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Crime

& Culture

Crime as a Cultural Problem
The Relevance of Perceptions of Corruption to Crime Prevention. A Comparative Cultural Study in the EU-Accession States Bulgaria and Romania, the EU-Candidate States Turkey and Croatia and the EU-States Germany, Greece and United Kingdom

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Chronic, Incurable or What?
Perceptions of Corruption in Croatia

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1. Introduction – A Brief History Regarding Corruption and Anti-corruption Measures in Croatia

During the past 17 years, Croatia underwent major social, political and economic transformations. Unlike the majority of post-communist countries, these simultaneous changes were deeply affected and complicated by the 1991-1995 war. A combination of the cultural legacy of state socialism, disruptions and costs caused by the war, a slow and tightly party controlled process of institutional reforms, especially in respect to privatization, and the authoritarian and clientelist regime of the late President Tudjman led to systematic irregularities within economic subsystem and to a number of anomalies in public services. Such a situation resulted in the widespread perception that corruption is ubiquitous. In spite of the fact that the period 2000-2006 was marked by growing political stability (including the strengthening of democratic institutions) and an improving standard of living, the public perception of corruption increased. In comparison to 1995, when 66% of participants in the *World Values Survey – Croatia* stated that "most" of public servants are corrupt, the percentage recorded in the *South East European Social Survey Project* (SEESSP) in 2003 was 73%. A comparable trend was recorded in Transparency International Croatia surveys carried out in 2003 and 2005. While 48% of participants in the first wave agreed with the statement that corruption in Croatia is "extremely wide-spread", in the second wave the figure rose by 7 percentage points. In 2003, 17% of participants stated that corruption was "somewhat less present than three years ago", while 12.4% claimed it was "a lot more present than before". Two years later, the numbers were 10% and 19%, respectively.

In contrast to the surveys, which documented the increasing public perception of corruption, available crime statistics suggest a decrease in corrupt activities. In 2001, the total of 646 corruption related crimes were officially recorded. In 2002 they came down to 430 cases, in 2003 to 329 cases, and in 2004 to only 266 cases. Finally, 2004 witnessed a sudden and sharp increase due to 442 recorded cases.

A few studies provide a more detailed insight into public perception of low-level corruption and its cultural acceptability. In 1995 (WWS–Croatia), around 40% of participants in a nationally representative probabilistic sample stated that corruption could sometimes be justified. Four years later, 25% of participants in a comparable study (European Values Survey – Croatia) had the same opinion. According to the same study, 46% of respondents believed that their fellow citizens are taking bribes and 43% believed that they offer bribes. The issue was revisited in 2003 (SEESSP), when 40% of participants claimed that their fellow citizens are offering bribes. The same year, a study using a convenient on-line sample (*Posao.hr*) reported that 30% of the surveyed revealed that they would bribe someone to get a job.

When it comes to the personal experience of corruption, a study carried out in 1996 (*Social Capital in Croatia*) reported that 28% of participants in a nationally representative sample, or the members of their closest family, experienced corruption in the health system.[1] In 2004, the *Global Corruption Barometer* (GCB) findings pointed to 9% of households with a direct experience with corruption. A year later, the same study reported a decrease of 2 percentage points. According to the 2005 GCB, 30% of participants believed that "the level of corruption will increase over the next 3 years", which is a 17 point increase in comparison to the 2004 findings. The social impact of the widespread perception of corruption was recently assessed in a research paper, which found the perception of corruption to be the strongest (negative) predictor of generalized trust and trust in institutions (Štulhofer 2004).

Before the Transparency International GCB annual survey started in 2004, no systematic research on corruption existed in Croatia. This is somewhat surprising having in mind the fact that Croatia's TI Index ranking is (and used to be) rather low and has been worsening since 2001. In 2004, the value for Croatia, ranked 57th on the list of 145 countries, was 3.5, indicating more corruption than reported for seven out of eight Central and Eastern European countries that joined the EU in 2005.

With regard to the national legal framework, Croatian government ratified the Council of Europe Criminal Law Convention on Corruption in September 2000, became a member of GRECO in December of the same year, and developed the first National Program for Combating Corruption in 2001 (adopted together with the Action Plan in March 2002). In the same year, the Office for the Suppression of Corruption and Organized Crime (USKOK) was formed as requested by the national plan.[2] Also in 2001, the Parliament ratified the Council of Europe Civil Law Convention on Corruption and two other related protocols, as well as United Nations anti-corruption and transnational criminal conventions. In 2003, the Bill on the Prevention of Conflict of Interest in the Exercise of Public Office was passed (it was updated in 2004), as well as the Bill on the Access to Information. A year later, the Bill on the Financing of Presidential Election was adopted and an independent Committee for the Monitoring of Conflict of Interest was formed.

As pointed out by local experts and the international analysts, the state response to corruption left much to be desired. Although progress has been made, primarily in the legislative area, many deficiencies – such as low level of administrative capacity for fighting corruption; missing legislation on the financing of political parties (in spite of a seemingly high level of

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[1]   In 2006, the new National Program for Combating Corruption declared four highly problematic areas to be targeted: the judiciary, the health system, local government and political parties.

[2]   Unfortunately, USKOK remained understaffed until recently.

political corruption); the practical failure of USKOK; monitoring problems (lack of research and reliable statistics); insufficient transparency, oversight and accountability of the state; lack of coordination between the authorities responsible for anti-corruption activities; lack of training in financial investigation; insufficient training and education for civil servants and other administrative employees; and a negligible number of sanctioned corruption cases – have also been listed (Transparency International Croatia 2005; GRECO 2005; European Commission 2005).

Some of these shortcomings have been recently addressed by the more vigorous USKOK's activities (USKOK was finally provided with necessary personnel and resources), by the introduction of the new National Anti-Corruption Program, and by passing the Bill on the financing of political parties and candidates.

2. Current Situation

On March 10, 2006 the government launched the new National Anti-Corruption Program, drafted in October 2005 (*The National Program for Combating Corruption 2006-2008*).[3] The event was carefully staged to accentuate its importance and to send a clear and loud message to the EU, which has made corruption one of the key accession criteria (OSI 2002). The action plans envisioned by the new strategy were promptly developed by the assigned ministries and were presented only four months after the strategy was officially launched. During the summer and the fall of 2006, several highly publicized cases of corruption were processed by USKOK. In September, the Prime Minister was quoted in the media promising that the new law on the financing political parties will be passed by the Parliament before the end of 2006. Three months later, the Bill on the financing of political parties and candidates, which was severely criticized by a number of experts, was passed.

In January and February 2007, two highly publicized cases of alleged corruption shook the government. The first involved the Prime Minister himself, when it was pointed out in a magazine that he failed to report his valuable collection of wristwatches in the property card. What ensued was an exchange of allegations between the Prime Minister's office and the State Commission on Conflict of Interest. The ruling party's spokesperson argued that it was unclear whether collections such as the one in question needed to be entered into officials' property cards and that the Commission should be held responsible for this confusion. The second affair took place in February when a large-scale fraud and corruption scandal invol-

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[3]   The program was approved by the Parliament on March 31, 2006.

ving the top management of one of the largest shipyards was uncovered. Since the Minister of Economy himself served as the chair of the shipyard's supervisory board at the time, the main opposition party demanded his resignation. After a lengthy parliamentary discussion, in which the government firmly supported its member, the Minister remained in position.

At the moment, fighting corruption does seem to be high on the government agenda, at least on a rhetorical level. Partially, it is an important element of the election campaign.[4] Even more importantly, it seems, is the message that the government is trying to send to the EU through intensified anti-corruption activities. It remains to be seen if and how much the current initiative will deliver.

3. Research Methodology

Although the public opinion polls mentioned above offer some insights into the perceived level and dynamics of corruption, detect groups that are perceived to be especially prone to corruption, and indicate levels of perceived corruption, they do not represent a systematic analysis. A number of questions remain unanswered:

- Why are some types of behavior perceived as corrupt and others not?
- What is the link between the perception of corruption and values and norms embedded in the traditional cultural patterns?
- Did the recent societal changes (transition processes) influence the changes in the understanding of corruption? Are the changes connected to the nascence of new types of corruption?
- Is there a general, common, "socially agreed" definition of corruption or is there a clash between "particular" definitions specific for the particular social groups?
- How are various patterns of understanding corruption embedded in societal and group norms and values?
- Can a failure of the measures for combating corruption be attributed to the clash between the conflicting definitions of corruption?
- Do the differences in the perception of corruption influence the societal support to anti-corruption measures?
- What appeals would be in accordance with the values and norms underlying the understanding(s) of corruption in a given society (thus being more effective)?

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[4]   Parliamentary elections will take place in November 2007.

- What are the differences in the perception of corruption among European countries, etc.?

It could be argued that answers to such questions are, to a significant extent, out of the reach of public opinion polls and other similar quantitative research methods since they are mainly oriented towards the dis/confirmation of the pre-established ideas and hypotheses, which are blind to some (unexpected!) aspects of the phenomenon under study. For these reasons, this project – focused primarily on discovering various patterns of perceiving corruption, as well as on their consequences in regard to combating corruption – has adopted a qualitative research approach, which "allows the unexpected to express itself freely" as existent (living) social reality. Among possible quantitative research methodologies, the *Ground Theory Methodology* has been selected as developed and effective methodology that has been successfully applied to similar research problems (Glaser/Strauss 1967; Glaser 1978; Corbin/Strauss, 1990; Strauss/Corbin 1990; Charmaz 2000).

3.1. Case Studies

In the first phase, the project design required selecting two case studies, one representing low-level corruption and the other high-level corruption. After consulting with several local experts and two anti-corruption NGOs (*Transparency International Croatia* and the *Partnership for Social Development*) the two following case studies were selected for qualitative analysis: (a) financial issues related to the last presidential campaign and (b) a case of corruption in homes for the elderly in the city of Zagreb. Since at the time no relevant case related to party financing existed (except for a marginal case involving the small *Democratic Center* party), we selected the financing of the 2005 presidential campaign (in particular the advertising costs) as a case study in, potentially, high-level corruption. The other case was interesting not only because it was the talk of town for years (obtaining a place in a home for the elderly is most often perceived as involving some kind of corrupt behavior), but also because it was debated and analyzed on various social and institutional levels.

Case A: Brief Description

The last presidential elections took place in January 2005. There were 13 candidates competing in the election including the President of the State who was re-elected after the second run. The main target of the analysis was the financial aspect of the campaign, which received

a great deal of public attention after some alleged irregularities were reported by the media and a NGO. The scandal revolved around the unrealistically small advertising budget reported by the ruling party candidate. The analysis of this case study has largely focused on two processes: on the presentation of the case by the media and by civil society, and on the earlier process of adopting the Bill on the Financing of Presidential Elections in the Parliament in 2004. The Bill on the Financing of Presidential Elections was adopted in July 2004. The content of the law is based on the definition of allowed and forbidden financial sources, conditions for spending of funds and the transparency of financial sources, which are regulated through early financial reports from presidential candidates. The Bill did not include any provisions for sanctioning wrongdoings.

Case B: Brief Description

Admittance in homes for the elderly (HE) is free of charge and based on waiting lists. It is estimated that more than 10,000 retired people are waiting for such accommodation at the moment. The beginning of our case dates back to June 2003 when a client contacted a NGO (the *Partnership for Social Development* /PSD) and reported a number of irregularities. PSD investigated the case and later notified the local government (City of Zagreb) and the media. In July 2003 PSD and a popular newspaper started a campaign called "Stop Corruption". This brought forward a number of citizen's complaints, testimonies and anonymous reports implicating various criminal activities in the city HE. Among the irregularities mentioned were illegal use of the belongings and money of the deceased clients, bribing the managers of HE (in order to be admitted into a HE regardless of the waiting list), illegal and preferential supply deals, trading a place in a HE for a client's apartment, etc. In 2002, an inspection of the Ministry of Health, Work and Social Care investigated reported irregularities in HE-Centar. The Inspection identified several problems and omissions. Prompted by the report, the Municipal State Attorney's Office opened a case against the manager of HE-Centar. The ensuing court case was (temporarily) finalized in 2004, when the judge ruled the manager not guilty. In the explanation of the ruling, the judge stated that in spite of the fact that illegal activities were committed those responsible could not be identified. The verdict was later annulled and the case transferred to the county court where it is still in procedure.

Many questions concerning alleged corruption in Zagreb HE remain unanswered, though the case seems to be only a segment of murky and potentially corrupt dealings involving the city government (Podumljak/Kunac 2005). Pointingly, no session or focused discussion devoted to the issue ever took place in the Municipal Assembly. Over the course of three years (2002-2004), only four questions related to the alleged corruption in HE were raised in the Assemb-

ly. Although all of them received only provisional answers by the Head of the Office for Health, Work and Social Care, none were followed through or re-stated at later time.

3.2. Research Material

Most of the research materials were collected during the March - May 2006 period. Text sources from six target groups (*Politics, Legal System, Police, Media, Civil Society and Economy*) were collected. Although extensive search and consultations were undertaken, only a few documents were collected from the police and economy target groups. Views of the rest of the target groups were well documented. With regard to the type of materials collected, our database contains a wide range of documents, including newspaper articles, the parliamentary and a municipal assembly proceedings, strategic analyses, annual reports of various state offices, the text of the new National Anti-Corruption Program, public speeches made by the Prime Minister, Minister of Justice and the leader of the largest union in the country, NGO publications and reports, etc. Most of the collected materials were obtained via Internet (newspaper articles, official document and annual reports), through official publications (governmental materials, NGO studies and reports) or by using NGOs' archives.

3.3. Coding of the Documents

The documents were coded using the *ATLAS.ti* software. In the coding process, special attention was devoted to the following issues:

- Emerging (even quite fragmentary) definitions of corruption
- Elements of the corruption perception patterns
- Causes of corruption;
- Whether corruption is considered to be a significant social problem in Croatian society and why;
- Who are the victims;
- Who is perceived as corrupt;
- How to fight corruption.

However, no strict codes for the elements mentioned above have been imposed (since it would be contrary to the main principles of the Grounded Theory), and coding was performed mostly using open codes. To improve the reliability of coding, the same document has been coded independently by at least three members of the research team. The dilemmas and

disagreements regarding coding were resolved on project meetings and final codes were determined consensually. After the initial round of coding, we performed secondary coding in order to create more general codes (categories) focusing on similarities and differences between perceptions of corruption encountered in various documents. The secondary coding was the basis for the discussion of six models of understanding corruption described in the final section.

4. Findings: Perceptions of Corruption

In this part we present the findings of qualitative (text) analyses. Sub-chapters, each reporting on a specific target group, are structured in the following manner: case relevant analyses are presented first, followed by summary analysis of the perception(s) of corruption found in the specific target group.

4.1. Target Group Politics

The pattern of the somewhat ambiguous governmental position in respect to combating corruption was revisited in the speech given by the Prime Minister of Croatia. The speech was structured around the following four messages:

1.   When dealing with the state, citizens should not feel helpless anymore;

2.   We are fighting corruption because of our internal needs and not because of external pressures (the EU conditionality)

3.   The main characteristic of the new strategy is its participative and integrative approach (everyone is invited to contribute);

4.   Corruption is universal – it is not specifically the Croatian problem.

The prevailing perception of corruption in the target group politics remains unclear. Although it seems that on local levels (case study B) corruption is perceived as a nuisance or something potentially disruptive to usual institutional routines, the understanding among the highest-ranking politicians could be primarily tactical, i.e. oriented toward reputation maintenance and credibility building – domestically, as well as internationally (the EU).

4.2. Target Group Legal System

Altogether, the position of the legal system seems complex and insufficiently clear. Although corruption is perceived as a detrimental phenomenon, anti-corruption measures and concerns were met with reluctance and suspicion or were simply set aside (the court case). There is an impression that parts of the legal system systematically underestimate the presence of corruption within the system, most probably in fear that focusing on corrupt activities could lead to the destruction of the overall credibility of the courts and judicial.

On the other hand, the analysis of the final text of the new National Anti-Corruption Program and its first draft revealed a typical expert approach to the phenomenon of corruption.[5] Within this model of understanding corruption, concerns over maintaining the reputation of the legal system are based on an almost completely opposite logic. Here, the basic rationale is that the credibility of the legal system depends primarily on its ability to purge its ranks from the corrupt individuals.

4.3. Target Group Police

A single document on corruption that was obtained from the Ministry of Interior contained an analysis of institutional capacity and an assessment of future needs and goals, as requested by the government during the process of preparing the new National Anti-Corruption Program (adopted in 2006).

Importantly, the document briefly analyzed both external (i.e. outside of the police) and internal (i.e. inside the police force) corruption. In spite of the fact that a comprehensive definition of corruption was mentioned at the beginning of the document as the foundation for all anti-corruption activities of the police, the mentioning of internal corruption was limited to the low-level type, associated with a relatively small number of traffic and border police officers. There is no mention of the possible involvement of some higher ranking police officers in organized crimes networks.[6] This fact is in sharp contrast to the comprehensive understanding of external corruption presented in the paper.

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[5] The National Anti-Corruption Program emphasized the following four aims: (a) sanctioning the corrupt ones; (b) strengthening professional ethics; (c) improving responsibility and user-friendliness of public administration; and (d) increasing citizens' trust in institutions.

[6] It should be noted though that strengthening the Internal Control Department was included among the priorities listed in the document.

One of the most important parts of the document focused on the prevention of corruption[7], finding it unjustly, but understandably marginalized at the moment.[8] Building on a comprehensive definition of corruption, the paper found trust building between citizens and the police (and other parts of the system of law) crucial for efficiently fighting corruption. Somewhat surprising, the report did not mention any concrete steps for trust building other than listing a need for increased human resources in the police force. Also, in stating that there is no need for additional professional education programs[9], the document created an impression that a strategy of preventive anti-corruption activities has already been worked out. The report prioritized organizational improvements, focusing on the needs of the Department for Economic Crime and Corruption. The document strongly suggested a special Section for Combating Corruption to be formed within the Department, on both central and regional levels.

Although our findings are based on a single document, its strategic nature and purpose adds considerable weight to the analysis. The document's focus on organizational improvements and potentially far-reaching preventive activities – together with noticeable avoidance of controversial issues such as corruption among high-ranked police officers and political corruption in general – suggested a rather pragmatic approach to the understanding of corruption. Within the pragmatic approach, corruption is perceived as a serious and potentially explosive societal problem. Fighting corruption, therefore, demands proper framing: defining corruption in practically and politically manageable terms and curbing it through sustainable activities.

4.4. Target Group Media

Overall, the media expressed a highly alert and critical stance toward corruption. Although our analyses were not able to reconstruct operational definition(s) of corruption used by the journalists, by implicitly and explicitly focusing on the public as the main victim of corrupt dealings, the media shared at least some common assumptions about corruption and its impact with the NGO. Unlike the involved activists, the journalists, on the other hand, did not display similar commitment toward investigating the cases. It is no surprise, therefore, that their articles did not uncover any new details regarding backstage activities.

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[7] The New National Anti-Corruption Program strongly emphasized the importance of prevention, too (Barbić 2006).

[8] The current lack of the police prevention efforts was attributed primarily to the lack of staff.

[9] Which seems to contradict one of the findings of the EC report (European Commission 2005) stressing the importance of improving the level of financial investigation expertise.

4.5. Target Group Civil Society

In both cases, the civil society representatives displayed a highly critical approach, based on what seems to be a comprehensive understanding of corruption. Their criticism, implicitly (case study A) or explicitly (case study B) based on the principle of the centrality of human rights, openly dealt with political corruption. In the first case, the criticism pointed to a lack of political will to set up an efficient prevention of political corruption, while in the second case it implicated a wide network of powerful people as corrupt or protective of those who are corrupt. The prevailing understanding of corruption in the target group civil society could therefore be described as the one anchored in human rights paradigm. Occasionally, at least, the approach entails an almost automatic suspicion toward those in power.

4.6. Target Group Economy

In this target group three documents were coded that indicated the perception of corruption on the part of the economically relevant institutions, the Croatian Employers' Association (CEA) and the Independent Croatian Unions (ICU). These documents did not deal with any particular case of corruption, but provided some insight into attitudes towards and perceptions of corruption. The views of the CEA were clearly expressed in the report on participation of the representatives of the CEA in drafting the National Anti-Corruption Program, as well as in the Program of the CEA's National Competitiveness Council. In case of the ICU, a relevant speech of the ICU president was analyzed.

The CEA believes that the corruption is a systemic phenomenon and that one of the most troublesome aspects in combating corruption is the cultural tradition that supports and shields corrupt behaviors. The documents emphasized the importance of mobilizing citizenry against corruption through efforts that would successfully encourage civic responsibility. Importantly, the first document criticized the drafted National Anti-Corruption Program as unsatisfactory for failing to demonstrate any real commitment to combating corruption. The CEA pointed to the lack of political will responsible for the inefficiency of the existing legal framework.

The target groups legal system and economy share similar perceptions of corruption. Within both target groups the anti-corruption steps taken so far were recognized as important, but insufficient. Unfortunately, the lack of relevant documents produced by the two target groups suggests that corruption is placed rather low on their priority lists. It remains to be established whether such a low interest could be the consequence of earlier, failed engagements.

Although our analyses pointed to different perspectives on and perceptions of corruption in Croatia, they do share certain similarities. Firstly, there is a belief that corruption is widespread, almost ubiquitous. Secondly, most documents suggest that the existing measures to fight corruption are weak and inefficient. There is a common perception that combating corruption requires new, additional measures and more genuine efforts. At the same time, one often encounters skeptical undertones when new measures are discussed. With such a generalized, almost "epidemiological" approach, there is always a risk of equating corruption to a chronic disease – or something that one simply has to adapt to.

5. Toward a Typology of Understanding Corruption

This final chapter provides a taxonomic discussion of the findings. Here we describe in more detail a range of group-specific conceptualizations and perceptions of corruption in Croatia. In the first part, we briefly summarize the conclusions from our case studies. In the second part, we discuss different perceptions of corruption that emanated from our qualitative analysis.

In general, it seems that at least two opposing perceptions of corruption, or models of its conceptualization and understanding, were operating in the case study A. The first could be labeled *the Public Relations Model* (PR) and the second *the Expert Model* (E). While the first is primarily about impression management and public presentation, the second model focuses on professional responsibility. In both conceptualizations, though to different degree, empirical reality is often neglected or marginalized. The PR model is focused on taking steps that will result in a positive impact on public opinion. It is primarily about sending a convincing message about political commitment to (and efficiency in) combating corruption, which would maximize the political reputation of the sender or simply save face. Issues such as fine-tuning anti-corruption efforts or establishing full accountability, which are not seen as essential to achieving these goals, will tend to be brushed aside as difficult to implement or even as too risqué. The PR conceptualization seems to be based on simplified, one-dimensional definition of corruption.

The E model, on the other side, is primarily about professional expertise. The emphasis is on theoretically rich understanding of corruption and technically sophisticated solutions to the problem. Unlike the PR model, the E model defines corruption more comprehensively and insists on the measures that most experts would find superior to others. In doing so, proponents of the E concept may sometimes seem insufficiently sensitive to the (political) context and the existing institutional capacity. If affiliated with the oppositional parties, they often

seem oblivious of possible consequences of the systematic approach to curbing corruption – particularly political corruption – for their own party. The constraints under which the proponents of the E model act are the imperatives of maintaining professional reputation, which can sometimes lead to impractical solutions being proposed.

In the case study B we found *two models* of understanding corruption. The first we call *the Nuisance Model* (N) and the second *the Human Rights Model* (HR). The N model is basically a concept of avoidance. It does not entail a detailed or analytical approach to corruption and it does not provide incentives for attempting a deeper understanding. It regards corruption as a little more than a nuisance that, if brought to public eye, will create a publicity storm. This, in turn, will overburden the institution – mostly through requested inspections, reports and audits. The N model, popular with administration, can effectively minimize or even trivialize problems and costs associated with corruption.

The HR model was found to be characteristic of civil society. It emphasizes individual ramifications of corrupt activities and focuses primarily on individual costs and personal responsibility. Often, as in case study A, this approach/perception does take into account the public good and collective interests, but it presents them in a fundamentally liberal manner – not as a collective property, but as the sum of rights of all the individuals concerned. The HR model naturally flows from the fundamental role of the civic sector and, therefore, provides legitimacy. Although the HR model seems to be an indispensable tool in the making of an effective and highly alert NGO watchdog, it may result in flooding the media and state institutions with allegations of corrupt handlings.

The four models described above can be presented in a more systematic manner by focusing on the four main dimensions: (a) definition of corruption, (b) the core belief, (c) combating measures, and (d) analytical focus (see *Table 1*). Unlike these four models that emerged from our case studies, two additional models were suggested in the analyses of the documents unrelated, but relevant to our case studies. The first, the Pragmatic Model – in cursive like the other models (P)-, starts from the imperative of curbing corruption. The model tends to build upon a sophisticated and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, but is biased toward activities that deal almost exclusively with *manageable* corruption. In other words, the proponents of the P model would eagerly confront less controversial forms of corruption – usually low-level corruption – but would be less keen to intervene in highly sensitive cases of political corruption. The reason is a straightforward one. What is feared the most within the P model is creating an insurmountable obstacle that would make all efforts at fighting corrup-

tion futile. The strategy employed is hence simple: concentrate on what is manageable and avoid everything that is not.

The second concept, the Ignoring Model (I), is primarily about overlooking the phenomenon of corruption. Strictly speaking, it is hardly a model of understanding of corruption, rather a conceptual framework which marginalizes the importance of corruption and systematically underestimates its costs. The I model can sometimes emerge as a combination of the extreme version of the P ("corruption is unmanageable") and the N model ("corruption is an irrelevant or minor issue"). The model may also be based on the realization that corruption cannot be effectively curbed or that the fight against corruption in a certain social environment is doomed to continuing frustration.

Table 1: Perceptions of Corruption Models

	Definition	*Core belief*	*Combating measures*	*Analytical focus*
The PR Model	Simplified and populist	Corruption is perceived primarily as damaging to public image	Chosen according to public impression management efficiency	Mostly low-level corruption
The E Model	Complex and comprehensive	Corruption damages the fabric of society and hinders development	Based on best international practice	High-level/political corruption
The N Model	No clear definition	Corruption is an omnipresent phenomenon of minor but overblown importance	*Ad hoc* type	If present, the focus is only on low-level corruption
The HR Model	Comprehensive definition emphasizing violations of human rights	Corruption is a moral, social and economic evil that needs to be eradicated	Should be rigorous and transparent	Both low- and high-level corruption
The P Model	Comprehensive, mostly legalistic definition	Major social problem	Need to be internationally tested, systematic and coordinated	Mainly low-level corruption
The I Model	*Ad hoc* and populist definitions	Only potentially problematic	Largely absent from the discourse	No clear focus

When discussing possible linkages between the six target groups and the described models, three caveats should be mentioned. Firstly, our findings so far cannot justify any conclusions as to which models could be characteristic, or core parts of the dominant understanding of

corruption, of a certain target group. We hope to be able to explore these links in more detail during the second phase of our research project, which includes structured interviews with members of the target groups. Secondly, our models need to be seen primarily as *Weberian* ideal types and not as empirical entities. In reality, most of the proposed models could be found only in fragments or as an array of different variants. Thirdly, it would be mistaken to assume that a single model could ever neatly represent any target group. In contrast to such a simplified picture, we found elements of several different models of corruption in most target groups.[10]

In a preliminary manner, our analysis suggests specific linkages between the models and target groups. The PR model, or its core elements, was found to be present in target group politics, primarily in the government and the ruling party documents and discussions, and to a certain degree in the legal system target group. In the documents of both target groups, we also found elements of the P model. Additionally, the P model was detected in documents belonging to two other target groups, the police and, to a lesser extent, civil society. The N model fit well with the perspective on corruption reflected in the city government and admini-stration (target group politics) documents. The I model was found primarily associated with the target group economy, but this finding could have been biased by our choice of case studies. The E model seemed to be present in a number of documents from various target groups, most often from the civil society target group, the media and the politics (recorded discussions of parliamentary opposition members), but also from the economy, the police and the legal system target groups. Finally, the HR model was found primarily in documents from the civil society, politics (Ombudsman's report) and the media target groups.

Having in mind a number of limitations imposed by our data collection method, the linkages presented remain tentative at best. In some cases the number of documents collected proved insufficient for reaching conclusions about the complexity of approaches to and understanding of corruption within the selected target groups. In some instances, we found the documents analyzed too ambivalent or simply unclear, which again prevented strong claims and elaborated argumentation. For these and other reasons, the suggested linkages between the (ideal-typical) models and the six target groups should be taken with caution, at least until additional (interview-based) data provides more clear and analytically convincing insights into the distribution of the proposed models of perceiving corruption in Croatia.

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[10] More precisely, in the documents representing target groups.

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SIXTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION
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**SPECIFIC TARGETED RESEARCH PROJECT: CRIME AND CULTURE**

Crime as a Cultural Problem. The Relevance of Perceptions of Corruption to Crime Prevention. A Comparative Cultural Study in the EU-Accession States Bulgaria and Romania, the EU-Candidate States Turkey and Croatia and the EU-States Germany, Greece and United Kingdom

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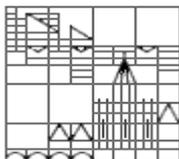
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