

Chapter 4

Quantitative Analysis of Corruption Political Factors



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Abstract The factors of corrupt behaviour resulting from the political environment have the strongest impact on corruption. The enforceability of political accountability and the transparency of the political system can be considered as the political factors of corruption. The aim of the study is to quantitatively confirm the impact of the degree of political accountability and transparency of the political system on corruption in country. The quantitative testing of relationship between corruption (measured by Corruption Perceptions Index), enforceability of political accountability (measured by Rule of Law Index) and the transparency of the political system determined by freedom of press (measured by Press Freedom Index) and quality of institution (included in Global Competitiveness Index) is realized. The relevance enforceability of political accountability and the transparency of the political system as political factors of corruption are confirmed by statistical methods and discussed in broader socio-political context. Within it, the quality of the institutions, the freedom of the press has the greatest impact on the level of corruption.

Keywords Corruption · Enforceability of political accountability · The transparency of the political system · The rule of law index · Press Freedom Index · Global Competitiveness Index

4.1 Introduction

Corruption is a response to the legal, economic, cultural and political institutions in a country (Schelling, 1960). The causes of corruption thus stem from the economic, political and cultural–social environment. The phenomenon of corruption is most strongly associated with the political environment, and factors of corrupt

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behaviour resulting from the political environment have the strongest influence (; Aidt et al., 2020; Santoro & Kumar, 2018; Statista, 2020). The political factors of corrupt behaviour can be identified as the enforceability of political accountability (OECD, 2017; Wu, 2005) and the transparency of the political system (Hudori & Mustikasari, 2020; Lima & Delen, 2020).

The rule of law, law enforcement and the powers of supervisory authorities (Apergis & Cooray, 2017; Klitgaard, 1998) determine the enforceability of political accountability. Transactions with state representatives, the government or other public officials are marked by a certain asymmetry of information (Kaufmann & Wei, 2000; Klitgaard, 1998; Ondráčka, 2005), which naturally creates a motive to act corruptly (Hudori & Mustikasari, 2020; Vašečka, 2007). From this point of view, increasing the transparency of the political system can reduce the risk of corruption (Holcombe & Boudreaux, 2015; Malagueño et al., 2010; Wroe et al., 2013). The freedom of the press reduces this information asymmetry and increases the transparency of the political system. Political decentralization, perceived as a positive phenomenon, can negatively affect the risk of corruption, mainly in case of low institutional quality (Treisman, 2000; Fan & Lin a Treisman, 2009; Tanzi, 2010; Arian, 2004; Freille et al., 2008). However, the quantitative analysis of relationship between corruption enforceability of political accountability and the transparency of the political system is missing. The aim of the study is to quantitatively confirm the impact of the degree of political accountability and transparency of the political system on corruption in country. Quantitative analysis of relationship between corruption (measured by Corruption Perceptions Index), enforceability of political accountability (measured by Rule of Law Index) and the transparency of the political system determined by freedom of press (measured by Press Index Freedom) and quality of institution (included in Global Competitiveness Index) is realized to achieve this aim.

4.2 Theoretical Framework

The essence of political responsibility is to justify political decisions and take responsibility for their consequences (Lewis & Hendrawan, 2019). Political responsibility is given by a certain limit of the exercise of state power directly corresponding to guaranteed civil liberties (Duvanova, 2014). Given this, it can be assumed that the enforceability of political responsibility is low in countries where socialist or authoritarian regimes of government predominate. However, the application of the principle of enforcing political accountability is also challenging in countries with democratic regimes (Acemoglu & Verdier, 1998; Lewis & Hendrawan, 2019; OECD, 2016). Political enforcement is thus directly linked to the degree of democracy in the country (Liu, 2010; Malagueño et al., 2010). Many studies confirm that a high level of democracy reduces the risk of corrupt behaviour (Kimbrow, 2002; Li et al., 2015; Rose-Ackerman, 1998).

Stable parliamentary democracy and guaranteed political accountability (Rose-Ackerman, 1998; Shleifer & Vishny, 1993) reduce the risk of politicians' own interests and those close to their interest groups taking precedence over the public interest (Amin & Soh, 2020; Anderson, 2015; Apergis & Cooray, 2017; Holcombe & Boudreaux, 2015) and thus the risk of corruption.

The enforceability of political accountability is determined by the rule of law, law enforcement and the powers of supervisory authorities (Apergis & Cooray, 2017; Klitgaard, 1998). From this point of view, the Rule of Law Index is an important indicator for us (Apergis & Cooray, 2017; Carr & Outhwaite, 2011; Kimbro, 2002; Klitgaard, 1998; Ngozi, 2018). It encompasses the nine dimensions of the rule of law: the absence of corruption, order and security, restrictions on government powers, fundamental rights, open governance, regulatory enforcement, access to civil justice, effective criminal justice and informal justice.

There is a certain degree of natural information asymmetry in the political environment, which is necessary from the point of view of maintaining top secret data and security of the country (Houqe & Monem, 2013). On the other hand, the benefits of information asymmetry can be misused for personal gain by public officials. The tool of solving information asymmetry in governance is the transparency of the political system (Hudori & Mustikasari, 2020; Kaufmann & Wei, 2000; Klitgaard, 1998). The transparent functioning of individual levels of government is positively influenced by a free and independent press, which plays an important role in informing society and especially in a situation where society is active and able to put pressure on responsible behaviour of political institutions (Hirsch & Watson, 2010; Ghur, 1998; Malagueño et al., 2010; Wroe et al., 2013; Holcombe & Boudreaux, 2015). A certain indicator of the transparency of the political system is the Press Freedom Index (Chayes, 2016; Kuris, 2014; Szeghyová, 2011). The freedom of the press index identifies the degree of representation of opinions in the media space, the independence of the media (Ngozi, 2018; Schweizer, 2019). Transactions with state representatives, the government or other public officials are marked by a certain asymmetry of information (Ondráčka, 2005), which naturally creates a motive to act corruptly (Vašečka, 2007). The presence of freedom of the press (quantified by Press Freedom Index) reduces this information asymmetry, increasing the transparency of the political system.

As the number of individual levels of government increases, the transparency of the political system decreases. Decentralization as part of the democratization process therefore has a paradoxically negative effect in terms of reducing corruption. Research on the relationship between political decentralization and corruption has concluded that the incidence of accepting and providing bribes increases with increasing levels of government (Apergis & Cooray, 2017; Rose-Ackerman, 1998; Tanzi, 2010; Treisman, 2000; Unger, 2018). Political decentralization, perceived as a positive phenomenon, can therefore negatively affect the risk of corruption. Paradoxically, authoritarian regimes with development-oriented elites reduce the risk of corruption (Glaeser & Saks, 2004; Rose-Ackerman, 1999).

The division of power into different levels of government, reducing the transparency of the political system, increases the risk of corruption, especially in

the case of poor-quality institutions. Political systems lack balanced sharing of power and transparent and accountable functioning of institutions (Amundsen, 1999; Niskanen & William, 1971; Vašečka, 2007). The quality of institutions can be assessed as part of the Global Competitiveness Index (Anderson, 2015; Unger, 2018). This index consists of twelve pillars: quality of public institutions, infrastructure, macroeconomic environment, health and primary education, higher education and training, goods market efficiency, labour market efficiency, financial market maturity, technological readiness, market size, business maturity and innovation.

4.3 Methodology

The aim of the study is to quantitatively confirm the impact of the degree of political accountability and transparency of the political system on corruption in country. The subject of the examination with regard to the set goal is the mutual relationship between the level of corruption and the enforcement of political responsibility. The research precondition, the source of which is the theoretical basis of the political factors of corruption, is the existence of a mutual relationship between the level of corruption and the enforcement of political responsibility. The level of political enforceability given by the degree of democracy—the level of the rule of law, freedom of the media and the quality of institutions have an impact on the level of corruption in a given country. We describe the relationship quantitatively by determining the dependence between the Corruption Perceptions Index as a dependent variable and the rule of law, freedom of the press and global competitiveness indices as independent variables.

The Corruption Perceptions Index has been compiled annually since 1995 by the non-governmental organization Transparency International (TI). The index reflects the views of experts on the prevalence of corruption and various expert surveys. The value of the index is in the range $<0-100>$, where 100 means an economy without corruption. According to TI, the CPI expresses how corruption is perceived in a given country, while corruption is the abuse of public office for private gain. The calculation of this index is based on thirteen different sources based on ten independent organizations, but not all sources are used in the calculation of the CPI. The minimum for including a country in the assessment of the level of perception of corruption in the country is set at three independent sources. The professional community, entrepreneurs and various analysts answer questions about corruption in the public sector (abuse of power by public officials for their own benefit). The CPI value itself is obtained using the average of the responses. As the data are from different sources and therefore have different rates, they have to be standardized before entering the final index. The final CPI value is thus the average of the transformed values of all sources. Vojtková (2007) points out the different reliability of this index consisting in the “inconsistency of input data, which is caused by the availability of different input indicators for different countries”.

The independent variable The Rule of Law Index includes nine dimensions of the rule of law—limitation of government powers, absence of corruption, order and security, fundamental rights, open government, regulatory enforcement, access to civil justice, effective criminal justice and informal justice. Its quantification is based on expert opinions, but also on the experience and opinions of citizens. The score of the index ranges from 0 points to a maximum of 10 points, where 0–4 is authoritarian regimes, 4.01–6 is hybrid regimes, 6.01–8 is flawed democracies, and 8.01–10 is full democracies.

The second independent variable is the press freedom index. The score of the index ranges from 0 to 100, with values towards one hundred representing the low level of the Freedom of the Press Index.

The last independent variable is the global competitiveness index. The index takes values from 0 to 100, where 100 represents the frontier, an ideal state where an issue ceases to be a constraint to productivity growth (Schwab, 2019).

We verify the validity of the research assumption as a null hypothesis in a random set of countries. We obtained a list of countries from the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic. We then assigned numbers from 1 to 199 to the individual countries in alphabetical order. Subsequently, we compiled a random sample using a random selection function. A suitable way of selecting countries is random selection, given that each entity has the same chance to get into the sample, other words is in no way excluded from the selection. These countries are as follows: Argentina, Austria, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Dominican Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Haiti, Hungary, China, Indonesia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Russia, Slovakia, Sudan, Switzerland, Turkey, Ukraine, UK, USA and Zimbabwe. Countries are diverse in terms of economic maturity, demography, geography, different cultures, different levels of corruption and different political systems in the countries of the world.

We use the statistical software IBM SPSS Statistics 19 for evaluation, we consider a significance level of 0.05 during testing. From statistical methods, we use Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple linear regression. Pearson's correlation coefficient takes values from -1 to 1 . Dependence between individual characters, resp. degree/degree of how the characters are related to each other, we determined as follows: values of the correlation coefficient (r) in the range from 0 to $|0.3|$ we evaluate it as a weak direct, resp. indirect dependence, values in the interval from $|0.3|$ after $|0.6|$ we evaluate it as a medium direct, resp. indirect dependence and values in the interval from $|0.6|$ after $|1|$ as a strong direct, resp. indirect dependence.

We use multiple linear regression when looking for the values of a dependent variable from a linear combination of the values of several independent variables. The aim of multiple linear regression is to explain the variance of the dependent variable by statistics R^2 and to estimate the effect of each independent variable on the dependent variable by non-standardized regression coefficients b , controlling the action of other independent variables that enter the model. The relative strength

of the influence of individual variables on the dependent variable is determined by standardized regression coefficients beta (Vojtková, 2007).

We draw input data for evaluation from databases of international organizations that ensure primary data collection.

4.4 Results and Discussion

We compiled scatter plots of interdependence between the individual independent variables (Rule of Law Index, Freedom of the Press Index and Competitiveness Index) and the dependent variable (Corruption Perceptions Index).

The scatter plot of the dependence of the Rule of Law Index and the Corruption Perceptions Index indicates a slight fragmentation of countries; these countries are not concentrated in one area. Approximately common values are characteristic of Switzerland, Finland and New Zealand, while the Netherlands, Germany and Luxembourg are also approaching these countries in terms of value. Sudan, Zimbabwe, Russia and China are on the periphery, caused by the low values of both indices (the prevalence of corruption in the country is high, and the rule of law is low). Brazil, along with the Dominican Republic (high rule of law and more widespread corruption than other countries), also separated from the group. The pair of countries Czech Republic and Poland are characterized by similar values of both indices, but in the case of the Czech Republic and Poland, these are the inverse values of both indices. While Poland, compared to the Czech Republic, is characterized by a lower prevalence of corruption, the rule of law has become lower. In the case of the Czech Republic, this is the opposite situation—more widespread corruption and a higher rule of law (Fig. 4.1).

Kotera et al. (2010) find that in countries with high democracy levels, an increase in government size can decrease the level of corruption, while it will do the opposite, if democracy is weak. This is precisely because, in countries with functioning democracies, politicians are monitored through the media and free elections. On the contrary, if these institutions are weak, it will cause an increase in the level of corruption (Kotera et al., 2010). The following figure (Fig. 4.2) shows the relationship between the Corruption Perceptions Index and the Press Freedom Index as one of the institutions that has a positive effect on the level of corruption in a functioning democracy. According to Pellegrini (2011), if democracy has existed in a country for at least 10 years but not more than 45 years, it leads to a reduction in the level of corruption in the country. Similar results were obtained by Treisman (2000) and Rock (2009), who state that democracy leads to a reduction in corruption only if it is established in the country for a long time. Our results point out that the level of corruption is higher in the former post-communist countries, because of democratic establishment in these countries has not been established for a long enough time.

The scatter plot of the Corruption Perceptions Index and the Freedom of the Press Index indicates the fragmentation of countries, which means that even in this

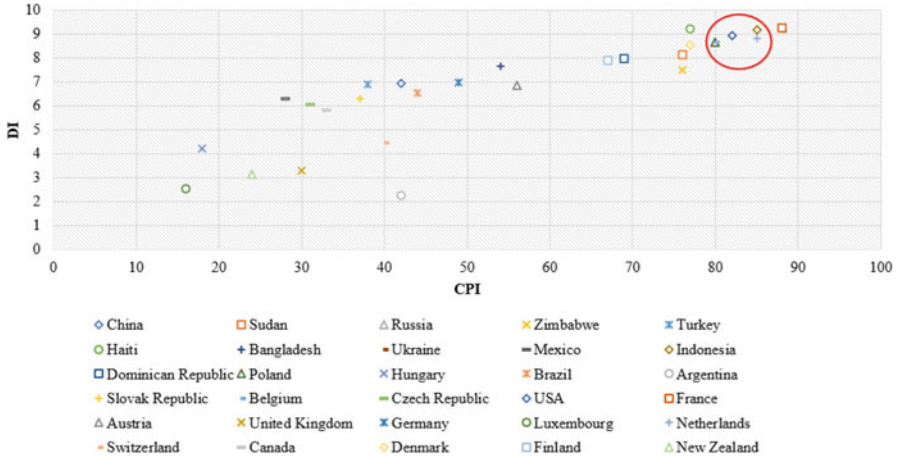


Fig. 4.1 Combinations of corruption perceptions index and rule of law index (2019). (Source: Processing based on Infographics.economist and transparency international data; World Justice Project 2021)

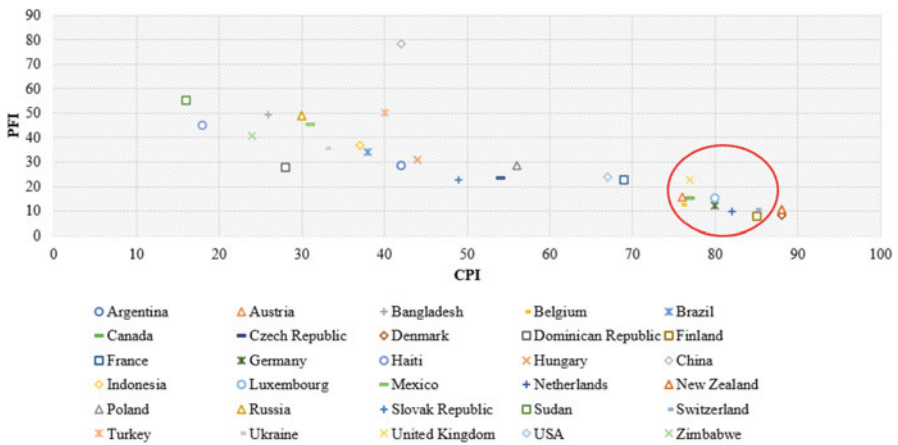


Fig. 4.2 Combinations of corruption perceptions index and press freedom index (2020). (Source: Processing based on Infographics.economist and reporters without borders data; Reporters Without Borders 2021)

case, countries are not concentrated in one area. Approximately common values are characteristic of Switzerland, Finland and Austria. These are countries that have achieved a high level of the rule of law. These countries are at about the same level as in the previous case (Fig. 4.1). Sudan and China are on the periphery, which is due to the low values of both indices (in the country, the prevalence of corruption is high and the freedom of the press is low). Haiti, along with the Dominican Republic and Zimbabwe (a high degree of freedom of the press and more widespread corruption

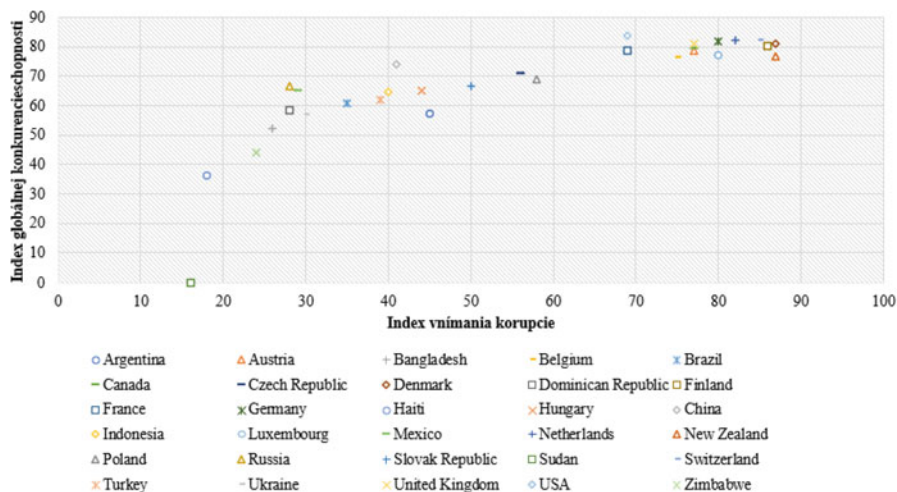


Fig. 4.3 Combinations of corruption perceptions index and global competitiveness index (2019). (Source: Own processing from the obtained flia.org data)

than other countries), also separated from the group. The pair of countries, China and Indonesia, have similar levels of corruption index, but in the case of Indonesia, the promotion of freedom of expression in public is at a better level (Fig. 4.3).

The scatter plot of the Corruption Perceptions Index and the Global Competitiveness Index indicates the fragmentation of countries, which means that even in this case, countries are not concentrated in one area. Approximately common values are characteristic, as in the previous case of countries such as New Zealand, Switzerland, Denmark and Finland. Similar values are achieved in Canada, Austria and the UK. Haiti, Zimbabwe and Bangladesh are on the periphery, which has caused the low values of both indices (in the country, the prevalence of corruption is high and the global competitiveness index is low). According to Enste and Heldman (2017), the same regulations and changes in tax rates adopted in Russia and the Scandinavian countries may also bring differences in the level of corruption due to the historical development of individual countries. Dreher (2009) state that the quality of an institution has a major impact on the level of corruption. This effect can be divided into a direct effect and an indirect effect which works through lowering the scope of the shadow economy. According to Lamsdorff (2006) the economic freedom, the degree of competitiveness in economy is essential for the reduction of corruption. If there is a lower degree of economic freedom in a given country, resp. competitiveness, this results in an increase in the level of corruption. The reason is that more competition there is, the harder is it to hide corrupt payments, because competitors might uncover the corrupt activities and therefore the risk of being detected is higher than in a monopoly market (Enste & Heldman, 2017).

In the next section, we will focus on independent variables that affect the level of corruption. Data are processed by Pearson correlation coefficient and

Table 4.1 Correlations between the dependent variable corruption rate index and the independent variables

Year	Independent variable	Democracy measure index	Freedom of the press index	Global competitiveness index
2012	r	0.860	-0.727	0.907
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000
2013	r	0.836	-0.762	0.903
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000
2014	r	0.862	-0.778	0.900
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000
2015	r	0.849	-0.776	0.915
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000
2016	r	0.853	-0.749	0.909
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000
2017	r	0.874	-0.748	0.901
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000
2018	r	0.848	-0.752	0.970
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000
2019	r	0.832	-0.782	0.929
	p	0.000	0.000	0.000
2020	r	0.841	-0.823	
	p	0.000	0.000	

Source: Own processing

linear regression analysis. The results of the dependence between the independent variable and the dependent variables are given only for those independent variables for which the dependence has been confirmed. The results are processed for the years 2012 to 2020 or from 2019. Due to the different methodology, we use only data for 2019 in the competitiveness rate index. If the relationship between the dependent and independent variables appeared in more than half of the observed periods, we consider this independent variable affecting the level of corruption. The following Tables 4.1 and 4.2 summarize the values of the correlation coefficients and determinations for independent variables for which the existence of interdependence was confirmed within the observed years.

All independent variables in the table can be considered as significant factors influencing the level of corruption in the given countries. Similarly, Enste and Heldman (2017) state that the index of freedom of the press and the quality of institutions—the competitiveness index and the rule of law index are among the strong factors influencing the level of corruption. According to Laderman et al. (2005), Pellegrini (2011) press freedom reduces corruption. On the other hand, there are opinions as stated by Freille et al. (2007), who claim that the media cannot be considered beneficial in general since newspapers might report false information in order to increase the sales. Also, journalist may be involved in corruption themselves leading to false or omitted information (Enste & Heldman, 2017). The

Table 4.2 Coefficients of determination between the dependent variable and the independent variables in %

Independent variable/year	Democracy measure index	Freedom of the press index	Global competitiveness index
2012	73.96	52.85	82.26
2013	69.89	58.06	81.54
2014	74.3	60.53	81.00
2015	72.08	60.22	83.72
2016	72.76	56.1	82.63
2017	76.39	55.95	81.18
2018	71.91	56.55	94.09
2019	69.22	61.15	86.30
2020	70.73	79.92	

Source: Own processing

table shows the extent to which individual independent variables determine the dependent variable.

The global competitiveness index has the most significant impact on the level of corruption. In the following section, we present the results of multiple linear regression for the period from 2012 to 2019 (Table 4.3).

Significant variables in our case are the variables in the column Sig. They have a value less than 0.05. From the data, it is possible to find out whether the given variable influences the index of perception of corruption in a positive or negative sense. A positive relationship can be found, for example, in 2018 between the Global Competitiveness Index and the Perceived Corruption Rate Index—the higher the level of competition, the lower the level of corruption. If the value of this variable increases by 1, it is possible to expect an increase in the perceived corruption rate index by 16,230. On the contrary, there is a negative relationship between the index of perceived corruption and the index of freedom of the press. In this case, however, it should be noted that the Press Freedom Index has the opposite rating; it means 0 is the best possible level. This means that if it is possible to present free speech in a country, the level of corruption in that country is reduced. Changing this variable by 1 would cause the Corruption Perceptions Index to increase by 8939 points in 2019. According to standardized coefficients, the independent variable Global Competitiveness Index has the greatest impact on the Corruption Perceptions Index.

4.5 Conclusion

Several scientific studies declare the impact of the political environment on the level of corruption in the country. However, in the cases known to us, these are claims based on qualitative analysis. Quantitative verification of political factors of

Table 4.3 Linear regression year 2012–2017

Model	Unstandardized coefficients			Standardized coefficients		t	Sig.	Correlations		
	B	Std. Error	Beta	Beta	Zero order			Partial	Part	
2012	(Constant)	-53.219	9.537			-5.581	0.000			
	GCI_2012	24.679	1.938	0.748		12.736	0.000	0.907	0.928	0.670
	PFI_2012	-0.243	0.040	-0.360		-6.139	0.000	-0.692	-0.769	-0.323
2013	(Constant)	-46.464	11.560			-4.020	0.000			
	GCI_2013	24.874	2.204	0.719		11.288	0.000	0.903	0.911	0.624
	PFI_2013	-0.542	0.093	-0.372		-5.833	0.000	-0.728	-0.753	-0.323
2014	(Constant)	-44.996	10.135			-4.440	0.000			
	GCI_2014	24.782	1.922	0.703		12.891	0.000	0.900	0.930	0.616
	PFI_2014	-0.608	0.081	-0.411		-7.535	0.000	-0.749	-0.828	-0.360
2015	(Constant)	-46.739	8.659			-5.398	0.000			
	GCI_2015	25.470	1.616	0.721		15.761	0.000	0.915	0.951	0.629
	PFI_2015	-0.631	0.072	-0.398		-8.714	0.000	-0.750	-0.863	-0.348
2016	(Constant)	-44.265	9.399			-4.710	0.000			
	GCI_2016	24.555	1.745	0.735		14.071	0.000	0.909	0.940	0.655
	PFI_2016	-0.555	0.075	-0.385		-7.373	0.000	-0.717	-0.822	-0.343
2017	(Constant)	-39.894	10.303			-3.872	0.001			
	GCI_2017	23.450	1.876	0.722		12.501	0.000	0.901	0.926	0.642
	PFI_2017	-0.572	0.085	-0.390		-6.761	0.000	-0.721	-0.798	-0.347
2018	(Constant)	-31.148	7.475			-4.167	0.000			
	GCI_2018	1.525	0.094	0.861		16.230	0.000	0.970	0.954	0.657
	PFI_2018	-0.252	0.079	-0.168		-3.175	0.004	-0.725	-0.529	-0.128
2019	(Constant)	-7.056	5.609			-1.258	0.220			
	GCI_2019	1.253	0.072	0.733		17.383	0.000	0.929	0.960	0.626
	PFI_2019	-0.537	0.060	-0.377		-8.939	0.000	-0.758	-0.869	-0.322
2020	(Constant)	-0.130	7080			-0.018	0.985			
	PFI_2020	8272	1006	0.841		8219	0.000	0.841	0.841	0.841

Source: Own processing

corruption in the context of understanding the problem of corruption is lacking. The presented study is unique in this respect; it quantifies the impact of the level of enforcement of political accountability and transparency of the political system on the level of corruption in the country. The secondary research seeks a relationship between the Corruption Perceptions Index on the one hand and the Rule of Law Index, the Freedom of the Press Index, the Competitiveness Index of Capabilities capturing the rule of law, press freedom and the quality of institutions on the other.

The result is the creation of a unique basic basis for identified political factors conditioning corrupt behaviour, the relevance of which has been confirmed by mathematical and statistical methods. Although we could assume that the enforceability of political responsibility given the degree of democracy is key to maintaining a low level of corruption, quantitative testing of the level of corruption in relation to the quality of the rule of law has not clearly demonstrated this. The reason is the fact that democracy combined with political decentralization can guarantee a reduction in the level of corruption only in the case of transparent operation of the political system and guaranteed quality of institutions.

The quality of institutions, which realistically reflects the very functioning of society, is thus an important factor in corrupt behaviour. This was confirmed by our analysis. When we speak about the protection of property rights, the existence of organized crime and especially in its economic form have the greatest impact on the level of corruption—recently several facts in the Slovak Republic, connected with the murder of investigative journalist Ján Kuciak, have clearly demonstrated this documenting the huge scope and impact the murder of investigative journalist Ján Kuciak. These contexts confirm the results of our analysis, which have shown that, in addition to the quality of the institutions, the freedom of the press also affects the transparency of the political environment and thus the level of corruption.

In addition, other factors expressed in other indicators can be taken into account—the Happy Planet Index (contains inequality), the Human Development Index and the e-Government Development index. In this regard, we see other possibilities of our research, the results of which could be used as a basis for design and implementation of more targeted anti-corruption measures by bodies of the decisive and executive public administration.

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