

Tolerant Towards Crime, Concerned with Corruption: The Czech Case

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This paper describes recent developments in fear of crime as surveyed in the Czech Republic. The dynamics of fear and concern are on the rise, although the standard measure of fear has reached quickly a stabilized and average level, when compared to the rest of Europe. However, there is a new subject of concern, maybe even a new scapegoat for the public's worries—corruption. This text examines the processes of fear differentiation with respect to both victimization and local conditions. It confirms an emerging realism of fear attitudes. Consequently, it demonstrates an extreme rise in concern about corruption and instances of bribery in everyday practices as well. Although the transition to democracy in the Czech Republic after 1989 offered a picture of a “tolerant” society, accepting the necessary social costs of change, the simple conclusion about “risk normalization” is not quite valid when it comes to corruption: the concern for corruption extends beyond the public's opinions, as Czech citizens exhibit high involvement in bribery in everyday life. According to the data collected, one third of adult population is involved and the “insiders” are more tolerant. The situation in most post-communist countries is evaluated as still worse especially if compared with Scandinavian countries. The paper address the need for a more detailed study of both attitudes and practices, because this increase in concern reflects a serious risk with respect to people's trust in the system and its key institutions.

Keywords: fear of crime, concerns, corruption, public opinion, Czech Republic

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1 Introduction

Corruption has emerged as one of the key issues across Europe. It influences economics and politics and is reflected very sensitively in public opinion. This is quite typical for the majority of post-communist countries (Krastev, 2005). Political corruption is defined as “the misuse of public office for private financial gain” (Svensson, 2005: 20; Treisman, 2000: 399). Corruption reduces the quality of government in a number of areas as well as the citizens' trust in political institutions and in each other, it slows down the development of civil society, or it may even cause civil unrest (Brown, Touchton, & Whitford, 2011; Griesshaber & Geys, 2012; Pellegata, 2012). However, corruption is not only dangerous in that it produces a malfunctioning society, but it is also a factor in the deceleration of economic growth. From this perspective, corruption is evidently a very negative and undesirable phenomenon and to fight it is a challenge, not only for Europe (Fric, 2001; Svensson, 2005).

The aim of this paper² is thus to analyze the findings of fear of crime studies within the scope of crime surveys in the Czech Republic. We expected that during times of economic crisis, certain concerns would have increased, but what was most surprising was the onset of a new subject of concern: corruption. Corruption can be treated as a scapegoat in the sense that it may be used as an outlet for voicing concerns or worries. We consider this mix of opinions, worries and experience with corruption as a new risk, which could be easily misused in political discourse.

The transition to democracy in the Czech Republic after 1989 offered a picture of a “tolerant” society, which accepted the necessary social costs of change, including an increase in crime rates. Our concept of “risk normalization” (Buriánek, 1998, 2001; Buriánek & Kuchar, 1997) also covers the increasing differentiation of attitudes according to local factors, such as city size or victimization. Nevertheless, the emerging fear of corruption addresses the still challenging question: What is prevailing now - paradoxes or realism in public opinion? Is it moral panic combined with a decrease in civic participation

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and continuing resignation? And what does it mean for anti-corruption measures or strategies?

Although at first glance, the use of the concept of moral panic seems to be appropriate, we do not believe that the state of public opinion meets all of the necessary criteria. It offers an alternative interpretation due to the fact that the phenomenon is associated with the public's active participation and voiced opinions - one way or another - related to life experience. Therefore, the public are not merely processing external stimuli, e.g. information made public by the media. We can also assume that their degree of concern about corruption is still relatively subdued due to people's solid trust in institutions; on the other hand, concern may escalate under the influence of social deprivation. It would then be possible to discuss the topic not only in terms of fear or concern, but also in terms of experience. Therefore, the goal should be to analyze the corruption climate as a complex phenomenon covering attitudes, opinions, compliance with the law and real behavior in everyday life in a broad scope of areas where corruption appears (Sampford, Shacklock, Connors, & Galtung, 2006).

Originally, our study on fear of crime was embedded into a simple frame of reference. We were inspired by a kind of a latent dichotomy represented by two leading German criminologists. Sessar (2001) offered a thesis on both a "generalization of risk perception" (the fear is treated as a mixture of different concerns) and the role of social deprivation during the social transition, which reflects the situation in Germany in the 1990s. In the same time, Boers, Gutsche, and Sessar (1997: 188) stressed the role of individual copying and of the social environment - community, locality and vulnerability, among others - and it opened the way for a distinction to be made between fear of crime and other "concerns," leaning towards a more detailed analysis (Boers, 2003). These alternatives correspond well to the fear of crime theories compiled by Jackson, Farrall, Hough, and Bradford (2009: 182-183), where concerns reflecting victimization, risk perception and environmental disorder could be interpreted as a micro-sociological view; while structural change and generalized anxiety offer a macro-sociological explanation.

2 Data and Methods

Our data form a homogeneous time series due to our long-term cooperation with the Home Office. Replications were done in surveys called "Actor" and some small gaps can be accounted for due to relatively minor setbacks. The list of surveys referred to in this paper includes:

- Surveys "Security risks", which were carried out from 1998 to 2005, F2F interviewing, samples of about 1,400 respondents from age 15, quota sampling method
- Survey "Actor 2006," based on the same methodology, N = 1939
- Security Risks Survey 2007, N = 1390
- Survey on corruption in Prague 2009, N = 584
- "Actor 2011" for the international project EUROJUSTIS (as a pilot project for ESS 2011, data collection in February, N = 1199, F2F, population 18+).
- "Actor 2011" (December), N = 1109, quota sampling
- "Actor 2013" (December), N = 1088

International context was provided by the European Social Survey, Round 5, 2010, which was implemented in the Czech Republic during February 2011.

Regarding the fear of crime measurement, we followed a common way of both the conceptualisation and questioning (see Boers, 2002; Farrall & Gadd 2004; Ferraro, 1995; Holloway & Jefferson, 1997; Skogan, 1987; Walklate, 1998). The possibility of integrating sociological and psychological aspects was discussed recently by Jackson (2009) and we have reflected on the criticism of Farrall, Bannister, Ditton, and Gilchrist (1997) and Lee & Farrall (2009) as well. According to recent debates, we have broadened the scope of indicators in our surveys using:

- Standard general measure (*Do you feel safe on the streets when walking outdoors in the evenings after dark?*)
- Concrete item batteries- (the first one measuring "fear," while the second one considers the probability of a criminal act, both using 10-point scales)
- Experience/exposition items (*"How often did you feel unsafe outside in the evenings last year?"*)

Thus we have an opportunity to control the validity of our measurements by combining the expression of emotion (fear) with a more rational, cognitive evaluation (probability) and experience (behavioral aspect).

3 Fear of Crime Development

The majority of the people surveyed expressed the view that crime rates represented a prevalent problem in society. However, our data have shown (Figure 1) that in the period of the economic depression (1997-1999), this concern was realistically displaced with economic issues. Nevertheless, crimes rates are no longer the greatest subject of public concern. Corruption is becoming the biggest problem in the Czech Republic, with unemployment in second place. In an open

question asked at the end of 2011, 40 percent of respondents ranked corruption in the top two of their list of concerns (19 percent in first place, 21 percent in second place).

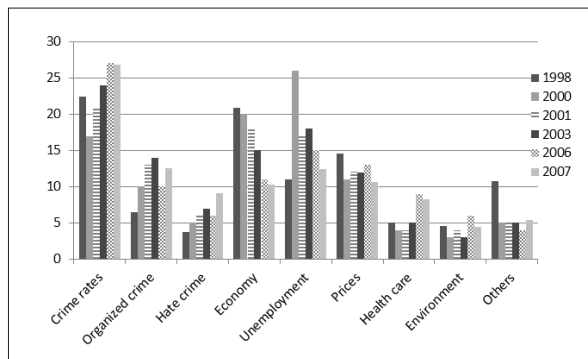


Figure 1: The biggest problem in Czech society up to 2007 (%)

A similar result is shown in a standardized grid examining concerns with social problems (Figure 2). After we added the item on corruption to the menu during 2007, it began to occupy a leading position. The shift in the last four years is noticeable. It is evident that concerns have increased slightly in almost all items. However, the concern for environmental care has decreased.

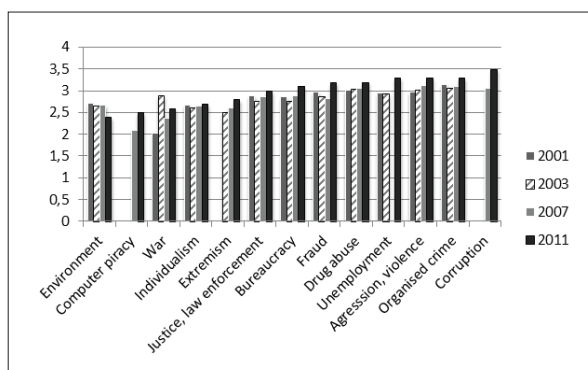


Figure 2: Concerned with social problems from 2001 to 2011 (means on a scale of 1 to 4 = very concerned)

This concern and fear of crime never corresponds precisely to the crime rate figures (Table 1). There was a quite dichotomous trend between the increase of crime rates after 1989 and the continually increasing feeling of safety. Nevertheless, at that time, criminality was likely perceived by Czech citizens as something which could be improved upon.

Table 1: Crime rates and their turning points in the Czech Republic (police statistics)

Year	registered crimes	detected crimes	prosecuted offenders
1988	119 675	97 064	72 887
1993	398 505	126 442	106 874
1999	426 626	193 354	127 837
2005	344 060	135 281	121 511
2010	313 387	117 685	112 477
2011	317 177	122 238	114 975
2012	304 528	120 168	113 024
2013	325 366	129 181	117 670

The trends in crime rates are mostly positive in the recent period. It should be noted that in Table 2, personal victimization experience (prevalence) levels remained roughly the same, though they decreased significantly in the last few years. The proportion of people reporting the event to the police is stabilized (about 55% on average).

Table 2: Personal victim experience (a general measure)

During	1998	2000	2002	2005	2006	2010	2011	2013
Prevalence/%/	19	25	26	23	28	10	10	10

The basic indicator of fear fully illustrates the positive trend of risk perception by the Czech public (Figure 3). On the other hand, the potential for further improvement is evidently limited. One reason is that we have revealed a relatively strong impact of the city size (including differentiation by victimization prevalence in Table 3). It serves as a substantial argument in the debate on the role of “universalistic” attitudes supported by the media’s influence, or on the contrary, on the role of the acknowledgement of the local condition, of the community.

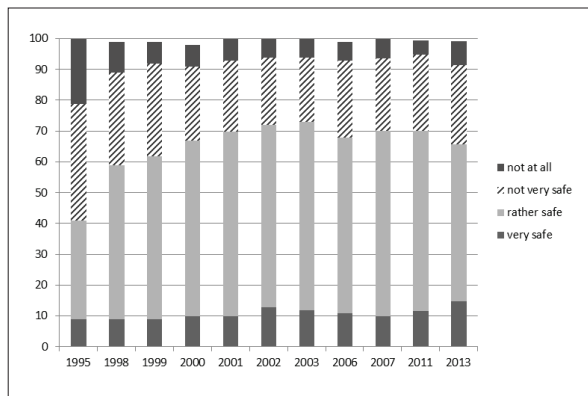


Figure 3: Fear of crime (feeling of safety while outside in the evenings)
 Note: The rest up to 100 percent = DNK

The position of the Czech Republic among European countries looks rather favourable. According to the results of ESS 2008, the fear of crime index 1.8 is close to the numbers of Finland, Netherlands, Sweden or Germany (Croatia and Norway occupied top positions approaching 1.5; while on the opposite side the index, Greece and Bulgaria over-lapped at 2.3). The medium level of fear corresponds to the relatively low level of social risks here, which correlates with the fear of crime across Europe. It should be viewed as a confirmation of Sessar’s thesis, though when considering internal differentiation within the country, Boers’ view comes back into play.

When you take a look at internal differentiation (Figure 4), local trends differ. Prague’s position here is exceptional (the positive trend turned over and became more realistic), but there is another interesting ranking of medium-sized cities with about 50,000 inhabitants, where the feeling of safety is relatively low.

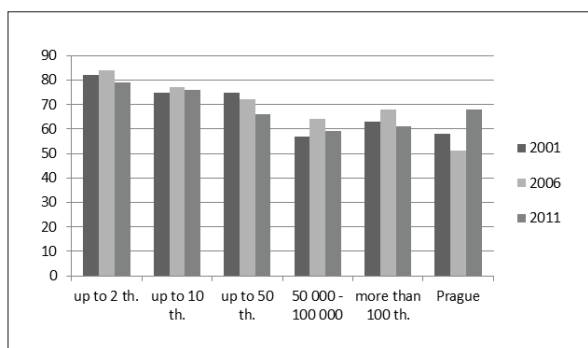


Figure 4: Local trends differ (proportion of people feeling very or rather safe, %)

3.1 Determining Factors for Fear of Crime

Table 3 has provided evidence for the impact of both gender and victimization on the fear of crime. The response patterns of men are likely to be less dramatic. The actual difference between male and female victimization prevalence is statistically insignificant. We should be able to observe a weak association when analyzing the role of age.

Table 3: Fear (evenings on streets) by victimization and gender (2007, %)

Victim		Fear of crime					
		Low	2	3	High	DNK	
1 YES	Male	9.9	59.2	23.8	7.2	-	100
	Female	3.9	45.6	32.5	17.0	0.5	100
	TOTAL	7.0	52.7	28.0	11.9	0.2	100
2 NO	Male	15.8	63.5	17.8	2.2	0.4	100
	Female	8.4	54.1	29.6	6.9	0.9	100
	TOTAL	12.0	58.7	23.9	4.7	0.7	100

The implementation of the control question “How often did you feel unsafe outside in the evenings” did not fortify the arguments against the general measurement of fear (Farrall & Gadd, 2004). The scope of responses brought about a certain level of precision. The positive message is that the correlation coefficient (gamma) is rather high (0.66)! According to Figure 5, expressed fear is usually combined with the expressed experience of fear. The type “fear without experience of fear” represents only one-tenth of those who feel “not at all safe” on the streets in the evenings.

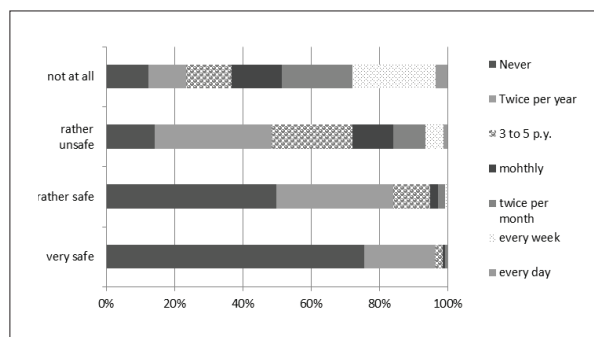


Figure 5: Validity of the fear measure (feeling safe and fear experience frequency, 2007)

Moreover, the responses to this alternative question have confirmed a positive trend in fear of crime reduction.

Table 4: Had a real fear experience in the evenings on the street (%)

	2007	2011
Never	41.7	45.1
once or twice	31.5	32.5
3 to 5 times	13.1	9.5
6 to 10 times	5.1	4.4
Monthly	4.8	4.1
every week	3.2	2.9
every day	0.5	0.8
another situation	0.4	0.6
	100	100

We would like to sum up our findings in a simple conclusion stressing the observable feasibility in the fear of crime declarations because:

- Fear correlates with the risk exposition perception (“experience”).
- Both fear and risk exposition correlate with victimization.
- Fear correlates with local conditions.

We can elucidate our thesis using a preliminary regression analysis. Table 5 contains one of the simplified models incorporating variables that explain what causes fear. It is not surprising that in fear “construction,” the estimated risk of violent attacks is more relevant than in others. We have also calculated the model for men and women separately, resulting in some minor differences. (Among men, the fear of assault plays an important role while among women the fear of robbery is high on the list).

Table 5: Regression analysis for the fear experience

Model		Unstandardized Coef.		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	0.53	0.25			
	Sex (F)	0.61	0.07	0.23	8.754	0.000
	City size	0.11	0.02	0.13	5.089	0.000
	Not victimized	-0.50	0.08	-0.16	-6.476	0.000
	Fear of robbery	0.08	0.02	0.16	4.571	0.000
	Fear of violence	0.10	0.02	0.18	5.313	0.000
	Fear of burglary	0.02	0.02	0.03	1.122	0.262
	Fear of theft	0.01	0.02	0.03	0.828	0.408
	Fear of murder	-0.04	0.02	-0.08	-2.338	0.020
	Satisf. with Police	0.07	0.04	0.04	1.760	0.079

Dependent Variable: Fear experience R = 0.47 Rsq = 0.22

3.2 The Content of Fear

The specific identification of particular risks is widely recommended. In the recent period, we have reduced our batteries of probability estimation because the differences between fear (concerns) and probability are continually diminishing. We would like to present only the top fears in the Czech public (Table 6) and a selection of the most important instances regarding probability (Table 7).

Table 6: Most frequent fears (means at a 10-point scale, 10 = maximum in concerns)

	2002	2003	2006	2007
Thefts	6.5	6.6	6.5	6.9
Burglary	6.3	6.3	6.1	6.7
Traffic accidents	6.1	6.1	-	7.0
Car theft	6.0	5.9	5.8	6.4
Fraud	5.7	5.6	5.1	5.9

The position of the most relevant risks is very fixed. The recent “return” of the fear of fraud could be interpreted as the result of the government’s insufficient handling of this issue. Public opinion is “realistic” regarding the structure of criminality as reflected in statistics. The small increase in specific concerns should be examined as well.

Table 7: Estimated probability of criminal victimization in selected items (means at a 10-point scale, 10 = maximum probable)

	2001	2002	2003	2006
Car theft	5.42	5.43	5.64	5.52
Burglary	5.5	5.44	5.66	5.48
Robbery	3.96	3.95	4.17	4.32
Violent attack	3.71	3.60	3.69	3.84
Rape	2.62	2.72	2.82	2.83

When you look at those concerned about the risk of sexual abuse, we have to distinguish between male and female perception. The fear of car theft is more relevant to those who have owned a car. As shown in Table 8, differentiation should be taken into account, although the fear of car theft is relatively generalized. (There is no detrimental absence of logic: People without a car could be afraid that their friends, relatives or their companies will experience car theft.)

Table 8: Status and fear (Probability from 1 to 10 = maximum, 2007)

	car theft	burglary	robbery	rape	violence
Male	5.63	5.34	4.01	2.09	3.74
Female	5.39	5.62	4.62	3.56	3.93
Car owners	5.85	5.50	4.26	2.79	3.77
Without car	3.93	5.44	4.58	3.02	4.17

We can take car ownership as a rough indicator of social status as well. In that case, we have to mention the higher level of fear expressed by the lower class in respect to violent, physical attacks.

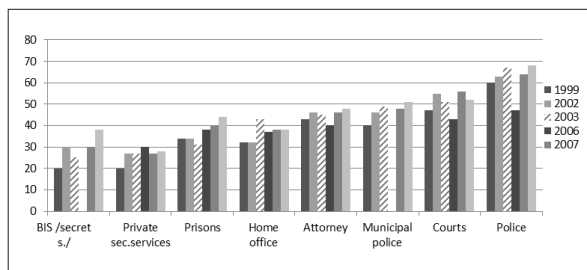


Figure 6: Trust in institutions (% of very trusted + rather trusted)

As a bonus, we’ve added information about trust in institutions such as the authorities. This has confirmed our positive picture of the growing potential for adaptation (Figure 6). The decline in 2006 could have been caused due to the questionnaire’s slightly different context. There has been practically no change in the distribution of attitudes (Table 9) concerning satisfaction with the police.

Table 9: Satisfaction with the police (%)

	1999	2000	2003	2006	2007	2011
Very satisfied	1	1	1	1	2	2
Rather sat.	24	22	28	23	25	34
It depends	53	51	49	48	48	48
Rather dissatisfied	19	22	17	22	21	12
Very dissatisfied	3	5	5	5	4	3

4 A New Fear of Corruption?

As stated above, the complementary aim of this study is to explore the dramatic increase in the fear of corruption in this country, though from a methodological point of view, we find the topic challenging. In addition to determining people’s at-

titudes, we want to verify the possibility not only of detecting their feelings and opinions, but also of asking people directly about their involvement in the processes of everyday corruption (though it seems to be only “minor”). Only after doing so, does the fundamental question make sense, as it shapes the specific climate of corruption.

As is apparent from the available resources (Jansa & Bureš, 2011), Transparency International ranked the Czech Republic, according to its CPI (Corruption Perception Index), 53rd in the world (2010). Figure 7 also shows that after the “crisis” around 2002, there was further decline in the index in 2011, i.e. the estimated increase in corruption.

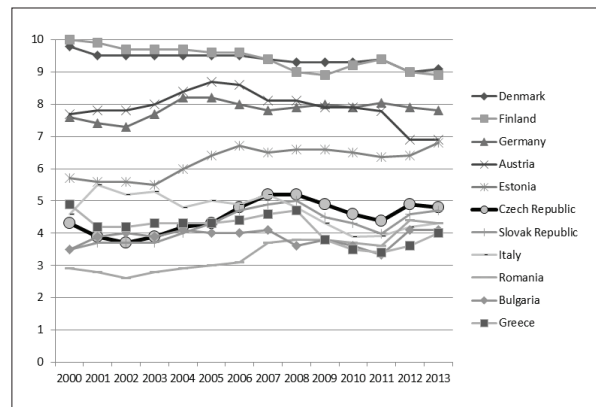


Figure 7: Corruption perception index in selected European countries (Source: Transparency International, 2013)

Note: An index value of 10 indicates the minimum level of corruption.

However, the analysis of the factors determining corruption perception (CPI) done by Smith (2008: 94) demonstrated a strong influence of both the economic situation, including the level of economic inequality (see also Uslaner, 2008), and the media. This “corruption eruption” is not limited to post-communist countries only, as it represents a worldwide problem.

Since corruption became the number one cause of concern very quickly, we can expect that it will impact the view of the respondents regarding the level or stage of corruption. This indicator confirmed the dramatic trend surprisingly clearly (Table 10): It not only resulted in a decrease of undecided respondents, but it has clearly revealed that those who perceive corruption as organized or even infiltrated in the system, are in the majority. It should mean that corruption permeates all areas of life and has become a prerequisite for the functioning of most social systems.

Table 10: Development of opinion on corruption in the Czech Republic (%)

Developmental stage of corruption	2002	2007	2011	2013
isolated, accidental	14	8	5	5
frequent, but still occasional	31	36	22	18
organized	22	28	45	42
systemic corruption	12	14	24	32
do not know	21	12	3	3
	100	100	100	100

These opinions and general beliefs do not contain significant social differentiation. However, a sub-trend is beginning to emerge as members of the lower class are seeing the situation more clearly (at least 77 percent perceive corruption as organized) than the upper middle class (63 percent).

Table 11: Associations of the corruption stage evaluation (average values on scales)

stage of development of corruption	Current political system 1-10	Left-Right 1-7
isolated, rare and random	7.1	4.6
frequent, but feisty	7.6	4.3
organized corruption	4.9	4.0
systemic corruption	3.9	3.6
TOTAL	5.4	4.0
N	1070	1057

Hand in hand with this tendency, we see a clear correlation between concern over corruption and assessment of the current political system (Table 11). There is also a link to political orientation (toward the left).

We have the opportunity to note that the spectrum of the left-right political orientation scale shifted to the middle of the scale, although it was deflected to the right during the long-term period after the Velvet Revolution. Whether it has only been affected by concerns over corruption is something we cannot yet surmise empirically.

Table 12: Corruption and citizens feeling safe on the street in the evenings (Actor 2011)

Feeling safe	"Corruption and bribes are encountered at every step..."				
	Absolutely true	Rather true	Not quite	Totally untrue	
Very safe	50.5	26.7	20.8	2.0	100
Rather safe	45.5	41.3	12.3	0.9	100
Not too safe	54.8	35.7	7.4	2.2	100
Not at all safe	71.4	25.0	3.6		100
Total	50.7	37.0	10.9	1.3	100

Because of the subjective nature of the situation, it is not surprising that we have found a correlation between the concern over corruption and the feeling of safety outside during evenings. From this perspective, it would seem that it is a part of a broader cluster of attitudes, which is only emphasized differently at various stages of development. Further analysis should be carried out to illuminate the lifestyle practices in even more detail.

4.1 Corruption in Everyday Life

Our first attempt at ascertaining the degree of citizens' involvement in corruption practices was made in 2007. We asked about bribes received or made, and on this basis we were able to come up with a general idea of the degree of the population's involvement in different forms of corruption. This proportion was estimated to be one-quarter (taking into account that self-reporting methodology was being applied). More importantly, however, was our ability to compare the attitudes of those who are involved in some form of corruption with the rest of the population.

Table 13: Offers of bribes according to social status (2007, shares in %)

	Offer of a bribe		"Corruption grows .." statement
	received	given	
lower class	12	15	64
lower middle	13	16	57
middle	19	15	48
upper middle	40	29	35
TOTAL	19	17	51

It appears that higher corruption potential occurs at the level of the upper classes and that these "insiders" express tolerant attitudes toward corruption. In this case, it refers to those who, when asked about the development of corruption,

answered that it was on the rise. They also have a significantly positive “balance” of bribes. We have to note that social status was determined using the subjective opinion of the respondent.

Those who have received a bribe expressed higher fear of corruption (in the survey in 2007, measured on a 10-point scale, Table 14), but they also demonstrated a higher degree of tolerance in relation to both offering bribes and accepting kickbacks. The people involved in corruption practices, however, did not differ from the others regarding their views on the stage of corruption in the country. Experience thus generates rather specific attitudes, though it has no demonstrable effect on their overall assessment of the situation.

Table 14: Effect of participation on attitudes to corruption (range 1 to 10, means)

Bribe	Fear of corruption	Tolerance to offering	Tolerance to bribery
Was offered	5.03	3.32	3.76
Not offered	3.98	2.87	3.04

A closer look at the involvement of citizens in corruption is reflected in a specialized research study conducted in Prague during 2009. 69 percent of respondents remained outside of the supply circle, so less than one-third were involved. Twelve percent had offered a bribe while nine percent had received an offer. Ten percent of the respondents had been involved in both scenarios. Moreover, in this survey, the reply was followed by a question asking whether the offer had been realized or the bribe had been accepted. Although the answer may not have been entirely sincere, offered bribes proved to have been “finalized” in about one-third of the cases, while the offers made by the respondents had been accepted in half of the cases. It should be added that these supply issues reflect a period of one (last) year! It turns out that corruption is reproduced in everyday life quite intensively, although it will be difficult to reach accurate estimates of the amount or severity of bribes.

However, this holds true for the police force’s statistical records as well, since the willingness to report corruption is relatively low. In this survey, 45 percent of respondents stated that they see no use in filing a report, and only one-fifth of the respondents said they would call the police. One-third would prefer anonymous phone lines, but these are currently being canceled due to low efficiency. Reluctance to report has apparently nothing to do with confidence in the police, as people have become slightly more confident in the police force. While only fifty-two percent of citizens trust the courts, sixty-eight percent of citizens currently trust the po-

lice to some degree. A total of 37 percent of the respondents are more or less satisfied with police work while 45 percent answered that “it depends.”

In the EUROJUSTIS project³, the wording of questions was reformulated with an emphasis on whether or not a good or bad job was done with respect to police performance, but even here it was confirmed that the police are perceived in a better light (average 2.8 on a 5-point scale) than the courts (3.1). However, in respect to the frequency of corruption in the police force and judicial system, the police came out considerably worse - averages on a scale from 0 to 10 were 5.2 and 5.1.

Summing up these two ratings, it is possible to create an overall index of the level of corruption in the police service and the courts, which is nearly ideal, i.e. at a normal distribution rate (Mean 10.3, standard deviation 3.9). This allows us to reliably show the different views in each category of the Czech population (Table 15).

³ We joined the project later. Nevertheless, we conducted the pilot study in the Czech Republic respecting international design (but adding some „standard“ measures at the end of the questionnaire).

Table 15: Who assumes a higher level of corruption among police officers and judges (composite *index from 0 to 20*)

EUROJUSTIS 2011 Level of corruption index (police + courts)	TOTAL	Mean 10.3	N	St.dev.
Time spent watching TV				
No, not watching TV		10.7	20	3.4
Less than half an hour a day		10.3	43	3.9
Half an hour to an hour a day		9.6	127	4.0
From one to two hours		10.1	306	3.8
About two to three hours		10.1	411	3.9
More than three hours		11.2	265	4.0
ETA 0.129 **				
Reads the major national dailies	Yes	10.1	721	3.9
	No	10.7	445	4.0
ETA 0.075 *				
Corruption	Not at all concerned about	9.9	34	3.6
	Very concerned	10.7	735	3.8
ETA 0.120 **				
The basic level of education		11.2	174	3.8
ETA 0.095 *				
Opinion on household income:	it enables carefree life	9.5	70	3.8
	It is very tough to deal with current income	11.5	129	3.5
ETA 0.129 ***				
Status (selected categories)	Lower class	11.2		
	Upper middle	9.4		
	Inhabitant of Prague	11		

Critical opinions were expressed by those who intensely watch television, as well as by those respondents who do not watch television at all. We also examined daily tabloid readers, but no statistical associations appeared. The most critical opinions came from people with basic education, members of the lower class having trouble making ends meet. Even here, the greatest concern was expressed by relative “outsiders”, people with the lowest potential for corruption.

This is most likely caused by their general attitude combined with a degree of anxiety. The respondents’ own experience with the police (contact in the past two years) did not impair the evaluation of both components; on the contrary, it improved them slightly (average 10.0), although at the same time, we can observe a higher rate of delinquency among these respondents.

In order to analyze some other relationships, we have created a comprehensive indicator of delinquency and law-abidingness (i.e. compliance - based on two items from the battery ESS). We compared acquired variables on the basis of correlation and then tentatively placed them in multiple linear regression (with the level of corruption as the dependent variable). In the first step, we found that the perception

of corruption had little to do with either delinquency or with normativity (in terms of willingness to obey the law). In the following regression model, a certain degree of influence was retained when considering tolerance of theft and lower self-control. From the other applied variables, only the assessment of household income played a certain role. (Age, gender and delinquent tendency had no significant effect.) The explanatory power of the model, however, was, generally speaking, very weak. Thus, corruption perception represents a relatively independent parameter, which is difficult to predict, although a link to (low) social status remains intact.

4.2 Corruption Perception from a Comparative Perspective

In conclusion, we compared the situation in the Czech Republic with most European countries participating in the European Social Survey Research (Table 16). We have created a scale based on the evaluation of corruption within the police force, though it is obvious that it is very similar to an evaluation of the courts. For clarity’s sake, we included both extreme groups and the most average group. Even though we see that the average range covers some post-communist countries, the Czechs find themselves near the bottom of the scale.

Table 16: ESS 2010: Selected countries in order of police corruptibility (Means)

	Police works well (1)/badly (5)	police corruption (0-10) ⁴	corruption courts (0-10)
Denmark	2.12	1.61	1.09
Norway	2.29	2.08	1.69
Finland	2.04	2.19	2.20
-			
Estonia	2.42	3.88	3.84
Belgium	2.35	3.90	3.32
Mean ESS score	2.53	4.15	3.83
Spain	2.31	4.22	4.38
Slovenia	2.52	4.23	5.12
-			
Greece	2.86	5.49	5.98
Czech Republic	2.67	5.57	5.37
Bulgaria	2.60	5.72	6.48
Russia	3.15	6.65	5.81
Ukraine	3.41	7.42	7.40

The findings from Eurobarometer (2014: 6) have confirmed the troublesome status of certain countries, but their ranking can fluctuate easily due to small differences in prevalence. Three-quarters of respondents in the EU (in 2013) think that corruption is widespread in their own country. The countries where respondents are most likely to think corruption is widespread are: Greece (99%), Italy (97%), Lithuania, Spain and the Czech Republic (all 95%), Croatia (94%), Romania (93%), Slovenia (91%), Portugal and Slovakia (both 90%). The Nordic countries are the only Member States where the majority think corruption is rare – Denmark (75%), Finland (64%) and Sweden (54%). It correlates with the ESS data entirely. A quarter of Europeans (26%), compared with 29% in 2011, agree that they are personally affected by corruption in their daily lives. People are most likely to say they are personally affected by corruption in Spain and Greece (both 63%), Cyprus and Romania (both 57%) and Croatia (55%); and least likely to do so in Denmark (3%), France and Germany (both 6%), Luxembourg (7%) and in Finland and the Netherlands (both 9%). In most Member States, respondents are less likely to say they are affected by corruption than in 2011, though it is ever more difficult to control and explain the specifics of the situation inside a particular country. The proportion of people saying they are affected by corruption has increased dramatically in Spain (20 points more). However, we have to rely on a simple comparison of prevalence without any opportunity to test the equivalence of items as well.

Many scholars have tried to ascertain the causes of corruption in separate countries, as well as why certain countries have higher levels of corruption than others (Rose–Ackerman,

1999). Taking into consideration the results of various studies, what emerges is the fact that countries with a tradition of the Protestant religion, higher levels of economic development, and openness to international trade, have lower levels of corruption. These studies also reveal a lower degree of corruption in countries under British rule. Conversely, if a state has been made a federation, it demonstrates a higher level of corruption (Blake & Martin, 2006; Treisman, 2000). Democracy has, according to research, a surprisingly ambiguous impact on the levels of corruption in the country (Blake & Martin, 2006; Pellegata, 2012). It is therefore not surprising that some studies evaluated the effect of democracy on corruption as insignificant. In their article, Brown et al. (2011) present the hypothesis that the effect of democracy on corruption is non-linear, and that for this reason the hypothesis of linearity cannot be confirmed. According to an analysis done by Pellegata (2012), countries that shift from non-democracies to democracies (hybrid mode), initially have a higher level of corruption than during the non-democratic regime. With the provision of democratic institutions, this level of corruption has slowly been decreasing over time (Pellegata, 2012). Nevertheless, the results of international surveys (Eurobarometer, 2014) did not confirm the continual decrease of the public’s concerns, and it is difficult to accept the idea that the real level of corruption being practiced is decreasing in these countries.

5 Conclusion

Specific questions regarding corruption in the police and the courts (as used in ESS) differentiated well across countries, but in terms of places where corruption occurs, it is just a small section. Therefore, a general indicator of development

⁴ Scales on corruption: 0 = quite impossible, 10 = quite easy to corrupt

stages should still be used for the purposes of international comparison, as it does not react so sensitively to social differentiation. Over time, it would be appropriate to introduce direct inquiries into people's involvement in the corruption circle, at least in respect to bribe offers. It turns out that direct questions on the subject are not so sensitive. From this we can deduce, however, a less favorable conclusion: To speak of corruption in the Czech Republic is something quite commonplace, "normal," even. However, from a methodological point of view, questioning people about corruption still appears to be a very sensitive topic and it is challenging to search for a new assessment of the corruption climate as a complex phenomenon. In the works cited, there are different, broadly discussed concepts of sensitivity, in which the willingness of respondents to give a truthful answer varies according to their actual situation and the context of the interviews (Tourangeau & Yan, 2007; Tourangeau, Rips, & Rasinski, 2000; Vinopal, 2012).

Although corruption perception is based on personal opinion, it also reflects both personal experience and potential involvement. Insiders are less concerned about corruption and are more forgiving, as if they were better "adapted." The mechanism of neutralization may also play a role. The people who are sensitive and concerned seem to be socially frustrated and angry (Jackson, 2004), therefore we can assume an effect of multiplied deprivation (also in the sense of frustration that they "missed the boat") when explaining worries or concern. Under these conditions, the indices derived from surveys of public opinion constitute only a relatively crude assessment. In fact, our findings comply with analyses done by Smith and Mateju (Smith, 2008: 53). What is more, these authors deal with another data-set generated by The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP). Generally speaking, many of the questions aimed at experience with corruption are still too broad. In Eurobarometer (2014), the respondents were asked if they personally knew of anyone who takes or has taken bribes. To be honest, this Eurobarometer survey even asked people for the specific amount of the bribes, making it difficult to compare the findings.

Czech society today is characterized by high levels of concern and negative assessment of the level of corruption. This situation is perhaps partly reinforced by the media, though in our opinion it is mainly a reflection of the state of the political scene. In this way, it has become a certain political risk, in terms of both growing dissatisfaction and potential electoral votes that may be acquired by populist parties promising a quick solution. A certain advantage is perhaps the fact that the public concern is still quelled due to people's trust in institutions, as well as a certain reliance on abstract systems (see also Lee & Farrall, 2009).

On one hand, during the transition, Czech society was "tolerant" and highly adaptive (most likely due to strong and generalized social expectations – Burianek, 1998). The people's trust in institutions and "general attitudes" were also stabilized, possibly in part due to a decrease in the crime rate during the last period. On the other hand, strong concerns about corruption represent a new concretization (new subject or new streaming) of fear. These opinions or attitudes are based on personal experience with bribery and are also reinforced this way.

Our research so far has shown that corruption is not just a matter of public opinion, or widespread idea only. We cannot speak about moral panic because up to one-third of the population may be involved in the chain of corruption that infiltrates everyday life. So it is not only the impact of the ongoing cases revealed at the highest level of politics and government, since the gradual erosion of standards occurs in everyday practices. Corruption has become a part of life (at least for certain groups or social classes).

Looking at the critical texts of the Czech philosopher Vaclav Belohradsky, we can recall the question of whether corruption means a pure, deviant phenomenon or an inherent part of the system, which is based on the market principle using money as the key medium (and on the interrelated social inequality). We must then ask why we find so much less fear of corruption in Denmark or Finland and other Western democracies. Incidentally, Denmark served as a famous subject of criticism by Hamlet. In present times, it could mean that in the confrontation between democracy (or at least procedural justice) and pure profit, a certain symbiosis is possible. It seems, however, that we (as a typical post-communist country) boarded a train, which only has a few first class cars, and the wheels are pulling away hastily and rumbling somewhat ominously. The relatively positive message is that Czech society remains highly adaptive and relatively fearless (and open to direct questioning). Nevertheless, the normalization of corruption can steer the train in a dangerous direction. Unfortunately, in this case, Denmark won't be the next stop.

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Strpni do kriminalitete, zaskrbljeni glede korupcije: primer Češke

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Članek opisuje nedavna spoznanja raziskav o strahu pred kriminaliteto na Češkem. Dinamika strahu in zaskrbljenosti sta v porastu, čeprav je standardna mera strahu hitro dosegla stabilizirano in povprečno raven v primerjavi z ostalo Evropo. Vendar pa se je pojavil nov povod za zaskrbljenost, morda celo nov grešni kozel za skrb javnosti – korupcija. Ta prispevek analizira proces diferenciacije strahu pred kriminaliteto v zvezi z viktimizacijo in lokalnimi razmerami ter potrjuje pojav realističnega prikazovanja s strahom povezanega vedenja. Prikaže izjemen porast zaskrbljenosti zaradi korupcije in primerov podkupovanja tudi v vsakodnevnih praksah. Čeprav je prehod v demokratično ureditev na Češkem po letu 1989 ponudil sliko "strpne" družbe, ki sprejme potrebne družbene stroške sprememb, preprosta ugotovitev o "normalizaciji tveganja" ni povsem veljavna, ko gre za korupcijo. Skrb glede korupcije sega onkraj mnenj javnosti, saj češki državljani v vsakdanjem življenju izkazujejo visoko raven vpletenosti v podkupovanje. Glede na zbrane podatke je vpletena ena tretjina odrasle populacije in t. i. "poznavalci" so bolj strpni do takšnega ravnanja. V večini postkomunističnih držav so razmere še vedno slabe, zlasti v primerjavi s skandinavskimi državami. Članek izpostavi potrebo po podrobnejši študiji stališč in prakse, saj povečanje zaskrbljenosti odraža resno tveganje glede zaupanja ljudi v sistem in njegove ključne institucije.

Ključne besede: strah pred kriminaliteto, skrbi, korupcija, javno mnenje, Češka

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