politics* 71(2): 473–491. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022381609090409>.
- Persson, T., Tabellini, G., & Trebbi, F. 2003. Electoral Rules and Corruption, *Journal of the European Economic Association* 1(4):958–989. <https://doi.org/10.1162/154247603322493203>.
- Pharr, S. J., & Putnam, R. D. 2000. Officials' misconduct and public distrust: Japan and the liberal democracies, in: S. J. Pharr & R. D. Putnam (eds.), *Disaffected democracies: What's troubling the trilateral countries?* Princeton: Princeton University Press, pp. 173–201.
- Putnam, R. D. 2000. *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. New York: Simon and Schuster.
- Rogge, J., & Kittel, B. 2014. Political trust in Europe: the combined effect of quality of democracy and corruption, *Zeitschrift Für Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft* 8(2): 155–178. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12286-014-0202-0>.
- Schneider, C. Q. 2003. Prospects for the consolidation of Latin American democracies: rethinking the role of corruption and institutional trust, *Sociologia, Problemas e Práticas* (42): 65–90.
- Seligson, M. A. 2002. The impact of corruption on regime legitimacy, *The Journal of Politics* 64(2): 408–433. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1468-2508.00132>.
- Školník, M. 2019. Není korupce jako korupce: vnímání a zkušenost ve vztahu k politické participaci, *Acta Fakulty Filozofické Západočeské Univerzity v Plzni* 11(2): 22–39. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.24132/actaff.2019.11.2.2>.
- Školník, M. 2020a. Korupce a důvěra ve veřejnou správu v postkomunistické Evropě, *Acta Politica* 12(1): 20–39. [https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14712/1803-8220/25\\_2019](https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.14712/1803-8220/25_2019).
- Školník, M. 2020b. The Effects of Corruption on Various Forms of Political Participation in Colombia, *Latin American Policy* 11(1): 88–102. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lamp.12180>.
- Smith, M. L. 2011. Limitations to building institutional trustworthiness through e-government: a comparative study of two e-services in Chile, *Journal of Information Technology* 26(1): 78–93. <https://doi.org/10.1057/jit.2010.17>.
- Solé-Ollé, A., & Sorribas-Navarro, P. 2018. Trust no more? On the lasting effects of corruption scandals, *European Journal of Political Economy* 55: 185–203. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2017.12.003>.
- Sootla, G. 2001. Evolution of roles of politicians and civil servants during the post-communist transition in Estonia, in: T. Verheijen (ed.), *Politico-administrative relations: Who rules*. Bratislava: NISPAcee, pp. 109–146.
- Steven, R., & Hansen, J. M. 1993. *Mobilization, Participation, and Democracy in America*. New York: Macmillan.
- Stockemer, D. 2017. What affects voter turnout? A review article/meta-analysis of aggregate research, *Government and Opposition* 52(4): 698–722. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.1017/gov.2016.30>.
- Stockemer, D., LaMontagne, B., & Scruggs, L. 2013. Bribes and ballots: The impact of corruption on voter turnout in democracies, *International Political Science Review* 34(1): 74–90. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0192512111419824>.

- Svendsen, G. T. 2003. *Social Capital, Corruption and Economic Growth: Eastern and Western Europe* (03-21).
- Thomas, C. W. 1998. Maintaining and Restoring Public Trust in Government Agencies and their Employees, *Administration & Society* 30(2): 166–193. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095399798302003>.
- Transparency International. 2020. Definition of Corruption. Retrieved January 10, 2020, from <https://www.transparency.org/what-is-corruption>
- Tsaturyan, S., & Bryson, P. J. 2010. Corruption and development: The Armenian case, *International Journal of Economic Policy in Emerging Economies* 2(4): 356–371. <https://doi.org/10.1504/ijepee.2009.030937>.
- Uslaner, E. M. 2004. Trust and corruption, in: J. G. Lambsdorff, M. Taube, & M. Schramm (eds.), *The New Institutional Economics of Corruption*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 90–106.
- Van Ryzin, G. G. 2011. Outcomes, Process, and Trust of Civil Servants, *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory* 21(4): 745–760. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/muq092>.
- Villoria, M., Van Ryzin, G. G., & Lavena, C. F. 2013. Social and Political Consequences of Administrative Corruption: A Study of Public Perceptions in Spain, *Public Administration Review* 73(1): 85–94. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2012.02613.x>.
- Warren, M. E. 2015. The Meaning of Corruption in Democracies, in: P. M. Heywood (ed.), *Routledge Handbook of Political Corruption*. Abingdon: Routledge, pp. 42–56.
- Zagata, L., Hrabák, J., & Lošřík, M. 2020. Post-socialist transition as a driving force of the sustainable agriculture: a case study from the Czech Republic, *Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems* 44(2): 238–257. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21683565.2019.1585400>.
- Zhang, Y., & Kim, M.-H. 2018. Do Public Corruption Convictions Influence Citizens' Trust in Government? The Answer Might Not Be a Simple Yes or No, *The American Review of Public Administration* 48(7): 685–698. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074017728792>.

*Biographical Note:* Milan Školník is a Ph.D. student at the Department of Political Science, Philosophical faculty of the University of Hradec Králové. His current research focuses on corruption, public administration, and political participation.

ORCID iD <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0672-219X>

E-mail: [milan.skolnik@uhk.cz](mailto:milan.skolnik@uhk.cz)

### Appendix 1 — Variables in the Models

Variables	Description
<b>Dependent variable</b>	
Trust in public servants	Most government administrators can be trusted to do what is best for the country. 1. Strongly agree 2. Agree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Disagree 5. Strongly disagree
<b>Independent variables</b>	
Involvement in corruption	In your opinion, about how many government administrators in (selected country) are involved in corruption? 1. Almost none 2. A few 3. Some 4. Quite a lot 5. Almost all
Frequency of bribery	In the last five years, how often have you or a member of your immediate family come across a public official who hinted they wanted, or asked for, a bribe or favor in return for a service? 1. Never 2. Seldom 3. Occasionally 4. Quite often 5. Very often
Equal treatment	In general, how often do you think that the tax authorities in (selected country) treat everyone in accordance with the law, regardless of their contacts or position in society? 1. Almost always 2. Often 3. Sometimes 4. Almost never
<b>Control variables</b>	
Gender	Male 1. Female 2
Age	Range between 18–97
Education	0. No formal education 1. Primary school (elementary education) 2. Lower secondary (secondary completed that does not allow entry to university: end of obligatory school) 3. Upper secondary (programs that allows entry to university) 4. Post secondary, non-tertiary (other upper secondary programs toward the labor market or technical formation) 5. Lower level tertiary, first stage (also technical schools at a tertiary level) 6. Upper level tertiary (Master, Doctor)
Place of living	1. A big city 2. The suburbs or outskirts of a big city. 3. A town or a small city. 4. A country village. 5. A farm or home in the country
Employment	Variable adjusted to: 0. In paid work 1. Unemployed and looking for a job, In education, Apprentice or trainee, Permanently sick or disabled, Retired, Domestic work

Source: ISSP questionnaire The Role of Government 2016.