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Organizational cultures as agents of differential association: explaining the variation in bribery practices in Ukrainian universities

Marina Zaloznaya

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Abstract This article explores the variation in bureaucratic bribery practices of ordinary Ukrainians. Despite common arguments about corruption-generating structural constraints of economic transition and about the regional culture of corruption in Eastern Europe, interviews with university-affiliated Ukrainians reveal significant variation in rates and patterns of their engagement in bribery. This article shows that participation in corruption is closely associated with actors' exposure to organizational cultures. It uses Edwin Sutherland's differential association theory of crime to argue that the acquisition of definitions that are either favorable or unfavorable to bribery through exposure to different organizational cultures of universities leads Ukrainians to either commit or avoid bribery. Students and professors acquire crime-related definitions through (1) encounters with institutionalized bribery mechanisms, (2) conversations with peers and colleagues with more substantial experience within specific universities; and (3) observations of other students and instructors. Karl Weick's notion of organizational enactment is argued to be the mechanism whereby these learned definitions translate into specific bribery-related behaviors. Inasmuch as acting against these definitions may lead to academic or professional failure, testing their validity is risky for university members. The processes of organizational enactment of bribery-related definitions are, therefore, at the core of organizations' role as agents of differential association. The article concludes with a brief discussion of the potential synthesis of differential association and organizational theories as a powerful tool for the study of bureaucratic corruption.

Sociological criminologists have traditionally approached the study of small-scale economic crime in the developing world from a Mertonian perspective. Within this paradigm widespread bureaucratic corruption in Eastern Europe is customarily attributed to the lack of legitimate means for achieving the socially dictated goals in the contexts of political disarray, economic instability, and dysfunctional institutions. Historically-minded accounts suggest that inefficient bureaucracies and scarcity of consumer goods during the Soviet era gave rise to ubiquitous informal economies, while mass impoverishment, weak rule of law, and chaotic adoption of Western-style

M. Zaloznaya (✉)
Department of Sociology, University of Iowa, W140 Seashore Hall, The University of Iowa, Iowa City 52242 IA, USA
e-mail: marina-zaloznaya@uiowa.edu

institutions in the 1990s created ample incentives for illegality [20, 23, 25]. Some scholars argue that over time these structural constraints have generated countrywide normative systems that justify economic crime and neutralize its negative connotations - such as 'cultures of corruption' or 'bribonomy' [6, 47].

These Mertonian explanations, however, risk an overly deterministic view of structural constraints associated with the Soviet era and the transition period. Research shows that highly corrupt societies are, in fact, characterized by markedly differentiated patterns and rates of bureaucratic illegality on the ground. Not only do large portions of their populations regularly abstain from corrupt exchanges altogether, the patterns of economic crime in these societies are widely varied and range from nepotistic favors to impersonal monetary exchanges [16, 20, 28]. When it comes to small-scale corruption, what explains the observed behavioral variation within populations that are exposed to the same structural limitations and normative systems?

This article shows that on-the-ground variation in street-level economic crime rates and patterns is informed by organizational cultures, which mediate countrywide structural pressures and region-wide cultures of corruption. Interviews with Ukrainian university actors reveal that it is within specific organizations that they learn definitions that are either favorable or unfavorable to corruption. Based on this finding, this article argues that Edwin Sutherland's [42] differential association theory of crime offers a useful analytical tool for explaining the uneven distribution of economic criminality in the developing countries. The article concludes with a brief discussion of a possible theoretical synthesis between the differential association and organizational cultures theories.

What is corruption?

Corruption is commonly defined as the abuse of public office for private gain [17]. Most scholars, of course, recognize that boundaries between corrupt and non-corrupt behavior are socially constructed within specific cultural contexts. For instance, Scheppele [35] argues that in Soviet times the state overlooked the abuses of public property in exchange for citizens' complicity with the regime. As a result, people were and still are expected to assist their loved ones when they have access to state resources. Scheppele maintains that in this context the abuse of public office is not corruption. Corruption is a "violation of duties that people actually consider binding. Duties of friendship, loyalty, and integrity within one's networks, matter a lot in the former Soviet world. […] Corruption cannot be a failure of duty when no duty is felt…"([35]:522–532). Bova and Valliere also argue that the concept of corruption is not applicable in the non-Western legal systems that lack civil society, rule of law, and clear administrative regulations ([6]:7). Hallak and Poisson suggest that it is more productive to make a distinction between ethical and unethical behaviors rather than corrupt and non-corrupt ones ([16]:31). Granovetter agrees that corruption is often defined by a violation of a local moral principle rather than a legal infringement and is contingent on the relative social status of participants ([13]:154–167). James Scott's distinction between market and non-market corruption offers a partial resolution of this definitional dilemma. While market corruption refers to the sale of office to the highest bidder, non-market exchanges are informed by other obligations, such as

familial loyalty and tradition ([36]:12). Waite and Allen, in turn, suggest that instead of offering one-sentence definitions, scholars should identify the degrees of corruption and list different criteria for locating an exchange on a corruption continuum (i.e. illegality, immorality, amount of harm, etc ([50]:282–288)).

Defining corruption in education is just as challenging as defining corruption in general. Since professional standards in education presuppose more than respect of material goods, educational corruption "includes the abuse of authority for personal as well as material gain" ([17]:637). Osipian emphasizes the systemic character of education corruption and its diffusion in both public and private sectors ([30]:6). Hallak and Poisson [15], in contrast, define it in terms of its consequences "on access, quality, or equity in education". Corruption in education is not limited to the educational process. Heyneman distinguishes between corruption in admissions, corruption in students' certification, corruption in the accreditation of educational institutions, and corruption in the procurement of educational supplies ([17]:640–648). Osipian adds that educational corruption includes cheating, plagiarism, sexual misconduct, and corrupt practices in academic publishing ([30]:8). Others also note corruption in hiring practices ([2]:3–4), private tutoring [37], and educational property ownership and taxes (Heyneman 2004). Rumyantseva [34] suggests that educational corruption that affects students, such as bribery and nepotism, is qualitatively different from corruption that does not affect them directly, such as embezzlement of school property and tax evasion.

This article deals specifically with bribery in universities, defined as unsanctioned exchanges of resources between students and instructors that lead to admission or academic advancement of the former. This kind of educational corruption is, arguably, one of the most insidious and one of the most consequential types of educational corruption in present-day Ukraine. Temple and Petrov [44] identify three types of bribery exchanges that affect students: extortion by professors, voluntary offerings by students, and cooperative exchanges. Osipian adds that the volume of informal payments depends on the prestige of educational institutions, wealth of parents, and their connections to university officials ([33]: 114).

From Africa to the United States, corruption happens in universities worldwide [45]. In many developing regions educational institutions are among the most corrupted bureaucracies ([30]:3–5). Educational corruption is one of the most socially harmful forms of small-scale economic crime, often marking the first experience of corruption in the life course of youth ([34]; Heyneman 2004). Smolentseva [41] writes that most Russian students participate in corruption at least once during their university careers. A 2006 survey by the Ukrainian Ministry of Education reveals that 20 % of students know about instances of bribery and 13 % admit to personal involvement ([30]:1). According to Janashia, Georgian "students can practically buy his or her way through the institution, paying for every exam and, ultimately, a diploma" ([22]:10–11). Scholars argue that chaotic decentralization of higher education and impoverishment of its employees created a necessity for staff to supplement their meager incomes through bribes, nepotism, exchanges of favors, private tutoring, and sale of assignments and diplomas ([32]: 324; [50]) Educational corruption is also a function of inefficient testing mechanisms, emergence of private education in the context of underdeveloped legal regulations, protectionism, and weak links between educational and labor markets. Osipian [30] argues that significant discretion of

university staff, combined with scarce resources and skyrocketing demand for higher education perpetuate educational corruption over time.

Who participates in corruption?

Frederico Varese's [47], concept of a 'pervasively corrupt society' denotes a society where ubiquitous corruption gives rise to normative orders that neutralize its negative connotations. In such societies, identifying potential partners for illicit exchanges is virtually costless and uncertainty over the delivery of bribes is minimal. As a result, illegality is normal and expected. Corruption, then, becomes an integral part of what Bova and Valliere [6] call infralaw – a set of de-facto laws that govern social life of a group. Scholars refer to such normative orders as 'cultures of corruption' [29, 40].

Although Varese [47] and others argue that former socialist countries are characterized by cultures of corruption and 'bribonomy' ([39]:27–28; [6]:6–12), the research on behavioral patterns of their citizens reveals significant variation: even in the pervasively corrupt contexts many people abstain from corruption. Miller et al find that actual corrupt behavior of Eastern Europeans is only loosely related to their beliefs about the spread of corruption. While 81 % of surveyed Ukrainians believed that in order to get a bureaucratic service citizens needed to offer an expensive present or money, only 33 % reported actual participation in bribery ([28]:72, 104). A poll by the Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs shows that 29 % of Ukrainians pay bribes regularly, 19 % do so occasionally, and 17 % refuse to offer bribes ([6]:9). Although some of this difference probably reflects the biased reporting of illegality, other findings suggest that the gap remains even with an allowance for this bias.[1]

In Ukraine, as in other countries with a culture of corruption, many people engage in bureaucratic illegality, but many people also abstain. Furthermore, those who participate in corruption choose different ways of engagement. Caroline Humphrey's [20] work on post-Soviet Russia describes the highly differentiated modes of participating in illicit exchanges, distinguishing between 'transactional bribes', 'greasing', and 'local tariffs' ([20]:130–140). Hallak and Poisson further differentiate between the by-pass of criteria, capture/leakage of funds, bribery, favoritism, nepotism, fraud, influence peddling, and other corrupt acts ([16]:30–31).

What determines this on-the-ground variation within the so-called cultures of corruption? Unfortunately, there is no straightforward answer to this question. Grodeland, et al. show that citizens rely on an assortment of strategies depending on how they perceive bureaucrats' goals, the importance of their bureaucratic problem, and their access to resources ([14]:664–669). Miller et al suggest that corrupt behavior is shaped by the bargaining power of organizational actors vis-à-vis each other (officials' discretion and clients' dependence on their services).[2] Besides, they suggest that occupation-specific cultures of gift giving may also affect the vitality of informal

[1] Many respondents who understood bribery as ubiquitous claimed to have never been asked to pay a bribe ([28]:85).

[2] Miller et al also find that country of residence, economic pressure, type of industry, and occupation, affect individuals' engagement in bribery([28]:275–278).

economies. At the same time they find little association between the educational background, gender, age, income and the differentiated involvement in corruption ([28]:115–118; 130). Other studies also find no straightforward relationship between gender, education, and corruption [12, 38]. Heyneman et al. suggests that the decision to engage in corruption often depends on the personal value system ([18]:315). Based on a survey of students in 12 Ukrainian cities, Shaw [38] finds that corrupt behavior is predicted by past corrupt engagements and perceptions of corruption. Other scholars also find that beliefs about the spread of corruption predict individuals' participation in illicit exchanges [10]. Interviews with Ukrainian university students, their parents, and instructors, discussed in the rest of this article, however, point to the importance of organizational dynamics in determining their decisions to engage in or abstain from economic crime. Even a brief consideration of the case reveals significant variation in rates and patterns of bribery across different universities and other organizational sub-units, such as institutes and departments. What role can organizations play in determining their members' engagement in economic crime?

Organizational cultures as agents of differential association

The recognition of organizations' potential to shape deviant behavior of their members can be traced back to the writings of Max Weber, whose work inspired many social scientists to explore the 'dark side of organizations' ([4, 49]: 271–272). Organizational influence on deviance is most readily apparent when structural constraints, created by organizations, either enable or limit the possibilities for illegality. Inasmuch as bureaucratic organizations reflect the notions of purposive rationality in their structural make-up and role prescriptions, this approach to organizational behavior has an intuitive appeal. Scholars argue that organizational crime is more systematically guided by instrumental considerations than other types of crime: in criminological literature, organizational offenders are often portrayed as sober, calculating, and impervious to impulsive behaviors [3, 7].

At the same time, this utilitarian model cannot account for all organizational behavior. Research shows that actors' conduct within organizations is also affected by cultural beliefs, power differentials, and emotional understandings ([48]: 27; [1]: 39–40; [11]). Diane Vaughan argues that a better way to analyze deviance in organizations is through the situated action model, whereby the means and ends of social action are not predetermined and stable over time, but are continuously negotiated within specific social contexts. Vaughan writes that "decision-making […] cannot be disentangled from social context, which shapes preferences and thus what individual perceives as rational. Moreover, the situated action paradigm acknowledges that purposive social action can regularly produce unexpected outcomes, thus challenging all rational actor accounts of social behavior" ([48]: 33). By emphasizing social interaction within contextualized encounters, this behavioral model draws attention to the role of organizational systems of meaning, or organizational cultures, in shaping economic crime.

Similarly, Baker and Faulkner [3] argue that price fixing in the heavy electrical equipment industry is not so much a result of individual greed as it is a traditional way of 'doing things'. They suggest that, instead of rational calculus, individual

actors are driven by tacit cues from their supervisors and colleagues. In *Moral Mazes,* Robert Jackall [21] shows that in corporations the assertion of status or subordination often takes primacy over ethical or even instrumentally rational considerations. He suggests that organizations tend to subdue the moral beliefs that employees hold outside of the workplace; once a part of an organization, actors tend to follow the morality that is negotiated within specific organizational situations. Jackall claims that "…morality does not emerge from some set of internally held convictions or principles, but rather from ongoing albeit changing relationships with some person, some coterie, some social network, some clique that matters to a person. Since these relationships are always multiple, contingent, and in flux, managerial moralities are always situational, always relative" ([21]: 101). Organizations, therefore, transform individual morality of their members into a shared set of meanings, created and experienced collectively through members' interactions with each other.

These studies suggest that while organizational actors themselves are not irrational, their participation in illegality is, as a rule, not an outcome of individual-level amoral calculus. As members of organizations, they make choices that are consistent with organizational realities, experienced through collective myths about organizational operations, reactions to the actions of others, immediate situational pressures, rumors, and untested assumptions. Ideas regarding the appropriate conduct are not so much brought in from the outside as they are constructed in reference to the organizational cultures of deviance and transparency, experienced and interpreted through interaction with other organizational members.

This article argues that, to the extent that organizations serve as containers of definitions that are either favorable or unfavorable to crime, they function as agents of differential association that influence the propensity of their members to participate in or avoid corruption. Differential association theory, developed by Edwin Sutherland in 1939 is based on the assumption that normative systems, or cultures, of different societies include definitions that are favorable to the violation of formal codes and those that are unfavorable. "A person becomes delinquent because of an absence of definitions favorable to violations of law versus the definitions unfavorable toward the violation of law" ([43]: 81). The process whereby social actors select one of them over others is called differential association. The adoption of these definitions happens in intimate settings through interactions with other actors who espouse them. Favorable and unfavorable definitions are weighted by frequency and duration of actors' exposure, as well as the priority and intensity of the particular association whereby the definitions are learnt. According to Sutherland, class, age, gender, ethnicity, family status, and other individual factors affect criminality only indirectly by affecting the probability of learning the definitions that are either favorable or unfavorable to it.

Despite its intuitive appeal and extensive empirical application, Sutherland's theory has proven difficult to use rigorously due to its conceptual ambiguity. Not only does it lack precise operationalization of its major components, such as 'definitions', 'favorable/unfavorable', and 'association', it also does not spell out the mechanisms whereby the exposure to different definitions translates into specific

criminal behaviors ([46]: 406–408). Thus, while some authors argue that individual association with definitions that are favorable to breaking the law translates directly into criminal behaviors (i.e. [19]), others write about criminal perspectives as a mediating variable between associations and behavior (i.e. [26]); yet others talk about the reciprocal nature of causality between beliefs and actions (i.e. [8]).

This article offers a case study of the differentiating effect of actors' exposure to organizational cultures on their propensity to engage in university bribery, which elucidates the actual patterns whereby differential association operates on the ground. It argues that bribery conduct of university members is an outcome of their acquisition of definitions that are either favorable or unfavorable to bribery. Students and professors acquire these definitions through (1) exposure to institutionalized bribery mechanisms, (2) conversations with peers and colleagues with more substantial experience within a specific educational establishment; and (3) observations of other students and instructors. Karl Weick's [51] notion of organizational enactment is argued to be the mechanism whereby these learned definitions translate into specific decisions to either partake in or avoid bribery. Weick suggests that most seemingly matter-of-fact organizational behavior "consists of spurious knowledge, based on avoided tests" ([51]: 267). Inasmuch as acting against the expectations of others may lead to academic or professional failure, testing bribery-related definitions, acquired through exposure to university cultures, is risky for university members. Most of them prefer to comply with the rules of appropriate conduct that they learn through observations, hearsay, and encounters with bribery mechanisms. The processes of organizational enactment of bribery-related definitions are, therefore, at the core of organizations' role as determinants of variation in bribery practices.

Methodology

This study is based on 63 in-depth interviews with the affiliates of Ukrainian universities.[3] Subjects spoke both about their experiences with university bribery and their opinions about its prevalence, roots, and consequences. The data were collected in two stages. During the first stage (carried out in winter 2007), I conducted 32 interviews with students and recent alumni (graduated within 5 years), parents of students, and instructors. Preliminary analysis of these interviews revealed the organization-specific patterns in bribery. I then conducted a second round of interviews to investigate this trend (in summer of 2007), which consisted of 31 conversations with the affiliates of three universities (two universities in Kiev and one in Kharkov), identified by the first round respondents as 'very corrupt', 'somewhat corrupt', and 'not corrupt at all'. In each of these three universities, I interviewed 4–6 faculty members and 5–7 students. I then integrated the interviews from both rounds

[3] In 2005 Ukraine had 1003 higher educational institutions: 130 universities, 63 academies, 135 institutes, and 2 conservatives (228 public and 102 private). These included classical universities and specialized institutes. Public universities include 'budget'(tuition-free) tracks and 'contract' tracks where students pay tuition. Regulation of higher education is distributed between central and local authorities and educational establishments ([24]:45–50).

of data collection to carry out the analysis.[4] The combined sample consisted of 28 students, 22 professors, and 13 parents.[5]

During both stages, I used snowball sampling to recruit interviewees. Initial respondents in each category were located through my personal networks. Each recommended another potential interviewee who introduced me to the next one, and so on. Snowball, or chain referral, sampling technique is widely used in the studies of sensitive topics, such as illegal or stigmatized behaviors, and in the studies of hidden and hard-to-reach populations (Biernacki and [5, 27]). Although university affiliates are not a hidden group per se, individual students, parents, and instructors are not always willing to talk to an unfamiliar researcher about informal economic activities they partake in. The major advantage of snowball sampling lies in the fact that each additional respondent is introduced to the researcher by someone who the respondent knows and trusts, making it easier for the interviewee to discuss sensitive issues. While it is plausible that I could have assembled a substantial sample of willing respondents through random sampling, snowball recruitment, arguably, significantly increased the response rate of potential respondents, augmented the truthfulness and accuracy of their testimonies, and allowed me to engage with interviewees on a deeper level than would have been the case, had I not been recommended by their acquaintances.

Inasmuch as acquaintances tend to share certain social characteristics, the main drawback of this approach to sampling is the selection bias resulting in systematic inclusion or exclusion of one type of respondents ([9]:47). In assembling my sample, I tried to control for this problem by requesting to be introduced to students, parents, and instructors, who are (1) affiliated with a different educational institution (stage 1) or different department in the same institution (stage 2), and (2) of the opposite gender that the respondent making introductions. As a result, despite the relatively narrow basis for the initial selection, the final sample was diverse with regard to gender as well as the university and disciplinary affiliation of the respondents (See

[4] Due to (1) small number of respondents; (2) asymmetric samples across the three institutions; and (3) differences between institutions (in terms of their geographic locations and size), I decided against drawing conclusions from the direct comparison between these three cases. Instead, I integrated stage I & II interviews, and used all of the data to support my arguments.

[5] The unequal numbers of respondents in each of the three categories reflect the relative ease of access to each group of interviewees and the relative involvement of each type of actors in bribery exchanges in universities. While parents tend to be involved mostly in the admissions-related bribery and have, on average, less exposure to informal cultures of universities, their testimony is used largely to support the testimony of students. Professors and students, on the other hand, tend to be involved, whether directly or not, in most bribery exchanges in higher education. While students were generally willing to participate in the research project, professors were more difficult to recruit and have, therefore, a smaller sample size.

It is important to note that the unequal number of respondents in each group points to the potential inability of the researcher and the reader to make a direct comparison between the accounts of different actors involved in corrupt exchanges in universities. Since the sample of parents is, likely, less representative than the samples of other two respondent groups, it is important to exercise caution in drawing parallels. At the same time, given the overall small numbers of respondents in each category, as well as the asymmetry in their institutional affiliations and engagement in corruption, the juxtaposition of different accounts is not desirable in general. Rather, the accounts offered by the three types of respondents should be taken as three general perspectives on university corruption in Ukraine rather than the stories told by different participants of the same corrupt exchanges.

Appendix). While the respondent sample was not representative, it was sufficiently broad to not grossly over-represent or overlook any one type of respondents.

I located initial respondents in three different cities: Kiev, Kharkov, and Kerch. Kiev is the capital and hosts a variety of universities with students from around the country. I conducted 30 interviews in Kiev. Most student-respondents from Kiev universities came from smaller cities, towns, and villages throughout Ukraine. Kharkov is the second largest Ukrainian city with several large universities and multiple regional schools. I carried out 18 interviews in Kharkov. Most Kharkov respondents came from adjacent towns and Southern Ukraine. The third recruitment site was Kerch, a small industrial city in Southern Ukraine that is home to a naval academy and several regional branches of large universities. I carried out eight interviews in Kerch. All students interviewed in Kerch were originally from the city.

Respondents' introductions also led to several interviews with students and parents from five other medium-sized cities: Dnepropetrovsk (three interviews), Donetsk (two interviews), Kherson (one interview), Simferopol (one interview), and Sevastopol (one interview). While I travelled to Dnepropetrovsk, Donetsk and Kherson, I met the respondents from Simferopol and Sevastopol during their visits to Kiev. Since most Ukrainian higher educational establishments are located in large and medium-sized cities, recruitment in these sites resulted in a geographically diverse sample.[6] The respondents in the resulting sample were affiliated with five large public universities with a broad range of academic foci, two medium-sized state universities, two regional branches of state universities, two specialized state institutes, one prestigious semi-private university, and one small private institute (see Appendix).

The interviews were semi-structured. Organized around several major themes, they included a set of mandatory questions concerning these topics, as well as the spaces for interviewees to stir the conversation in the directions that they considered important.[7] The interviews opened with questions about the respondents' general opinions about the spread, causes, and consequences of corruption in the Ukrainian higher education. This set of questions was followed by a discussion of what respondents understood by 'corruption', 'bribery', 'extortion', 'present', 'compensation', and other notions they had invoked when asked about university corruption. Interviewees were then questioned on their own experiences with university bribery. Specifically, I asked whether they or their acquaintances have ever participated in bribery, what were the reasons for their involvement, how they found out about the

[6] There may be differences in corruption patterns in Eastern and Western Ukraine and among different ethnicities (Russians vs. Ukrainians, vs. Crimean Tatars). Studies find an association between the dominant religion and illegality (Lipset & Lenz 2000), which could translate into different corruption rates in the Orthodox East and largely Catholic West of Ukraine and between Orthodox/Catholic Slavs and Muslim Tatars. Also, if street-level corruption has roots in Soviet administrative tradition [23], Western Ukraine, influenced by Poland, may be less corrupt. Unfortunately, the collected data are insufficient to assess this hypothesis: due to limited time and resources, it does not cover Western parts of the country. Yet, it is fair to argue that this oversight does not directly affect the argument of the article. Whether or not there are differences between the regions or ethnicities, local organizational cultures of corruption mediate region-wide normative systems and individual predispositions of Ukrainians in the East and the West regions of the country.

[7] Many interviewees took advantage of the spaces, built into the interviews, to talk about corruption in other bureaucratic spheres, the political situation in Ukraine in general, the economic hardships of their families and other ordinary Ukrainians, and the changes that took place in the informal economies of universities and other bureaucracies over time.

appropriate ways to conduct illicit exchanges and the appropriate sums to offer or accept, what kind of interactions accompanied these exchanges, and how they justified their actions. The interviews, carried out during the second stage of data collection, also included a series of questions about the informal interactions between various university members and the normative environments of universities, with which the respondents were affiliated. The interviews ended with a discussion of the respondents' ideas about the possible ways to curb educational corruption in Ukraine.

While parent and student respondents included those who confessed bribery and those who did not, all interviewed professors denied currently accepting bribes. Instead, they either described their past experiences or the behavior of their colleagues. Students were the most willing to admit to participating in corruption (17 out of 28). Parents were somewhat less at ease with this topic although many (5 out of 13) admitted personal involvement. Due to selection bias, only instructors who did not participate in bribery agreed to take part in the study (See Appendix Table 2). Although not representative of the Ukrainian population and all Ukrainian universities, the resulting sample was sufficiently broad and heterogeneous so as to avoid over-representing any particular social group or type of university. Scholars have previously noted the difficulties associated with gathering ethnographic data on educational corruption due to the "immanent secrecy and illegality of the subject matter" ([30]: 13). The data collected for this project are in many ways unprecedented; they are both broad (based on a balanced sample of respondents) and offer in-depth insights into the actors' motivations.

Varieties of university bribery[8]

Interviews, conducted during the first stage of data collection, indicate that bribery usually occurs during entrance examinations in mid-summer and during final exams in January-February and June-July (the data for this project were collected prior to the introduction of standardized testing of high school graduates in 2009. At the time of interviews, students had to pass three to five oral and written entrance examinations at the department of their choice in order to enroll). Admissions bribery involves payments for illegitimate assistance with admissions to specific universities. Enrollment in universities is competitive and applicants take entrance examinations at individual departments in the universities of their choice. Given the significance of these exams for enrollment, admissions bribery is a common form of university corruption. The following quote illustrates this type of bribery: *"R: I knew she (*respondent's daughter) *wanted to go to this particular school […] [but] the university is very prestigious and we were afraid we just wouldn't have money to get her in.[…] I don't think anybody gets in there without a bribe! […] I called the mother of her friend who was attending this university and found out which dean I could talk to about prices. […] I met with that dean and she told me that the price was usually 3000 dollars, but all seats were already filled […] But, if we could pay $4500, maybe.. […].So, I just met*

[8] This part of the empirical discussion is based primarily on the interviews conducted during the first stage of data collection. The discussion of different bribery mechanisms, however, is enriched by the data from the second round interviews as well.

with that woman-dean again and gave it all to her, and she said she'll pass it on where it's supposed to go…" **[Pa1**].

This account suggests that admissions bribery is usually handled by students' parents. In order to learn the 'how-to' of bribery, parents contact someone who is familiar with the universities of their choice. Most exchanges are contracted through intermediaries who pass the money to admission committees and other university officials. The role of intermediaries is typically played by administrative assistants, junior instructors, and non-academic deans. Sometimes admissions bribery also entails private lessons with admission committee members or other influential instructors. Parents locate these instructors through personal networks with an expectation that these tutors will use their leverage within universities "*to pull the necessary strings"* **[Pa9]**. Although unspoken, the expectation of patronage is mutual, as reflected in the unusually high fees that professors charge for these lessons. Sometimes universities offer entire series of high-priced preparatory classes. According to all three groups of respondents, attending these classes implies an unofficial promise of assistance during the entrance exams.

End-of-semester bribery, on the other hand, is typically contracted by students themselves, with parents' participation limited to financing. Respondents repeatedly emphasized that face-to-face exchanges between students and professors are rare. Partly to maintain the appearance of meritocratic universities and partly to alleviate the psychological burden, university communities develop numerous mechanisms for contracting bribery with minimal contact between the participants. Thus, students often send illicit payments through university mail, pass them through friends, or leave them in professors' mailboxes or with professors' secretaries. Alternatively, students preparing for the same exam designate messengers to deliver collective bribes. Departments also have designated intermediaries, members of staff or non-academic deans, who serve as go-betweens, connecting students and professors for small fees. Interaction between intermediaries and students is usually concise and to-the point. In response to a standard request for help, intermediaries name the price without further ado. This standardized pattern of exchange allows actors to carry out a stigmatized act with minimal discomfort – in a way that practically negates the act itself. The following quotes reveal some rules of interaction between students and intermediaries: *"R: In my department people choose whether they pay a professor directly or go through the vice-dean.[…] it's much less awkward to not deal with the teacher personally, but it's 10 to 20 dollars more because it includes the commission…"* **[S15].** When asked whether it is uncomfortable to bribe, another student said: "*Not really. It's not like some criminal operation. […]. You just go to the dean's assistant, "explain your situation" […] Then she just tells you how much you need to pay."***[S1]**.

Another common bribery mechanism is *emergency tutoring*. Professors meet with students individually prior to exams to 'review the material' in exchange for a substantial fee. As a rule, the price for this service is ten to twenty times higher than market rates for regular tutoring. Students do not pay directly for their grades; instead, their payments are allegedly for services, consistent with instructors' professional duties. Yet, merely attending such review sessions is generally sufficient to get the

desired grade: *"R: For example, you have a day before an exam and you either know absolutely nothing or feel like the professor just won't let you be until you pay. You can just come and say: 'Dear so and so, […] I had some health problems, or some other bullshit […], so that I didn't have a chance to study – could you work with me before the exam?' Then, […] he reads the material to you once again and you pay him a lot of money […]. Meanwhile, you can sleep or text or do whatever - you pretty much get a grade even if you know nothing…"* **[S27].**

According to students, bribes are also collected under the guise of legitimate causes, such as purchase of textbooks, classroom supplies, building repairs, celebrations, or fieldtrips: "*R: They often demand money for repairs, new equipment, library books… Except… never do we actually get these things…"* **[S16].** Respondents also noted other mechanisms that facilitated bribery (see Table 1 for a complete listing).

By spelling out the rules of corruption, these mechanisms distance bribery perpetrators from the outcomes of their actions, turning bribery into a matter of compliance with the established way of doing things. These mechanisms transform corruption into yet another bureaucratic practice. Instructors emphasized that the role of professors in orchestrating corruption is minimal because of the stable bribery mechanisms embedded in university structures: *"R: Usually professors enter into a university with already-established rigid systems of bribery. […] the prices are often set. […] Then, there are certain people who communicate with students about these things"* **[Pr16].** The institutionalized venues for bribery uphold the appearance of a valid educational process despite the on-going violation of its basic premises. Professors stressed the impersonal nature of bribery as a result of these mechanisms: "*I: Do professors find it psychologically difficult to engage in bribery? R: … they certainly realize the social implications of bribery. But […] I doubt they feel much personal responsibility. Partially, it's because they feel powerless when faced with the system, but, mainly it is because of how bribery happens. It's very ritualistic […]. People […] know where to turn and what to do. As long as you follow the rules – you are fine…"* **[Pr2].**

Individual universities and departments differ in numbers and types of available bribery mechanisms – while some offer a wide range, others provide only a few. Respondents tended to judge how corrupt specific organizations were on the basis of which bribery mechanisms they offered. Furthermore, not all bribery mechanisms are considered equally morally reprehensible. Direct and unambiguous encounters are condemned the most. Thus, *price lists* and *bribery by mail* are considered more corrupt than *emergency tutoring* or after-exam banquets. The operation of bribery mechanisms is contingent on the spread of information regarding their existence and proper usage. The stability of corruption systems depends on informational networks, through which students and parents find out who they should pay, how much, and in what way: *"R: Sometimes there are set prices. Like menus […].Of course, they're not published anywhere. But everybody knows….Professors don't like to admit that they are selling themselves […]. It's your job to find this out in advance and bring the necessary sum with you."***[S24].**

The interviews reveal that the spread of information about these mechanisms generates substantial pressures on both exchange parties, which they enact according to the scripts learned through informal interactions within

their others in their universities. Respondents suggest that the richer the arsenal of bribery mechanisms in a university, the higher the pressure to participate in bribery. Exchanges that involve less explicit links between money and grades generate less pressure on the university community and allow for more deviation from the dominant norm of bribery. Thus, *price lists* and *group bribing* indicate higher pressures to engage in the informal economy, whereas *mediated exchanges* and *emergency tutoring* are seen as less corrupt, allowing for more discretion by actors. Different bribery mechanisms provide frameworks that impose specific meanings on the organizational reality; they signal what type of situation actors are facing and invoke specific cognitive schemas regarding the role-appropriate behaviors.

Variation in engagement[9]

Despite the beliefs about the ubiquity of university corruption, not all respondents participated in bribery. Students reported the highest rates of participation: 17 out of 28 admitted to having paid bribes. Among parents, only 5 out of 13 reported personal participation. Due to selection bias, no professors confessed to bribery. Although a portion of this variation is due to inaccurate self-reporting of deviance, all interviewees agreed that their fellow students and professors differed in how much bribery they committed. Interviews suggest that corrupt conduct is shaped not by actors' abstract beliefs about bribery but by their concrete experiences in organizational contexts, including informal interactions with peers and colleagues, observation of supervisors and upperclassmen, and exposure to gossip. The stories of university bribery reveal that local cultures of universities largely shape the actors' engagement in their informal economies.

Students

Students who confessed to participating in bribery differed in how much personal choice they perceived in their actions. 4 out of 17 admitted to initiating bribery because they found it personally beneficial: paying for a passing grade in peripheral subjects allowed them to concentrate on more important things, such as classes they valued, jobs, or family duties: "R: *Certainly, bribery is not right… but you need to consider the whole situation. …my main subjects were English and German languages – so, God forbid my teachers in these subjects would take bribes […]. But other subjects I really don't care about – so why not bring a bribe, huh? Saves me time, gives them money […] it is convenient for everybody."* **[S2].** Or, alternatively: *"I: Is bribery a problem in Ukrainian universities? R: …It's there, like everywhere, but if it's a problem -I don't know. […] It makes my life easier because I don't have to study useless things. I am seriously better off making money."* **[S28].**

13 out of 17 bribe-giving students, however, felt forced to pay, whether or not they knew the material: "*R: … I had no choice. […] you either pay and stay, or refuse and*

[9] Although this part of the discussion is based primarily on the interviews, conducted during the second stage of data collection, some quotes, introduced in this section, are borrowed from stage I interviews.

*go."***[S18].** The extortion of bribes rarely happened during the actual exams. As a rule, students deduced the necessity to bribe a priori from the information accumulated during their tenure at specific universities: *"R: How did I know that I should bribe? Ha, that's a silly question.... It's no secret – it's in the air. […] You talk to upperclassmen and they tell you who you can make arrangements with and who you absolutely have to bribe. […] you go with the flow…."* **[S26].** Another student corroborated: *"I: Do professors ask you to pay? R: ...you usually know before you approach a prof whether you'll need to pay […]. You hear things, people tell you about their experiences, you watch professors…"* **[S3].**

The situations where professors candidly spell out financial demands are atypical. According to Miller et al, clients reported that more officials 'seem to expect' bribes (56 %) than openly demand them (11 %) ([28]: 85). Similarly, a poll by the Ministry of the Internal Affairs of Ukraine suggests that demand for bribes is often 'deduced' by citizens if they experience delays, negligence, or impoliteness in bureaucratic settings ([6]: 9). Even those few students who claimed to have been forced to bribe during their interaction with professors rarely experienced explicit extortion – as a rule, they just felt pressure to offer: *"R:.. it was clear from the beginning that was what she wanted: she looked through her little notebook, where she probably notes who has already given before, and then turned to me with this stone face…"* **[S19]**.

Extortion is also experienced through interactions with peers and upperclassmen. The transmission of expertise across generations of students is a central component of the organizational cultures of corruption. Underclassmen often refer to their 'experienced' friends to find out how feasible or unavoidable bribery is and how different professors go about contracting it. The following quote offers an illustration: *"R: I remember my first econ exam: I was very naïve and good at economics […], so I decided there was no reason to pay. But my friend […] said that most students paid, so I decided to also give the professor a little something extra, just to make sure everything went smoothly. […]I really did not feel like gambling."***[S20].**

Most bribe-paying students reported that by talking to their peers they discovered which bribery mechanisms operated in their universities. Inexperienced students often interpreted the presence of these mechanisms as indicative of the inevitability of bribery: *"R: When I first came here I heard about people getting special tutors, or mailing their grade diaries… I just assumed it was the way to do things, so that's what I did too."***[S4]** Students follow the set rules of bribing instead of inventing their own in order to avoid unpleasant negotiations and minimize the risks of corruption: "*R: Before my first exam I asked the lab assistant if she knew of anything my chemistry professor needed.. … I knew that's what people did. It was always through this lab assistant. Why would I go straight to the professor and make a fool of myself?"*[**S14].**

Depending on the availability of different bribery mechanisms students reported feeling more or less pressure to bribe. For instance, a female student whose fiancé attended a university with *price lists*, claimed he felt more 'forced' into bribery than she did in her own university, where *mediated exchange* and *editing & ordering* were more common. Exposure to departmental gossip and observations of peers teaches students about the limits of acceptable behavior: *"R: A big part of it was always fear. I heard all these horror stories about what happens if you don't offer the money…"* **[S5]**. Participation in informational networks allows students to determine exactly how much they can maneuver within the informal economy: *"R: I can always tell*

what's ok and what's not. […] I know I can probably get away with not paying for this subject, but I have to give something for another one …" **[S3].**

Students' stories suggest that departments and universities develop enduring repertoires of anecdotes that instruct neophytes and reduce the uncertainties of advanced students regarding the appropriate bribery conduct. The roots of these stories are generally untraceable and their validity is, at best, questionable - they are based on gossip and unsupported inferences. Their strength, however, lies precisely in their non-testability. Inasmuch as academic performance and personal image of students is based on guessing professors' attitudes to bribery correctly, students are afraid to test the validity of rumors, thus enacting and perpetuating their beliefs.

Parents

Unlike students, parents never described corruption as beneficial. Those who admitted to bribery insisted on having no other choice: *"R: Bribery is disgusting […]. But what else am I supposed to do if there is no other way to get my kid into a good university?"* **[Pa6].** Another respondent corroborated: *"R: I don't disapprove of those who give bribes. […] Who would offer if they had another way to get what they want? We don't live well enough to give money away!"***[Pa12].** The feeling of inevitability of university corruption is very common among parents. Even parents who have avoided bribery insisted that the cause was luck rather than merit: *"I: Is university education possible without bribery? R:… It is, but it's an exception rather than a rule.* [Respondent's son] *works hard, he's a smart young man, but I would not attribute his academic success to his personal qualities. […] we just have not run into professors who blackmail you…"* **[Pa3].**

Parents emphasized that voluntary engagement in bribery makes little sense from a parent's prospective. Burdensome financially, it also discourages students from trying their best academically. Many scorned the effect of non-meritocratic promotions on their children: *"R: … you are doing a bad thing to your own child by paying, because he will learn […] to pay his way through everything. Once kids know that money is involved, they don't study as diligently… But, for a parent it is very difficult to watch their dreams break […] so we would do anything …"* **[Pa10].**

Although parents had only limited exposure to universities, many claimed to have experienced extortion. All but two believed in the ubiquity of university corruption prior to their actual contact with universities, based on hearsay and their experiences in other bureaucracies. Yet, no one acted directly on these beliefs. Instead, they sought out potential informants to learn about the informal economies of specific universities. In preparing for admissions, many parents solicited insider information regarding the necessity of bribing, contacts, prices, and ways to contract an exchange. The choice of corrupt conduct was based on what they learned through these interactions *"I: Were you forced to pay? R: Yes. Otherwise, my son would have never gotten in. […] we have many friends whose children attend this university, and none of them believes it's possible without a bribe….. I: Have you talked to someone before hand or were you faced with extortion once you applied? R: Of course before. I wouldn't want V. to embarrass himself by showing up at exams without anything! I: Do you consider yourself a victim of extortion? R: Absolutely."* **[Pa4]**. The interviews, therefore, suggest that parents feel

compelled to bribe when they learn that bribery had previously occurred in a given university. Even without explicit extortion parents think that their children are at a disadvantage in competition with other applicants unless they bribe.

Professors

Professors offered a different interpretation of university bribery. Due to the selection bias, the professors I interviewed were not only comfortable talking about corruption but were often pro-active in fighting it. Yet, they were more empathetic toward their colleagues than other respondents. When asked why instructors accepted bribes, professor-respondents often talked about direct, albeit invisible, pressure from university administrations. Often bribery collection is a departmental or university-wide affair, whereby the accumulated sums get channeled upward through university hierarchies. For individual professors refusing to partake in bribery is risky. Since it harms the authorities, the refusal can embitterer workplace relations or lead to the loss of employment: *"R: ...people blame professors […] way too quickly. …often you have to do things that you really do not want to do simply because you are not your own boss. X. has certain lists, which he […] circulates within the admissions committee: […] these applicants will be admitted regardless of how they do on exams. […]If I want to keep my job, I better favor them."* **[Pr21].**

In some universities, bribery is so normalized that their administrations informally emphasize that monetary offers should not be denied. Such departments develop a shared myth that students are uninterested or incapable of studying. The denigration of students partially removes the responsibility from instructors; since there is nothing they can do to teach students, they are justified in accepting material compensations for dealing with them: *"R: …in our university official and unofficial policies are the same – they are oriented towards […] fighting corruption, but there are places which on paper are against corruption but in reality don't try to fight it. There bribes are monitored from above and encouraged….. I have a friend who […] said that in her former department students who offered were considered bad students, so the best you could do was take the money"* **[Pr11].**

Many respondents also blamed students who were trying to avoid working: *"R: ... These kids just don't want to study! Many believe that it's useless for making money in the future, which is the only standard for them. Those who get in because their father has paid are often simply incapable….Imagine trying to teach them! […] professors first try to avoid corruption but soon realize that sticking to their principles makes them the biggest fools…."* **[Pr3].** Instructors emphasized that over time students' unwillingness to study generates certain expectations among the faculty: "*R: Many begin to expect monetary rewards from students after a while, but it is rarely a sign of greed or low morals, rather it's disappointment with the state of things, ... aberrant values in the society […] many educators accept the money, and even expect it as a compensation for students' disinterest…"* **[Pr15].**

Most of the time, however, professors experience pressure to participate in bribery simply by encountering bribery mechanisms. After learning about various institutionalized means of bribery, young instructors often feel compelled to participate: "*R: At the X university they had this practice… of tutoring students right before exams. This service was very pricey and had little to do with teaching …. It was a camouflaged*

bribery… But I did it – mainly because everyone else did. When you begin working in a place… it's not smart to challenge things…" **[Pr18].** Similar to students, professors deduce how much freedom they have to engage in or abstain from corruption based on what bribery mechanisms are common in their departments: *"R: Previously I worked at another department, which was also not very corrupt: there was some activity, but the less insidious kind - mainly presents here and there, some tutoring…Once I started working there I knew that it was possible to preserve your integrity*" **[Pr8].**

As discussed previously, the instructor-respondents were not involved in bribery personally at the time of interviews. Yet, their stories about their former departments, colleagues, and Ukrainian academics in general, compared and juxtaposed with students' and parents' testimonies, provide robust evidence for the effect of local cultures of corruption on instructors' behavior. While more first-hand accounts of instructors' bribery conduct are necessary to chart the workings of the university cultures of corruption, this study provides sufficient evidence that local cultural interpretations of students' motivations, administrations' expectations, and acceptability of informal exchanges, shape the conduct of university instructors.

Conclusions

While Mertonian accounts and 'culture of corruption' arguments suggest that corruption in Ukrainian bureaucracies is a result of structural limitations on the achievement of citizens through legitimate venues and/or the outcome of citizens' internalization of the nation-wide infralaw of corruption, this study reveals that individual-level decisions regarding participation in small-scale economic crime within organizations, as a rule, are not directly determined by cost-and-benefit calculus or with nation-wide normalization of corruption. As predicted by Edwin Sutherland, Ukrainian culture includes both kinds of definitions – those that are favorable and those that are unfavorable to the perpetuation of crime. Citizens' choice of certain definitions over others depends on their experiences within specific organizations.

The interviews reveal that organizational cultures often serve as a source of these definitions: exposure to organizational cultures shapes actors' ideas regarding acceptability and inevitability of bribery and influences their propensity to commit the acts of corruption. Thus, decisions to offer admissions bribes are made after extensive consultations with informants from specific organizations and a careful consideration of these insiders' evaluation of how expected, necessary, or possible bribery is. Similarly, final exam bribery is a function of students' and professors' exposure to different bribery mechanisms within their specific departments and universities, gossip and hearsay, conversations with and observations of their upperclassmen and colleagues. Based on the information, obtained via these sources, actors make projections about the necessity, possibility, or inevitability of corruption.

As predicted by Karl Weick's theory of organizational enactment [51], university actors, then, feel obliged to enact the specific definitions they acquire through their exposure to organizational cultures. This enactment is based on their fear to break the unspoken rules of organizational behavior and receive sanctions from other actors, which may range from expulsion and termination of employment to bad reputation and derision. For instance, the interviews reveal that students and parents rarely

experience direct extortion. Instead, they collect informal information about the 'rules of the game' in their educational institutions and draw conclusions regarding the appropriate bribery-related conduct. Afraid to ignore the informal rules of bribery, most students offer bribes preemptively. Professors, in their turn, tend to experience pressure from their colleagues and superiors who expect them to assume the duties of bribery collection along with other job-related obligations. These pressures are increased by legitimating mythologies, whereby students are construed as disinterested or incapable of studying. Afraid to break the organizational rules, instructors enact the acquired definitions through either participating in or avoiding corruption.

By invoking ideas about inevitability, pervasiveness, and normality – or, on the other hand, riskiness, amorality, and social harmfulness of university bribery, organizational cultures function as agents of differential association. Through the dispersion of untested assumptions about the 'ways of doing things', organizational cultures define the range of appropriate behaviors for their members. The definitions acquired from these cultures influence actors' choice of bribery-related conduct through the processes of organizational enactment. Organizational cultures do not deprive actors of their agency; rather, the interviews show that they establish boundaries within which this agency can be exercised.

The story of organizationally based variation in illegal behavior supports Edwin Sutherland's theory of differential association by suggesting that deviant behaviors are learned through informal exposure to different small groups' understandings of motives, mechanisms, and acceptability of illegality ([42]:5–9). At the same time, the case study of Ukrainian universities offers two modifications to this theory of crime. First, while Sutherland's theory in its classic form is based on the assumption that the dominant norm is that of non-criminal behavior, this article situates differential association in the context of normalized illegality. By extending Sutherland's claim that normative systems simultaneously contain definitions that are favorable and unfavorable to crime to the contexts characterized by pervasive economic illegality in organizations, this article dispels the common myth of homogenous countrywide cultures of corruption. Second, it demonstrates that organizations, with their tendency to develop strong and self-perpetuating cultures containing crime-favoring or crime-prohibiting definitions, are powerful agents of differential association that influence individual actors' propensity to engage in crime. Finally, this article argues that organizational theory elaborates the mechanisms whereby the definitions, adopted by social actors, get translated into concrete behaviors, offering the 'missing piece' for Sutherland's differential association theory of crime.

Organizational cultures and other determinants of corruption

The findings of this study suggest that ordinary Ukrainians' decisions to abstain from or participate in bribery reflect corruption-favorable or corruption-unfavorable definitions the actors learn from the informal cultures of universities, rather than actors' instrumental considerations and moral beliefs, or national cultures of corruption. Does this conclusion imply that these micro and macro factors, often identified as determinants of corruption, have no real bearing on its prevalence? Not exactly;

rather, they interact with organizational cultures in two ways, indirectly affecting the prevalence of corruption across organizations.

In the long run, national cultures and individual incentive structures and value systems of social actors actually shape the cultures of corruption in different organizations. This type of interaction between macro and micro constraints and organizational cultures produces gradual change of organizational normative milieus over time. Although the data presented in this article do not permit a systematic exploration of why different corruption cultures emerge and evolve in universities, the interviews suggest that the form of ownership and organizational prestige may be associated with distinct organizational cultures of corruption and transparency. Both are mechanisms whereby national cultures on the one hand and instrumental/value-based incentives of individual affiliates on the other shape university corruption cultures.

Public universities appear more likely to have cultures of corruption than private universities. Inasmuch as the national culture of corruption in Ukraine emerges from the Soviet legacy of extensive and dysfunctional public institutions [20, 25], it may be more pronounced in the public sector than in the newer, less bureaucratized private sector. In other words, national culture of corruption may impact organizational cultures of public universities more directly. Moreover, the form of ownership shapes the incentive structures of university members by affecting the bargaining power of bureaucrats, defined by Miller et al as "monopoly + discretion – accountability" ([28]: 261). Specifically, large public universities have less tightly knit employee hierarchies and, therefore, tend to present their employees with more discretion and fewer accountability requirements. Moreover, unless very prestigious, private universities are less selective, pay their employees better, and experience more market pressure to preserve their image by avoiding corruption than public schools. If a large number of university actors have the same bargaining power and face the same instrumental constraints for a long time, organizational cultures may change accordingly.

Local cultures of corruption also seem to be associated with universities' prestige, which varies according to age, international standing, size, and location of different schools. Large state universities are the most prestigious, while younger and smaller private schools have lower status. There is also a variation in the prestige of individual departments,[10] which usually reflects prevailing fashions in occupations and alumni earnings. The most prestigious subjects are law, medicine, international relations, and economics. Low-prestige subjects include mathematics, natural sciences, and humanities. Prestige is positively correlated with corruption because it proxies for admission competition rates and students' socio-economic status, reflecting the incentive structures of university actors. The national culture of corruption is also likely to affect prestigious organizations more than their less-prestigious counterparts due to the climate of non-transparency around the production and maintenance of elites in present-day Ukraine. Of course, these examples are neither exhaustive nor adequately supported with data. Rather, they are meant as illustrations of the possible ways in which the national culture of corruption and individual incentive structures and moral considerations of organizational members may shape corruption cultures of different universities over time.

[10] Large universities that combine multiple departments with different levels of prestige often develop several different local cultures.

Although organizational cultures are undoubtedly constantly evolving, at each particular point in time organizational actors face quite specific informal milieus that affect their decision-making. Thus, in the short run, organizational cultures mediate the national culture of corruption on the one hand and instrumental and moral considerations of individual actors on the other, creating specific stable levels of corruption on their premises. While many individual actors entering universities carry corruption-favorable definitions acquired from their exposure to national cultures of corruption, their attitudes get modified according to definitions carried by the informal normative milieus of universities themselves. The interviews reveal that even when students believe that corruption is overall a 'normal' and appropriate way of getting grades in Ukrainian universities in general, they tend to avoid bribery if it is not in line with 'the way things are done' in their particular department. Beliefs about the appropriateness of corruption, learned on the organizational level, therefore, moderate the beliefs stemming from the national culture.

Similarly, instrumental and moral considerations of individual actors get adjusted based on what organizational corruption or transparency cultures define as justifiable behavior, adequate compensations, acceptable ways of earning grades, and the overall purpose of the educational process. For instance, interviews revealed that students in some universities construe beneficial outcomes as getting a satisfactory grade while doing as little work as possible, preferably in exchange for a payment, while students of other schools view corruption as highly inappropriate and ultimately undesirable. Actors' incentive structures are therefore not stable and independent of organizational cultures. Instead, the perceptions of costs and benefits themselves, as well as ideas about amorality or appropriateness of corruption, are negotiated and adjusted or altered completely as a result of exposure to informal environments of organizations.[11]

Fighting bureaucratic corruption

The argument, developed in this chapter, has a set of important policy implications. Most reforms, advocated by scholars of educational corruption, involve the reorganization of the educational process and the format of assessment, i.e. standardization of admissions testing, creation of transparent accreditation system, increase in university autonomy and inter-university competition, and development of efficient managerial practices [17, 31]. Scholars also advocate the enforcement of clear ethical codes, emphasizing the importance of social control for transparency. In the words of Atlbach, "universities require an effective civil society as much as nations do" (2006: 3–4).

The organizational cultures-based theory of bureaucratic illegality has important policy implications that are related to the latter policy recommendation. As sites for the implementation of small-scale policy, organizations have much to offer because they represent distinctive ideological domains with in-built reproduction and

[11] The mediating impact of organizational cultures on beliefs and, consequently, behaviors of individual members may range from slightly adjusting their moral attitudes and cost-and-benefit calculations to completely altering them, depending on the strength of individual moral and instrumental convictions and needs, potency of organizational normative milieus, and situational constraints

enforcement mechanisms. Unlike countrywide cultures, organizational cultures offer reachable policy targets. For instance, using specifically tailored policies to eliminate the organizationally embedded bribery mechanisms will alter the cultures of corruption that surround them. This approach to fighting bureaucratic corruption would be particularly effective in higher education: regulating university bribery would decrease people's engagement in other types of corruption later in their lives. In universities, such policies may include prosecuting intermediaries, eradicating price lists, controlling tutoring rates, and abolishing exam celebrations, etc. Although structural changes, mandated by these policies are relatively small, organizational cultures of transparency are likely to foster corruption-free habits among the citizens.

Appendix

Table 1 Bribery facilitating mechanisms

Type of exchange	Mechanism	Facilitating effect
Mediated exchange	An intermediary names the price and passes on the bribe	Avoidance of contact between participants of bribery exchanges
Bribes by mail	A student sends a bribe with a friend/ through the mail and does not show up for the exam	
Group bribing	A group of students designates one representative to deliver a collective bribe	Minimization of contact between participants of bribery exchange
Price lists	Administration unofficially announces the bribery rates for different subjects	Avoidance of negotiation between participants of bribery exchanges
Public good collections	Professor/Staff member collects donations for textbooks, repairs, activities, etc.	Denial of corrupt exchange (enactment of cooperation for the common good)
Exam celebrations	Students bring treats/gifts/flowers to professors during the exam; organize a celebration with food and drinks right after the exam.	Denial of corrupt exchange (enactment of a personal relationship/gratitude)
Direct service	Students provide services directly to an instructor (e.g. update her computer, arrange for a free appointment with a beautician, help find cheap airline tickets, etc.) during the semester and are later rewarded with an inflated grade.	
Emergency tutoring	Student and professor make arrangements to meet before the exam for an individual review session, the compensation for which significantly exceeds market tutoring rates	Denial of corrupt exchange (enactment of a professional relationship)
Editing & ordering	Student 'hires' an instructor to look over the assignment before it is submitted or to prepare the assignment from scratch. It may later be submitted either to same instructor or to his colleague	

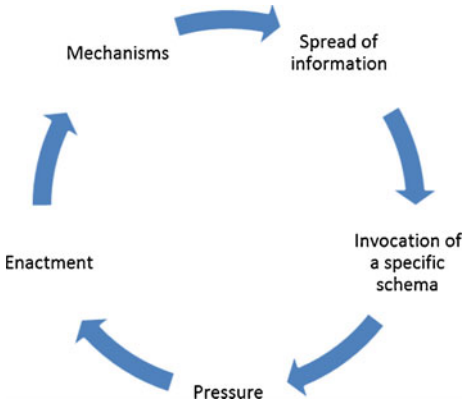

Fig. 1 The dynamics of university corruption cultures

The list of respondents

M = male; F = female
Pa = parents; S = students; Pr = professors
Parents:

[Pa1] F/50, Kiev, real estate agent, married, 2 children
[Pa2] M/41, Kiev high school teacher, married, 1 child
[Pa3] M/46, Kharkov, manager, single, 1 child
[Pa4] F/38, Kharkov, beautician, married, 2 children
[Pa5] F/37, Kharkov, sales assistant, married, 1 child
[Pa6] M/47, Kerch, an engineer, divorced, 1 child
[Pa7] F/58, Kerch, nurse, married, 3 children
[Pa8] M/60, Kerch, marine mechanic, married, 2 children
[Pa9] M/45, Simferopol, businessman, married, 1 child (attending a university in Kiev)
[Pa10] F/43, Sevastopol, administrative assistant, divorced, 1 child (attending a university in Sevastopol)
[Pa11] M/47, Kherson, car technician, married, 3 children (1 attending a university in Kherson)
[Pa12] F/39, Dnepropetrovsk, housewife, married, 2 children (1 attending a university in Dnepropetrovsk)
[Pa13], F/48, Dnepropetrovsk, pediatrician, divorced, 1 child (recently graduated from a university in Dnepropetrovsk)

Students:

[S1] F/24, Kiev, alumna[12] of an Architecture department, works as a flight attendant
[S2] F/23, Kiev (originally from L'viv), alumna of Romance Philology department, currently unemployed
[S3] M/21, Kiev, 3rd-year student of Law

[12] All university alumni, interviewed for this article, graduated within 5 years prior to data collection

[S4] M/20, Kiev (originally from Kharkov), 2nd -year student of Engineering
[S5] F/26, Kiev (originally from Brovary), alumna of Middle Eastern Languages Department, works as a sales representative
[S6] M/25, Kiev (originally from Zhytomyr), alumnus of Sociology Department, attends graduate school in Canada
[S7] F/21, Kiev, 2nd-year student of Romance Linguistics
[S8] M/20, Kiev (originally from Sumy), 2nd-year student of Environmental Science
[S9] M/23, Kiev, 5th-year student of Computer Science
[S10] M/21, Kiev (originally from Lutsk), 3rd-year student of Computer Science
[S11] F/19, Kiev, 1st-year student of Journalism
[S12] M/22, Kiev (originally from Zaporizhia), 3rd-year student of Mathematics
[S13] F/25, Kiev, alumna of Finance Department, works in advertising
[S14] M/21, Kharkov (originally from Kerch), 2nd-year student of Aviation Technology
[S15] F/20, Kharkov (originally from Odessa), 4th-year student of Pre-school Education
[S16] F/19, Kharkov (originally from Kremenchuk), 2nd-year student of History
[S17] F/22, Kharkov (originally from Pervomajskyi), 4th-year student of Accounting
[S18] F/20, Kharkov (originally from Yevpatoria), 2nd-year student of Graphic Design
[S19] M/24, Kharkov, 4th-year student in International Relations
[S20] F/21, Kharkov (originally from Melitopol), 3-rd-year student of Management
[S21] F/18, Kharkov, 1st-year-student of Culture Studies Department
[S22] M/20, Kharkov (originally from Kerch), 2nd-year-student of Management
[S23] F/20, Kharkov (originally from Feodosiya), 2nd-year student of Psychology
[S24] F/20, Kerch, a 1st-year student of Ukrainian Literature
[S25] F/22, Kerch, 4th-year-student of Hotel Administration
[S26] M/27, Kerch, alumnus of Marine Navigation department, works for Kerch Trade Port
[S27] M/23, Donetsk, 5th-year student of Computer Science
[S28] F/22, Dnepropetrovsk, a 4th-year student of Accounting

Professors:

[Pr1] F/57, Kiev, has a family, teaches in a language department
[Pr2] F/39, Kiev, has a family, teaches in a humanities department
[Pr3] F/45, Kiev, has a family, teaches in a social science department
[Pr4] M/66, Kiev, has a family, teaches in a natural science department
[Pr5] F/57, Kiev, has a family, teaches in a social science department
[Pr6] M/41, Kiev, has a family, teaches in a social science department
[Pr7] M/59, Kiev, does not have a family, teaches in an exact sciences department
[Pr8] M/35, Kiev, does not have a family, teaches in an exact sciences department
[Pr9] F/61, Kiev, has a family, teaches in a humanities department
[Pr10] M/41, Kiev, has a family, teaches in a Business department
[Pr11] F/34, Kiev, has a family, teaches in a social science department
[Pr12] F/62, Kiev, has a family, teaches in a natural science department

[Pr13] M/65, Kiev, has a family, teaches in a social science department
[Pr14] F/33, Kiev, has a family, teaches in a language department
[Pr15] M/67, Kiev, has a family, teaches in a humanities department
[Pr16] M/53, Kharkov, has a family, teaches in a social science department
[Pr17] M/49, Kharkov, has a family, teaches in an exact sciences department
[Pr18] M/42, Kharkov, has a family, teaches in an exact sciences department
[Pr19] F/61, Kharkov, has a family, teaches in an exact sciences department
[Pr20] F/31, Kharkov, does not have a family, teaches in a language department
[Pr21] F/55, Kerch, has a family, teaches in a language department
[Pr22] F/50, Kerch, has a family, teaches in a language department

Table 2 Participation in bribery by the type of respondents

Type and number of respondents	Participation reported			Participation not reported		Total
Students	Total: 17			Total: 11		28
	Extortion: 6	Voluntary Offers: 4	Both: 7	Denied: 11	Not addressed: 0	
Parents	5			Total: 8		13
				Denied: 5	Not addressed: 3	
Instructors	0			22		22
Total	22			38		

Table 3 Educational affiliation of respondents

Name of the university	Size	Location	Academic specialty	Type of respondents
Kiev State University	V. Large	Kiev	All	**S6 Pa2** Pr7
"KROK" Economics and Law Institute	Small	Kiev	Social Science	S0 Pa1 Pr0
Kiev-Mohyla Academy	Large	Kiev	All	S7 Pa0 Pr8
Kharkov Aviation Institute	Large	Kharkov	Technical	S1 Pa2 Pr0
Kharkov State University	V. Large	Kharkov	All	S8 Pa2 Pr4
Kharkov National Pedagogical University	Medium	Kharkov	Education	S1 Pa0 Pr1
Kerch Maritime Technological Institute	Medium	Kerch	Marine Trades	S1 Pa1 Pr1
Kerch Branch of Simferopol State Univ.	Small	Kerch	Linguistics	S1 Pa1 Pr1
Kerch Branch of Kherson State Univ.	Small	Kerch	Social Science	S1 Pa1 Pr0
Kherson State University	Large	Kherson	All	S0 Pa1 Pr0
Donetsk State University	Large	Donetsk	All	S1 Pa0 Pr0
Dnepropetrovsk State University.	Large	Dnepropetrovsk	All	S1 Pa1 Pr0
Sevastopol State Technical University	Medium	Sevastopol	Technical	S0 Pa1 Pr0

"S" = Student; "Pa" = Parent; "Pr" = Professor. The following number indicates the total number of respondents in each category (for instance, 'Pr1' means that one professor was interviewed from that specific higher educational establishment)

For parents "1" means either father/mother or both parents from a single family were interviewed. "2" refers to parents/sets of parent from different families

Bold font indicates that some student and parent respondents came from the same families

Table 4 Characteristics of the university affiliation of respondents

Name of the university	Ownership	Prestige
Kiev State University	State	High
"KROK" Economics and Law Institute	Private	Low
Kiev-Mohyla Academy	State/Private	High
Kharkov Aviation Institute	State	Average
Kharkov State University	State	Average
Kharkov National Pedagogical Un.	State	Average
Kerch Maritime Technological Institute	State	High
Kerch Branch of Simferopol State Univ.	State/Private	Low
Kerch Branch of Kherson State Univ.	State/Private	Low
Kherson State University	State	Average
Donetsk State University	State	Average
Dnepropetrovsk State University.	State	Average
Sevastopol State Technical University	State	Low

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