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The Varieties of Corruption: Lessons From a Least Corrupt Case

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Abstract

One of the main drivers of the rapid growth of corruption research the last 20 years is the easy access to empirical data via corruption rankings and composite indices that can be used for large-N analysis. It is also these indicators that mainly are used to place countries in the comparative literature (and elsewhere) and in analyses of the relationship between corruption and, among else, democracy, economic output and growth and institutional performance. Without doubt this literature has contributed to the field but there are also problems. In focus here are the effects of the habitual treatment of corruption as a single-dimensional phenomenon, and often tantamount to bribery, and as spatially constant within a country. I argue that the effects of this on our estimations and understanding of corruption are particularly well illustrated by established democracies with highly developed market economies placed in the category of “least-corrupt” countries (as many West European states), as corruption in these countries on theoretical grounds can be assumed not to centre on bribery. In the article I use Sweden, almost always referred to as a least corrupt case, to unveil what we see using various corruption indicators but also what we do not see when we employ the standard comparative measurements and legal data. Although we would expect corruption types other than bribery to be important in such a case (a least corrupt one), not least conflict of interest, this is missed out when we use the indicators that have become the standard in the literature. I conclude by discussing the implications of these findings for the accuracy of corruption measurement and by arguing for studies that nuance our picture of corruption, and also bring in conflict of interest.
Introduction

The scholarly interest for corruption for the last twenty years or so has moved from a focus on developing countries and non-democracies to include also established and wealthy democracies. Also, corruption has evolved as a factor of increasing interest in understanding legitimacy for government institutions, political parties, elected officials and officers in the established democracies of Western Europe and other economically rich countries of the OECD.

The easy access to empirical data via corruption rankings and indices that can be used for large-N analysis is one of the main explanations for the rapid growth of corruption research. This literature has contributed to our knowledge of corruption. That includes analysis of the causes and effects of corruption and its relationship with democracy, institutions, trust and economic development etc. (e.g. Tanzi 1998; Lane and Ersson 2000; Collier 2002; Uslaner 2005; Lambsdorff 2007; Kaufmann et al. 2010). An early example often referred to as the first systematic comparative empirical analysis of corruption is Paolo Mauro’s (1995) seminal article on the relationship between corruption and growth.

But there are also some remaining problems in cross country research of corruption. One feature of the standard measurements often used to place countries comparatively, i.e. composite indices with country scores such as the Transparency International’s Corruption perceptions index and the Control of corruption variable in the Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) by the World Bank (Kaufmann et al. 2010), is the habitual treatment of corruption as a unidimensional phenomenon, often making it almost tantamount to bribery,
and implying that corruption have the same causes no matter the place of occurrence (cf. e.g. Heidenheimer 1970/1989; Alatas 1990; Alam 1995; Johnston 2005).

There are also good reasons to assume that the relationship between bribes and overall corruption levels differ across countries. Though bribery is certainly a core indicator of corruption, the incidence of bribery in relation to the incidence of all corruption occurrences, including other types of corruption, can theoretically be expected to vary across countries and also across sectors within countries. Moreover, in low corruption countries, many of them found in Western Europe, with established democracies and highly developed market economies, corruption types other than bribery can be expected to be important (Johnston 2005) and the standard measurements might therefore miss out on this. Corruption that predominantly falls under the discussion of conflict of interest is expected to be a key feature in such least corrupt countries. Thus we might miss out on capturing corruption and assessing the magnitude of the problem correctly.

These aspects, concerning the multifacetedness and variation of corruption, I argue, should be given more attention in research. Bar these problems and aspects in focus here, other related issues have been discussed in the literature to a greater or lesser extent.

Concerning the standard measurements in general, the empirical foundations of these quantitative composite corruption indices make cause for being prudent in the way we interpret results based on them.\(^1\) Estimating real levels of corruption in countries is very difficult to do, i.e. issues of validity and what the aggregate scores really stand for is difficult.

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\(^1\) Even if most macro estimates of corruption are based on respondents (mainly business people and experts) perceptions of corruption and therefore not being the same as data on actual levels of corruption, they are in practice often used as such in the comparative literature (Arndt and Oman 2006; Andersson and Heywood 2009).
to handle (e.g. Andvig 2005; Søreide 2006). Thus, one discussion has concerned which of various measurements such as the CPI and WGI has the higher validity, and has not really implied a change of direction of how we go about research and the effects of using these macro aggregates. Another strand concern perception measures in relation to experience measures, where research has established that perception of corruption and experience do not always correspond, implying that when respondents are asked about whether they have own experiences of corruption, it might give another picture than asking them to rate corruption no matter whether they are basing their judgement only on their own experiences of corruption or not. Thus for some countries perceptions data and experience will be more in congruence than for others (Miller et al. 2001; Andvig 2005; Weber Abramo 2007; Groop 2013).

A positive data addition comes from the increased strive for hard data based on experience of corruption (e.g. Reinikka and Svensson 2006). Two such examples are legal indicators in terms of corruption cases or convictions and expenditure tracking in terms of following the money. But also here there are important caveats: for the former a problem could be that instead of corruption levels we end up measuring the effectiveness of the legal system and for the latter there are issues about evaluating whether money loss are for corruption reason or waste and inefficiency.

Concerning the need for more attention to spatial variation of corruption within countries (i.e. across sectors and levels of government) the diagnostic studies of corruption that has been conducted in several developing and transitional countries (World Bank 2011) is a step in that direction, where experienced based data as well perceptions data have been used with attention to corruption forms and enabling to grasp variation across sectors and government institutions. Another example concerns cross country studies of corruption that, although not
aiming at distinguishing between corruption types, use corruption indicators bringing in aspects of impartiality (e.g. Linde and Erlingsson 2012) and similar orientated studies that also look at cross regional variation within a country (Charron et al. 2011). Those studies have added important insight. Moreover, the focus on measuring impartiality is somewhat related to our interest of bringing in a more nuanced picture of corruption and conflict of interest.

So, to explore how and to what extent the standard cross country indicators and bribery focused measures capture corruption and its variation and the effects of this on our ability to understand the scope of the problem, I use Sweden, a country always referred to as a least corrupt case, to unveil what we see using various corruption indicators but also what we do not see when we employ the standard comparative measurements and legal data.

I present my argument first by in the following section elaborating on why the need for nuancing the corruption picture is likely to be particularly well illustrated by least corrupt countries in general and Sweden in particular. I then discuss concepts and distinctions to be used in the empirical exploration. Then I turn to the study of Sweden, which, step by step, explores how different indicators depict corruption. I start by examining the picture provided by standard cross country measures, then moving on to other indicators, including other types of corruption than bribery, the aim being to show the effects on our picture of corruption and corruption types and its variation across sectors and government levels. It also addresses what is corruption in Sweden from a legal perspective, including how conflict of interest violations and their sanctioning are handled and how this is related to the number of (legal) cases that are reported, and citizens’ perspectives on corruption. In the final section I discuss the results and their implications for our understanding of corruption, how we conduct research and for countervailing measures against corruption.
Why established democracies in Western Europe? Why Sweden?

Most Western European countries and in particular Sweden and other Northern European countries comes out very well in the standard corruption measures often resulting in the conclusions that problems are few and not very important. Thus in this respect, Sweden is a least likely case for corruption study that based on these standard measures would have us expect little corruption (and therefore little variation). Moreover, such a country also belong to cases that could be expected to have a certain pattern of corruption that from a theoretical point of view would have us believe the standard measurements of corruption would have difficulties in portraying, i.e. their corruption forms will escape our radar. According to Michael Johnston (2005: 39, 42) in highly developed economies the characteristic corruption syndrome is the dealing in access to and influence within strong state institutions, what he calls” influence market” corruption. In these settings these forms of buying influence gets more sophisticated and therefore less visible.

Different societies develop syndromes of corruption that reflects combinations of political participation and the strength of institutions in that society. We can therefore expect corruption syndromes to vary across countries, not just the overall levels of corruption. This also mean that if some syndromes are better or worse captured by the standard comparative measurements that will have a direct impact on how we interpret (or misinterpret) the variation of corruption across countries.

Indeed, in the new consensus that emerged during the 1990s where corruption is treated almost as synonymous to bribery and as both effect and cause of incomplete, uneven, or
ineffective economic liberalization, Johnston (2005: 6) notes that the focus on bribery might be warranted, but, in influence markets, bribery is just the tip of the iceberg. This point to the need in these types of settings for highlighting the difference between direct forms of corruption in terms of bribes and more indirect forms which are vaguer, taking on a collective character with personal aspects being in the background (Kjellberg 1995). Only focusing on the direct forms of corruption in mature democracies with influence market syndromes of corruption would then risk missing out on just the types of corruption that we can expect to occur.

Instead, much in common with Heidenheimer’s analysis (1989: 61), Johnston (2005: 42) notes how mature market orientated democracies have adjusted to wealth interests, much adopting their rules to fit these interests. This also highlights the importance of how countries deals with conflict of interest situations, i.e. what is regarded as a conflict and how they are sanctioned. How conflict of interest between officials’ private interests and their public duties are dealt with has a direct effect on corruption control (Andersson and Anechiaricho forthcoming.). Conflicts of interest generally involve situations where officials have an interest that could influence the way he or she carries out his/ her duties, while corruption concerns situations in which an official abuses trust or power for illicit gain (above). Clearly there is a strong connection between the two concepts and interest conflicts are a key issue in corruption discussion in mature democracies.

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2 Such market democracies being characterised by legitimate constitutional frameworks, political competition, free news media, strong civil societies and open economies, which do help to check abuses but without having eradicated corruption. Heidenheimer’s (1970/1989) seminal model of corruption leads to similar conclusions about expecting syndromes of corruption to vary. The analysis is centred around which of the various forms of behaviour that a substantial portion of the population regards as corrupt are more likely to be more pervasive in one society than another, and why.
So there are good reasons to take a closer look at what the implications of our ways of measuring corruption have by turning to the empirical exploration of Sweden. But before doing so I will next discuss my take on the role of definitions and typologies for understanding corruption adding one more piece to have with us before turning to the empirical case study.

**Studying nuances and varieties of corruption**

There is no shortage of articles and work that in depth discuss definitions of corruption (e.g. Warren 2004; Alatas 1968). Here it is not the aim to go in such depth but we need to establish what we mean with the concept of corruption to be able to have a thorough discussion about corruption and its nuances applied to a least corrupt case in Western Europe. There are several reasons why this is important to do. First we need to be precise about the central concept that we work with. Second, it is required in order to catch what we study when assessing corruption and doing so using a concept that travels comparatively. Third, definitions matter as they condition how we understand corruption problems which will have implications for how we think about how to safeguard against or combat corruption (Andersson and Heywood 2009: 750).

I define corruption as “… the misuse of power in the interests of illicit gain” (c.f. Andersson and Heywood 2009:748). Such a definition has the advantage of travelling comparatively (actually being able also to include corruption even in non-democracies as it does not require a breakage of trust) and it does not rule out corruption in the private sector or for purposes other than individual gain (for example to political parties). Such a generic definition embracing all kinds of corruption ranging from petty instances to grand corruption has the
advantage of, from a theoretical and analytical point of view, being able to capture the phenomenon, however it does not enable us to distinguish how various types of corruption vary in incidence across sectors, the impact of them, their causes and to what degree such types are formalised. So, these nuances are therefore lost.

Thus, without further operationalization to be empirically applicable, the lack of capacity to distinguish between different types of corruption as opposed to the overall aggregate, the implication would be that all corruption is treated as having similar incentives (Andersson and Heywood 2009) Since this kind of definition is often the sole indicator in comparative statistical analysis it is even more desirable to go outside this in comparative work aiming at complementing the picture and nuance it.

Syed Hussein Alatas has pinpointed that “Failure to make the distinction between the different types of corruption and to place them in their proper evaluative context only leads to confusion and time wasting …” (Alatas 1990:3). He particularly emphasized the need to distinguish between the transactive, extortive and defensive types of corruption. Clearly, the nature of, and the causes for and effects of these types of corruption are different. In transactive corruption at least two parties mutually agree to take part in a corrupt transaction for benefits for both donor and recipient such as between a business party and a public sector party. In contrast extortive corruption implies the donor being compelled to bribe in order to avoid harm. Here, defensive corruption regards measures undertaken by the victim of extortive corruption (this is the only corruption type that Alatas attributes with positive effects).3

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3 These types are part of a seven-type typology the others being: Supportive corrupt actions undertaken to support already existing corrupt activities; investive corruption that concerns offer of goods or services in hope of future favours with no direct link to a particular favour; nepotistic corruption, i.e. unjustified appointments of
So we need to discuss and include aspects that help us capture corruption as a multifaceted phenomenon in order to actually understand its scope and variation. One of the important aspects to consider in this respect is the distinction between illegal acts and what is morally regarded as corruption. This distinction, which is empirically difficult to make, can be done by turning to citizen opinion to compare whether such perceptions are in agreement with legal norms. Naturally an act regarded as immoral and illegal is clearly corrupt while acts perceived as immoral but not illegal represent a grey zone (Table 1).

Table 1. Distinction of corruption based on moral or law

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Immoral</th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Illegal</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Obvious cases of corruption(^4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Public outrage(^6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Based on Andersson 2003: 136.*

So, corrupt practices do not have to be restricted to what is stipulated by penal laws:

Misappropriation of public funds or illicit interference often is part of corruption, without being regarded as corruption proper (Mény 1996: 311). Moreover sticking to a strict legal

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\(^4\) In Sweden a scandal in Motala municipality in the 1990s is an example of a clear cut case where many politicians and officials had to resign as an effect of embezzlement, fraudulent entertainment expenses and breach of trust (Andersson 2002: 80).

\(^5\) See the family based system in Heidenheimer (1989).

\(^6\) The cash for questions affair in the 1990s where MPs in the UK were found to have accepted money to table questions in Parliament is an example of conduct that was not illegal but where several MPs had broken the rules of conduct in parliament or moral codes (Kay 2005: 1, Oliver 1997: 545).
terminology of corruption might in some cases limit our study to just bribes and that would not help us discussing variation of corruption and its forms.

This is important in a comparative perspective for several reasons. One is that a legal definition which is narrow (as is the case in Sweden) implies that there might be a bigger distance between this and what is socially and morally considered as corruption compared to a broader legal definition, and that this distance might vary across countries, and that sticking to a legal definition excludes many important aspects from study. As Johnston (1996: 333-325) has pointed out even in societies where norms and roles are relatively settled, such as in Western Europe, there will be substantial grey areas regarding what behaviours are considered as corrupt. This points to the importance of considering this distinction between judging acts as corrupt from a strict legal view or not.

Let us now explore the effects of using various indicators on how we understand corruption by turning to the empirical study of corruption, its nuances and variation in Sweden.

**Exploring corruption in Sweden: extent and variation**

The above outlined arguments for bringing in the nuances and multifacetedness of corruption will now be illustrated and explored empirically. Step by step we look at the picture received by using different indicators thus addressing the effects of the way we measure and define corruption for the result we receive and our ability to catch corruption. Here, special attention is given to effects on and our ability to see variation of corruption across sectors and levels of government, and what actors it concern. To accomplish this the exploration takes into account
whether cases concern direct or indirect forms of corruption, breakage of legal or non-legal norms and the view of the public. The focus is mainly on corruption in the public sector.

The first section look at the picture we receive by using standard macro indicators of corruption perception and corruption experience. Then we look at variation between sectors and actors, including corruption types. Here we use perception measures and legal data, and finally we address what corruption is (including according to citizens’ views) and how it is dealt with.

**Indicators of the overall corruption level**

If we start by using perceptions based macro indicators to look at the level of corruption these studies usually rank Sweden as among the most fortunate countries in terms of corruption thus putting Sweden among the least corrupt countries in this regard. In the probably most well-known measurement, but also heavily criticised (e.g. Andvig 2005; Andersson & Heywood 2009), Transparency International’s Corruption perceptions index Sweden has during the 2000s never had a score below 9 (out of ten) and between 2008 and 2011 between 9.2-9.3.7 Since the impact of the CPI is very influential and often substituted for real corruption levels, this has strengthened the impression of Sweden as among the least corrupt countries. Other similar measures such as the WGI (control of corruption) also views Sweden similarly (World Bank 2012). So based on these indicators corruption seems to be a rare phenomenon.

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7 Transparency International (2013) introduced some changes in the CPI methodology in its 2013 index substituting the previous scale by a scale from 0-100.
If we then turn from perceptions to people’s own experience of corruption, one such available indicator concern bribes. According to the Global Corruption Barometer⁸ one per cent of respondents in Sweden in 2006 and 2007 responded yes to having paid a bribe in contact with public institutions, which compares with a Western Europe and EU average of two per cent in 2006 and five per cent in 2007 (Transparency International 2006, 2007).⁹ More recent similar data conducted for Sweden only from the SOM Surveys 2009 indicate similar levels. Respondents stated that during the past 12 months (in 2009) 1.2 per cent had been asked to pay bribes in contacts with public servants/public authorities (Oscarsson 2010). Similarly, in contacts with business 1.3% stated that they had been asked to pay a bribe.

Thus, in the case of Sweden these experience-based data seem to point in the same direction as the perceptions based measurement: Sweden belonging to low-corruption countries. But this could also much be an outcome of that both the perceptions based measures and this experience measure of bribes having the same focus, i.e. bribes as indicator of corruption Linde and Erlingsson (2012: 6-8) in contrast instead demonstrates that Swedes perceive corruption to be rather widespread (and more so than their Nordic counterparts). That result also stands no matter whether respondents are asked directly for their perceptions about the share of politicians and public officers being involved in corruption, or concerning the impartiality of public officers where 41% per cent of respondents thought that the treatment from officials definitely depended on personal contacts.¹⁰

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⁸ Since it asks about the experience of the household (not just the individual respondent) it is not purely experience based.
⁹ These data are also possible to report for various sectors, but in the Swedish case where only around ten respondents replied yes to having paid a bribe this is not comprehensible to do.
¹⁰ Data from the Role of Government IV survey in the International Social Survey Program.
So far based on these data we could conclude that although corruption according to large-N corruption indices such as the CPI and WGI points very limited levels we also note that there are other data that gives another impression. So far we have not looked at data that enables us to address the spatial distribution within Sweden to which we turn next.

*Variation across sectors and levels of government*

Although not shown above corruption might differ across and between levels of government etc. What is the case in Sweden? Also, do we get the same estimates of corruption being almost absent using other indicators? There are various sources that provide indications to these questions. Turning to perceptions as measured by the Global corruption barometer 2006, respondents were asked to rate to what extent they believed corruption to affect different spheres within the country. Respondents in Sweden perceived politics and business similarly and close to the mid-point of the scale, which in a way also is interesting to note (Table 1), i.e. few people think that politics or business is not at all affected by corruption. In comparison to other countries, politics though got a better rating, while business and personal life were regarded the same as the EU average.

**Table 1. The perceived impact of corruption, 2006 (mean values)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Political life</th>
<th>The business Environment</th>
<th>Your personal and family life</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU/Western Europe</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Transparency International 2006: 23. Question: Some people believe that corruption affects different spheres of life in this country. In your view does corruption affect: (1: Not at all, 2: To a small extent, 3: To a moderate extent, 4: To a large extent)

Data from a the Riks-SOM national survey 2010 similarly shows that when given a chance to give more qualified statements about corruption quite few is of the perception that different
spheres of society are corruption free and rather lie in the middle of the scale. Asked about to what extent groups of professionals are involved in any type of corruption on a seven point scale (1. Not at all, 7. To a very high extent) the mean values were for politicians (3.9), public servants (4.2) and business owners (4.4) (Bauhr and Oscarsson 2011: 86). Linde and Erlingsson (2012: 7-8) also find similar relationships, respondents viewing slightly more public officials to be involved in corruption than politicians.

Looking at this in more detail, Swedes perceive various institutions quite similarly to their neighbours in Denmark and Finland (Table 2). Political parties, media and business are regarded as among the most corrupt, but parties and parliament are perceived much better than the average for EU.

Table 2. Perceived corruption in various sectors, 2007 (mean values)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sectors</th>
<th>Political parties</th>
<th>Parliament</th>
<th>Privat sect.</th>
<th>Business/Media</th>
<th>CSOs</th>
<th>Religious bodies</th>
<th>Legal system/justice</th>
<th>Medical services</th>
<th>Police</th>
<th>Permit and registry</th>
<th>Authorities</th>
<th>Tax revenue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Denmark</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finland</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Transparency International 2007: 22. Question: To what extent do you perceive the following sectors in this country to be affected by corruption? (1: not all corrupt to 5: extremely corrupt).

Survey (2009) has also asked about how common corruption is in several institutions, ranging from state institutions (migration board and police) and subnational government (municipalities and county councils) to companies and trade unions. Respondents’ perceptions
of these institutions vary (table 3) showing a striking difference between business (65.9) and
the police (15.5), compared by using the balance measure.

Table 3. Swedes perception of how common corruption is, 2009 (per cent and balance)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Companies</th>
<th>Trade unions</th>
<th>Municipalities</th>
<th>County councils</th>
<th>Migration Board</th>
<th>Police</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Very common</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>18.5</td>
<td>18.9</td>
<td>16.5</td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>13.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite common</td>
<td>44.3</td>
<td>33.7</td>
<td>39.2</td>
<td>34.4</td>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>25.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neither</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>36.0</td>
<td>32.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quite rare</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>8.0</td>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very rare</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No reply</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.7</td>
<td>5.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance</strong></td>
<td><strong>65.9</strong></td>
<td><strong>39.4</strong></td>
<td><strong>48.2</strong></td>
<td><strong>38.5</strong></td>
<td><strong>24</strong></td>
<td><strong>15.5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Balance is Very common and Quite common - Quite rare and Very rare.
Source: Survey 2009. How common do you think corruption, such as bribes and nepotism, is in the following institutions and organisations?

Of the public sector entities municipalities come out the worst. One likely reason is that quite many of exposed corruption scandals have concerned local government. In general, corruption is perceived as least common in the state institutions. Thus, based on these perceptions measures we can both conclude that the incidence of corruption seems to vary between sectors and levels of government (Local government being more corruption prone) and that indeed corruption is not perceived as absent.

Next with these findings as a background we turn to other indicators, where we especially compare results for which level of government that is identified as more corruption prone.

Two such examples are results from using reported corruption cases by the media and from politicians’ view of which level of government being more corruption prone.

Based on reported cases in a national daily which often concern reports of alleged corruption that caused public stir, breaking moral norms, but might not be judges as illegal by courts, the
picture provided was that about the same number of cases concerned national and local government, somewhat contrasting the picture above. However, judged by interviews with members of parliament, the local level of government were regarded as more corruption prone (Andersson 2002).

So far we have mainly relied on perception data, and to a much lesser hard data based on experience. Indeed, one way of adding to the picture of corruption variation is to turn to legal based data on corruption cases that has been exposed and also legally investigated. The advantage of such hard data is that we are basing the analysis on only real cases of corruption but in comparative terms there are also several downsides: it only covers such acts that are reported to legal authorities, which might not mirror the true level of corruption, its types and variation. Selection effects are also likely as some types of corruption might be easier to hide (Hols Salén and Korsell 2013). Also, what types of corruption that are prevalent might differ between sectors. Moreover, available data are heavily focused on bribes, which of course is a core type of corruption, but which does not capture other forms which might have another distribution across sectors and levels of government. But for the purpose here, showing whether different types of measures gives different pictures of corruption and adding to the nuances of corruption bringing in different types of corruption and its variation, it is fruitful to use these data.

The Swedish National Council for Crime prevention (Brottsförebyggande rådet, Brå) in a report uses legal cases of corruption based on all alleged cases of corruption (684 finished cases and 1,248 alleged offenders) reported to the Anti-corruption unit at the Swedish Prosecution Authority 2003-2011 (Hols Salén, Linda and Lars Korsell 2013: 7). Cases of alleged corruption, which almost overwhelmingly concern bribes, were rather evenly
distributed between the state government (27 per cent), local and regional government (26 per cent), and private sector (34 per cent) (Table 4). Another clear result is that, as expected, those giving bribes mainly come from the private sector while the vast majority of bribe-takers are active in the public sector.

Table 4. Corruption cases (reported) across societal spheres.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>State government</th>
<th>Local and regional gov</th>
<th>Private sector</th>
<th>Other*</th>
<th>Percept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alleged offenders (n=1211)</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convicted persons (n=267)</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Other includes private persons and associations not belonging to the other three categories.


Interestingly if one compare these figures with data for the number of convictions the relationship between state government and local and regional government changes significantly: the share of state government growing and local and regional government going down to just 10 per cent (Table 4).

In this regard it is also interesting to put this legal picture against the picture from the earlier perceptions based data: now local government does not stand out as more corruption prone. Also, findings based on earlier legal data have pointed to local government having more corruption cases than national government (Andersson 2002: 236). Thus the legal picture has changed in this respect.
Corruption and variation through the lens of corruption types

Next let us continue using legal data to see how different corruption convictions are distributed across the private and public sector and between levels of government (Table 5). Similarly as for all reported case bribe-takers are found in the public sector while givers are found in the private sector, and standing out is that only few of convictions concerns local government.¹¹

Table 5. Type of crime for the number of judgements and type of sentences, distributed on the number of offenders and type of organisation 2003-2011 (n = 267).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Crime</th>
<th>State gov</th>
<th>Local and regional gov</th>
<th>Private sector</th>
<th>Other*</th>
<th>Percept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convicted persons (267)</td>
<td>41 (109)</td>
<td>10 (26)</td>
<td>34 (90)</td>
<td>16 (42)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bribe-giving (84)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>57 (48)</td>
<td>43 (36)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bribe-taking (138)</td>
<td>73 (101)</td>
<td>14 (20)</td>
<td>12 (16)</td>
<td>1 (1)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misuse of office (5)</td>
<td>60 (3)</td>
<td>40 (2)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>(0)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Breach of faith committed by an agent against ones principal (10)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>90 (9)</td>
<td>10 (1)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud (11)</td>
<td>45 (5)</td>
<td>18 (2)</td>
<td>27 (3)</td>
<td>9 (1)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other crime (19)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>11 (2)</td>
<td>79 (15)</td>
<td>11 (2)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Other includes private persons and associations not belonging to the other three categories.

Source: based on data reported to the Anti-Corruption Unit 2003-2011 in Hols Salén and Korsell 2013: 32.

For other corruption crimes (non-bribery) the rates for state government is still higher than for local government although not to the same extent, but here cases are so few that we need not to use the figures for generalising. Let us for this reason check whether we get the same distribution for other (non-bribery) offences looking at alleged offences (instead of

¹¹ Other studies have pointed to local government as being more vulnerable to corruption risks (Andersson 2002; Erlingsson et al. 2008a, Andersson and Erlingsson 2010). Also, the Swedish government in 2011 commissioned the Agency for Public Management (Statskontoret) to evaluate the corruption situation in municipalities and county councils and reported its findings in 2012 (Statskontoret 2012: 249).
convictions). As the number of offences is still relatively few we also now should be cautious in our conclusions.

In Table 6 alleged breach of faith against one’s principal type of crime is almost evenly shared between the public and private sector, in comparison with conviction figures in Table 5 where none of them concerned the public sector, while for misuse of office and fraud the picture is very similar.

Table 6. Share of (%) other alleged corruption offences in matters, distributed on organisations 2003-2011 (n = 137).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offence</th>
<th>State (42)</th>
<th>Local/regional gov (35)</th>
<th>Private sector (50)</th>
<th>Other (10)*</th>
<th>Percept</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breach of faith committed by an agent against one’s principal (77)</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Misuse of office (25)</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud (19)</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other crime** (16)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Other includes private persons and associations not belonging to the other three categories.
**Other crime concern forgery of document (urkundsförfalskning), false certification (osant intygande), aggravating of tax control (försvårande av skattekontroll), embezzlement (förskingring), industrial espionage (företagsspionage), crime against the Act on certain international sanctions (brott mot lagen om vissa internationella sanktioner).


But what does these legal corruption offences more concretely concern? The majority of bribe-givers are suspected for trying to get the receiver to make or abstain from making certain decisions or hand out certain information. Another common purpose is to offer benefits or to strengthen relations (Hols Salén and Korsell 2013). Moreover, in terms of in what context corruption happens sales and procurement/purchases contained the
overwhelming majority (61%) followed by influencing a legal process and influencing inspection and the issuance of permits (Brå 2007: 73).\textsuperscript{12} Data also show that alleged cases of corruption are not sophisticated or appearing on a high level\textsuperscript{13}. Instead it is described as primitive where, at the local level, gifts are exchange for favours/services (Hols Salén and Korsell 2013: 7). In a way this is somewhat counter intuitive given what we theoretically would expect in an economically developed and established democracy. But again here we must remember that statements being based on legal data and corruption convictions are overwhelmingly based on bribery (85 per cent of alleged offenders in 2003-2011).

In common for alleged offenders are that they occupy positions of power or have other central positions or specific competence that can influence procurement decisions (Hols Salén and Korsell 2013: 8). It is also common that there are well-established ties of friendship between actors involved in corrupt deals and a common denominator for a culture of corruption is close ties between public officers and business, especially in local and regional government. (Hols Salén and Korsell 2013: 8, 25). Thus, interest conflicts are created.

Legal data, both from earlier and recent studies, indicate that most corruption cases in the public sector involve officers and to a much lesser extent, politicians (Andersson 2002: 236-37; Hols Salén and Korsell 2013). In state government 75 per cent of alleged offenders were officers and 8 per cent elected politicians. In local and regional government similarly 75 per

\textsuperscript{12} In the state sector this takes the form of offering money, travels and gifts to the receiver: most common is various objects (Sw. föremål) varying from capital goods form suppliers to baskets with sweets or fruit from private persons. In local and regional government bribes mainly concern travel, money, dinners and activities, land and property buying and renovations of private homes. In comparison to the state sector there are more offers of travel, activities, dinner and parties. Rennovation and construction work is particularly common in companies owned by local or regional governments (Hols Salén and Korsell 2013: 42).

\textsuperscript{13} Hols Salén and Korsell (2013) concluded that corruption by officials in higher positions are more difficult to detect as these positions are less controlled and that this corruption have no direct counterpart and lying at the interface between organisations.
cent of alleged offenders were officers and 11 per cent elected politicians (Hols Salén and Korsell 2013: 58). As expected most of the alleged offenders are male (85 per cent) while relatively few are women (15 per cent)

If we instead turn to alleged cases reported in a national daily, using a broader definition than the legal, officers and politicians figured to about the same extent (Andersson 2002: 236-37). Here, a lot of the discussion in the media was focused on whether ethical norms, as much as legal rules, were broken in cases concerning use of public funds for private matters such as trips, restaurant visits, and economic favours. But cases also concerned nepotism, embezzlement of funds, conflicts of interest affecting decisions, and although not common there were cases of extortion.

So in terms of corruption types and variation we could see spatial variation between sectors and levels of government, though available data limit our ability to be conclusive. In some instances indicators concur but in others the results were differentiated. In the following sections we continue looking at what is corrupt in Sweden in terms of the legal/penal definitions and how conflict of interest is dealt with and how this impact on our view of corruption.

What is corrupt? The legal definition, conflict of interest issues, and citizens’ views

In Sweden the legal definition, since 1978 applying the same rules for the private and public sector, of what constitutes corruption in the penal code basically concerns bribery: the giving and taking of bribes\(^\text{14}\) (Penal Code 10ch. §5a-c), trading in influence (influence peddling)

\(^\text{14}\) Bribe-taking is when the recipient takes or accepts or asks for a promised monetary or other undue reward for carrying out his or her responsibilities or for bribe-giving when the giver gives, offers or promise such an undue favour (Cars 1990: 9-10; Regeringens proposition 2011/12:79 p.24). The conduct may be judged criminally
(Penal Code 10ch. §5d) and careless financing of bribes (Penal Code 10ch. §5e). However the last two crimes did not become codified in the Penal Coded until 2012 (Regeringens proposition 2011/12:79 p.1). Thus, explicit rules making trading in influence and careless financing of bribes punishable was a somewhat widening of the penal code definition of corruption which in relation to our previous discussion about corruption types made it more inclusive. This could potentially mean that legal data in the future become more inclusive in terms of what corruption types are captured.

The way corruption is dealt with legally could also be informed by how the anti-corruption unit at the Swedish Prosecution Authority deals with corruption as its remit is to handle cases of corruption laid down in the penal code as well as other cases “closely related to these crimes”. (Åklagarmyndigheten 2012) In practise closely related has meant cases impacting on concerning the confidence of how authorities handling matters, which then concerns different aspects of abuse of power at authorities (Stetler 2012).

Another indicator of the legal definition is the take of other state authorities, where of course the basic pillar in defining the stance on corruption is the penal code definition above, but where there are also indications of taking an interest in the issue in a broader sense: one example being that when the government commissioned the study of corruption to the Agency for Public Management, corruption was defined as using a position of power for the benefit of oneself or a closely related interest, referring to the definition used by Transparency International (Statskontoret 2012: 249).

liable even before the professional post/commission is assumed and liability for criminal charges may remain even after the person has left the position/commission.
So seen from a legal perspective although being narrow in comparison to the social science definition referred to earlier these are some indications that over time (say the last 15 years) the formal view of what constitutes corruption has broadened somewhat. Still some activities and behaviour that in this paper is defined as corrupt would then not be legally defined as corruption (bribery) but would for many actions even so be illegal falling under other sections of the penal code. That would concern corruption that would legally fall under sections such as Breach of faith committed by an agent against his principal (bribery offences are since 2012 grouped with breach of faith offences in the penal code), Misuse of office, fraud and embezzlement\textsuperscript{15}. Indeed many of the reported corruption scandals in the press have legally concerned breach of trust (and embezzlement). But as we saw in tables 5 and 6 the number of reports of alleged offences was limited and very few in terms of convictions. There were only very few cases of misuse of office (5).

As we have identified there being very few cases of corruption in the legal data regarding indirect forms of corruption (and naturally an absence of cases that does not break legal norms) interest conflicts and how they are dealt with are a key issue to consider. They are also directly linked to corruption as the Swedish legislation outlaw bribery and the aim of bribes basically are to get officials to act contrary to office norms and according to the interest of the briber, i.e. in a conflict of interest.

\textsuperscript{15} Breach of trust occurs when someone carrying out a commission of trust involving economic or technical matters, misuses this responsibility and thereby causes harm to the principal (penal code 10 ch. 5§). Misuse of office is when a person who exercises by act or omission, intentionally or through carelessness, disregards the duties of his office (20 ch. 1§). Embezzlement is the disregarding of professional responsibilities, connected with the handling of assets belonging to another, in order to receive material gain or in other ways receive some advantage (10 ch. 1, 3§§). Fraud concerns misleading another party to engage in action advantageous for the initiator and harmful for the other person (9 ch. 1, 3, 11§§) (SFS 1962:700).
Looking at the legal framework to ensure impartiality and integrity in public administration a natural starting point is the principle of professional impartiality of public administration, which is stipulated in the Instrument of Government, article 9, stating that “Courts of law, administrative authorities and others performing tasks within the public administration shall have regard in their work to the equality of all before the law and shall observe objectivity and impartiality.”

The most obvious expressions of conflict interest violations such as bribe-taking and embezzlement are, as already noted, regulated in the penal code, while other vaguer expressions concerning disqualification and having incompatible interests are not. Conflict of interest situations (disqualification) in the public sphere is defined and guided by the Administrative Procedure Act (SFS 1986:223) that lays down instances considered to be conflicts (11§) and prohibiting a servant with a conflict of interest to process a case and requires the servant him/herself to give notice about a conflict (12§). There are also rules applying to elected members of assemblies in the Riksdag Act (RO 2 ch. 11§), making clear that members are not to deal with matters that concern themselves or people close to them, and in the Local Government Act (SFS 1986:223, 5 ch. §20; ch. 6 § 24)\textsuperscript{16} Moreover, the Public Employment Act (SFS 1994: 260, 7§), ban extra-occupational activities that could harm the confidence for an official’s or another servants impartiality or the reputation of the agency (this applies to government overall).\textsuperscript{17}

But there are also areas without general regulation, i.e. post-employment restrictions and similarly there is no public servant code of conduct. Moreover, for staff in the public sector in

\textsuperscript{16} For members of executive committees and other committees ch. 6 §25 also applies and there are also specific disqualification rules applying to elected lay auditors in municipalities and county councils (9 ch. §§4-5).
\textsuperscript{17} It also further specifies how extra-occupational activities should be handled at agencies, with similar regulations for local and regional governments in a collective agreement Allmänna Bestämmelser (3 kap. 8§).
The existing conflict of interest regulation gives limited possibility of imposing penal sanctions for conflict of interest violations involving appointments, sales and procurement in the public sector, which obviously are areas potentially vulnerable for corrupt influence. The reason is that these activities are not considered as an exercise of public authority, which is a prerequisite for being prosecuted using the Criminal Code’s rules on professional misconduct, i.e. misuse of office. In practice, individuals are not punished in such cases.

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18 One example when such a move caused much debate was when a former prime minister shortly after resigning as party leader and about a year after resigning as prime minister took a post as senior consultant for a consult and lobbying firm (Politiken 2007; Svenska Dagbladet 2007-05-08).

19 The Council of Europe, Group of States against Corruption.

20 Sweden has traditionally defended its position by pointing to the positive effects of having a flexible labor market where people can move between the public and private sector, but recently also pointed to an ongoing discussion which might lead to new initiatives addressing the issue.

21 Labour laws (above) though might imply sanctions if regulations are violated.

22 In the Swedish legislative context the exercise of public authority is defined as decisions or measures with legal implications for the legal subject due to public law but not due to contract or civil law rules (Falk 2009: 29). The named activities are regarded as an agreement/contract between two equal parties, rather than a case of a public authority being in a position to exercise power to decide for another party about benefits, rights, obligations, disciplinary punishment or other similar condition, and therefore not as the exercise of public authority.
unless other articles in the penal code apply such as bribe-taking; a great number of irregularities though, for example actions that advantage one’s own or someone else’s interests, can occur in connection with public procurement, yet fall short of being actual bribes (Falk 2009, p. 40; Molander 2009). Given that these areas, particular procurement, are vulnerable to corruption this might disguise some of the problems, and also give a piece to the puzzle understanding the low number of corruption cases concerning these matters and the very few convictions for misuse of office presented earlier in table 5. Also, we have noted in the discussion of the narrow legal definition of corruption (bribery) that there is a tendency for a somewhat widening of what is regarded as corrupt which might have future implications.

Now let us finally turn to scenario data in order to look at whether and to what extent citizens distinguish between various types of corruption and their seriousness or whether corruption is regarded more or less the same.

Our first indicators emanates from a study using ten scenarios that respondents evaluated by choosing between semantic pairs (such as corrupt versus non-corrupt, democratic versus non-democratic) and also by evaluating them on a four grade scale in terms of judging how corrupt the respondent regarded the scenario to be (Andersson 2002: 111-118). Indeed the scenarios were evaluated differently in terms of how corrupt they were regarded when moving from clear cut corrupt cases to more subtle forms. Also, some of the behaviours were almost unanimously regarded as corrupt while for others opinions varied. The scenarios that ranked as the most, second most and third most corrupt concerned bribery, nepotism and legislative conflict of interest. Respondents judgements of whether scenarios (for those that could concern local as well as national administration) were more associated with national/state

23 Nine of the scenarios in the Swedish study were based on Gibbons (1989) study on Canada.
level or with local/county council level of administration were quite evenly distributed, varying depending on scenario. It was also indicated that several background/independent variables affect opinions, which underscores the fact that the tolerance differ depending on behaviour and that we cannot take for granted that corruption has the same meaning to all individuals. But as this study was conducted on a limited number of respondents the results should be interpreted with caution.  

Having said that, a recent large-n study seems to confirm the picture above with respondents differentiating between various types of corruption in terms of their seriousness. Bauhr and Oscarsson (2011: 91) evaluate Swedish respondents’ acceptability of five scenarios evaluated on a seven point scale. Judged as least acceptable was a bribe scenario while a nepotism scenario was the most acceptable. Also various forms of nepotism situations are acceptable to various extent and this also concerns the two bribery scenarios. A public employee asking for a bribe to perform what is part of his/her duties is judged by more respondents as never acceptable (89%) than a business person who offers a gift or favour to a public employee in relation to public procurement (76%). The scenario of a public sector employed doctor who let a friend jump the queue is regarded by more respondents as never acceptable (77%) than a doctor in private practice who does the same (59%). This is interesting not least in the context of the discussion about potential problems with blurring the lines between the public sector and private (e.g. Andvig 2002: ch. 2, p.2).

So based on these scenario data it is clear that citizens differentiate between and judge various actions differently in terms of corruptness while their judgement of state or local government

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24 160 political science students.
being more associated with corruption varied depending on what type of behaviour it concerned.

**Standard corruption indicators and the varieties of corruption: concluding discussion**

This article set out to show the effects of the standard corruption measurements used in comparative research for our accuracy in estimating and understanding corruption. Using Sweden, a long established democracy with highly developed market economy and often referred to as a non-corrupt or least corrupt case, showed that our picture of corruption, its extent and its variation indeed depend on the measurements and definition of corruption used.

In terms of the extent of overall corruption, referring to the corruptions perceptions index and similar standard measures we would expect corruption to be almost non-existent. However, introducing other indicators, the extent of corruption turned out to be not as absent and unproblematic as one would expect based on standard indicators. Bringing in citizens’ perceptions of the situation it was clear that these are far from indicating corruption as absent. What is interesting here is that when citizens are asked about how many officers and politicians that are corrupt they indicate that there is a substantial corruption problem and similarly when asked about impartiality they also indicate a substantial problem. However, when citizens are asked about whether they have paid or have been asked to pay bribes very few have. Of course this could indicate an issue about whether respondents are being honest in their replies but I think a more likely conclusion is that indeed bribes are not a frequent phenomenon in Sweden. However, this does not mean that there is as little corruption as there are bribes. And indeed, citizens seem to indicate corruption more to be an issue that concerns conflict of interest and officials behaving partially, and that this is a more frequent problem
than bribes. This is actually also much in line with what is theoretically expected from the group of countries that Sweden belongs to and the corruption syndrome that adhere.

But this is something that the standard comparative measures seem to miss out on, i.e. for a case like Sweden we might not capture activities that are a key for understanding corruption. Here we could add that also other indicators with a focus on bribes, such as the penal data used, do not cover or grasp this aspect. In other terms, corruption types most expected in an influence market type of country like Sweden turned out not to be visible when using legal data and indicators focused on bribes.

Moreover, concerning the multifacetedness of corruption and its variation we used legal data, together with perceptions data to show that there is a spatial variation of corruption across sectors, government levels and concerning which actors that are most often involved. Interestingly, legal data (centred on bribery) indicate less corruption at local government level than state government, which again goes against expectations. But again, bribery centred indicators might here just capture a small part of the corruption problem in Sweden and also say more about the effectiveness of the control environment and reporting mechanisms. It was also clear when using scenario data that respondents do differentiate between various types of corruption and their seriousness. Also, legislation and the legal definition of corruption have effects in terms of what corruption that is exposed and penalised and therefore also on our view of how much corruption there is in various sectors and levels of government.

This might also have policy implications. Not recognising that corruption might vary and seeing corruption as a unidimensional phenomenon with the same causes, only using standard cross country indicators (and other bribery centred ones) might lead to a focus on corruption
types/problems that are not the most prevalent given the corruption syndrome characterising the case at hand, thus misunderstanding the causes of corruption that in reality are persistent. This could lead to turning to countervailing measures that are not fit for purpose.

In Sweden corruption has been regarded as almost non-existent, often referring to the corruption perceptions index and similar measures, and important policies for public sector reform have not recognised the impact on some of the corruption vulnerabilities that are pertinent for the Swedish case. To some extent sanctions are also weak and knowledge about problems are low precisely for the forms of corruption that are most likely, i.e. corruption types that connect to corrupt influence in stable and well institutionalised public sector institutions, and indirect and vaguer forms of corruption, such as conflicts of interest impacting on procurement, sales and appointment decisions. This affects the number of corruption cases that are reported.

But in what way does this have implication for our discussion about the effects of the way we measure corruption and beyond the case of Sweden? I would point to two implications. Firstly, as theoretically expected, corruption types other than bribery were important and the standard measurements do seem to miss out on this. So if this were to be the case also for other similar countries also regarded as low-corruption cases, this could imply that for these countries indeed bribes are not a good proxy for corruption. Moreover, I would argue that though bribery is certainly a core indicator of corruption the incidence of bribery in relation to the incidence of all corruption occurrences, including other types of corruption, can theoretically be expected to vary across countries and also across sectors within countries. Thus bribes serving as a varyingly good proxy for overall corruption depending on what type of country/society that is concerned would imply a measurement discrepancy that do not vary
by chance but would be larger for countries like Sweden where bribery is more the tip of the
corruption iceberg. Secondly, in particular for the group of low corruption countries with
established democracies and highly developed market economies: As the standard
measurements might miss out on an important piece of the corruption puzzle the types of
corruption that predominantly fall under the discussion of conflict of interest are important to
consider to capture corruption and assessing the magnitude of the problem correctly.

So, I argue for embracing the multifacetedness of corruption, its spatial variation and include
and discuss conflict of interest in the study of corruption.

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