

# Corruption and social values: Do post-materialists justify bribe-taking?

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# Motivation

- There might be some profound fundamentals for corruption because in spite of anti-corruption measures it takes dozens of years to fight corruption. Social values are excellent candidates for such a role.
- People under different living conditions might share different social values. Those who live in an environment of relative physical and economic security are more likely to share post-materialist values. In contrast, those who face existential insecurity are more likely to share materialist values (Inglehart, 1971; 1977; 1981; 1998; 2008).
- Does this values difference have an impact on people's attitude to corruption?

# Main hypothesis

Post-materialist values are  
incompatible with corruption behavior

# Why might materialists support corruption and post-materialists condemn it?

- Corruption can be considered as a personal security mechanism, which is used when protection and security are not guaranteed by legal institutions. That is why existential insecurity, associated with materialist values, nurture monetary bribery and different forms of favoritism and clientelistic relations.
- Post-materialists feel more secure, they are more satisfied with their life quality, so they don't need to pay bribes looking for protection.
- Country level evidence that corruption is lower in countries with higher indexes of post-materialist (self-expression) values (e.g., Welzel et al., 2003; Sandholz and Taagepera, 2005; O'Connor and Fisher, 2011).

# Our contribution

- No papers at the micro level devoted to the impact of post materialist values on peoples attitude to corruption.

# Data and methodology

- 3-5 waves of WVS
- Dependent variable:

*“Please tell me for each of the following statements whether you think it can always be justified, never be justified, or something in between, using this card.” Statement: someone accepting a bribe in the course of their duties (question **f117**). Range from 1(never justifiable) to 10 (always justifiable).*

- Main independent variable:
  - 1) 12-items Materialist/Post-materialist values index (provided with data)

# Data and methodology

Estimation by OLS:

$$f117 = \beta_0 + \beta_1 * PMVI + \gamma * Controls + \varepsilon$$

PMVI- Post-materialist values index;

Controls: age, age squared, gender, education level, marital status, number of children, employment status, relative income, country, year.

# Puzzle (pooled data)

Post-Materialism Index (ref.group=0, pure materialists)	
1	<b>0,084***</b>
	(0,015)
2	0,122***
	(0,014)
3	0,143***
	(0,016)
4	0,127***
	(0,021)
5 (pure post-materialists)	<b>0,057*</b>
	(0,032)
Const	3,382***
	(0,083)
Country*year	YES
R2	0,108
N	154 416



# Explanation

- Post-materialist values are ambivalent. They are associated with more social justice as well as with stronger relativism about norm deviations. That is why post materialists might be more tolerant to corruption.
- The propensity to norm deviation of the post materialists could be explained by the process of individualization which accompany the values shift process. Individuals get enough material and cognitive resources to develop their own values and norms that do not necessarily correspond to the traditional, institutional ones.

# Norm deviation index (NDI)

- Index of propensity to norm deviations (rescaled from 0 to 1).
- **Avoiding a fare on public transport**
- **Cheating on taxes if you have a chance**
- **Euthanasia ending the life of the incurably sick**
- **Abortion**
- **Divorce**

# Does NDI really matter?

Post-Materialism Index (ref.group=0, pure materialists)	
1	0,048***
	(0,015)
2	0,059***
	(0,014)
3	0,044***
	(0,016)
4	-0,038*
	(0,021)
5 (pure post-materialists)	<b>-0,217***</b>
	(0,032)
Norms deviations index	<b>4,198***</b>
	(0,040)
Const	
Country*year	YES
R2	0,251
N	132 091

# Country groups

Dependent variable: justification of corruption (1-never justified; 10-always justified)	Developed	Developing	Transition	
			CEE	CIS
Post-Materialism Index (ref.group=0, pure materialist)				
1	0,061	0,060***	0,044	0,199***
	(0,046)	(0,018)	(0,035)	(0,042)
2	0,063	0,122***	0,119***	0,098**
	(0,044)	(0,018)	(0,036)	(0,043)
3	0,023	0,183***	0,109**	0,046
	(0,044)	(0,021)	(0,043)	(0,050)
4	-0,037	0,211***	0,009	0,131
	(0,046)	(0,030)	(0,068)	(0,098)
5 (pure postmaterialist)	<b>-0,107**</b>	<b>0,170***</b>	<b>0,170</b>	<b>0,252</b>
	(0,053)	(0,057)	(0,191)	(0,314)
N	30 679	88 156	19 250	16 331
R2	0,049	0,117	0,153	0,070

*Why in developed countries post-materialists condemn corruption despite of their propensity to norm deviation?*

- Explanation: Post-materialists in developed countries differ from other post-materialists.
- They have stronger social justice norms. (Social justice index: *When jobs are scarce, men should have more right to a job than women. When jobs are scarce, employers should give priority to [NATION] people over immigrants.*)
- They are more likely to participate in peaceful demonstrations.
- They are more interested in politics.

# When does the “light side” outweigh the “dark side”? (HLM technic)

- Dependent variable: Corruption justification (1-never justified; 10-always justified)
- Level 1 independent variables: PMVI, controls
- Level 2 independent variables:
  - HDI
  - Country share of post-materialists (calculated using 12-items materialist/post materialist values index)
  - Democracy duration (Alvarez et al.) (1-democratic country since 1950, 0-non democratic, interrupted democracy)
  - Polity IV (difference between democratic and autocratic features of country's political regime)

# HLM results (2-5 waves, only societal level predictors)

Post-materialists share	<b>-6.613***</b>	<b>-8.548***</b>
	(2,193)	-2.05
HDI	<b>-0.461</b>	<b>-0.679</b>
	-0.38	-0.45
Polity score		<b>0.026**</b>
		-0.011
Democracy duration	<b>0.029</b>	
	-0.137	
Wave4	-0.286***	-0.146
	-0.096	-0.109
Wave5	0.039	0.089
	(0,113)	-0.118
R squared level 1,%	1.62	2
R squared level 2,%	7.92	12.81
N level 1	102274	124118
N level 2	61	102

# HLM results (conditional effects)

Post-mat.share	HDI	Dem.duration	Polity	Conditional effect ( $\gamma_{10}$ )
Max	Max	Max		-0.465*** (0,124)
Max	Max		Max	-0.644 *** -0.144
Max	Max	Min		-0.494** (0,189)
Max	Max		Min	-1.167*** -0.312
Min	Min	Min		0.503** (0,199)
Min	Min		Min	0.184 (0,216)
Min	Min	Max		0.532* -0.278
Min	Min		Max	0.707*** -0.24



# HLM results (conditional effects)

Post-mat.share	HDI	Dem.duration	Polity	Conditional effect ( $\gamma_{10}$ )
Max	Min	Min		-0.14 -0.31
Max	Min		Min	-0.105 -0.32
Max	Min	Max		-0.122 (0,325)
Max	Min		Max	-0.139 -0.345
Min	Max	Max		0.189 -0.151
Min	Max		Max	0.203 -0.148
Min	Max	Min		0.16 -0.149
Min	Max		Min	-0.32 -0.314

# Main conclusions

- Post-materialists justify bribe-taking significantly more than pure materialists.
- This puzzle could be explained with stronger relativism about norm deviations of the post materialists
- Post materialists are more likely to condemn corruption in countries with the higher score of HDI where post materialist values are widespread. Our explanation: social justice of the post materialists has some cumulative effect and results in effective social institutions. Post materialists might be less tolerant to corruption of institutions which they perceive as just. Propensity to norm deviation doesn't have such cumulative effect on the aggregated level.
- In less developed countries where the most people are materialists, post materialists are more likely to justify corruption. Explanation: post materialists might be tolerant to corruption of unjust institutions.

# Main conclusions

- The real shift from materialist to post-materialist values will help to depress corruption.
- The expectations that progressive post materialist elites without the support of ordinary people or democratic institutions per se may contribute to decreasing level of corruption are not confirmed by our results.

Thank you for attention!

# Post-materialism and social justice

Dependent variable: Social justice index (high-strong social justice norms)	Developed	Developing	CEE	CIS
Post-Materialism Index (ref.group=0, pure materialist)				
1	<b>0.054***</b>	<b>0.013***</b>	<b>0.025***</b>	<b>0.024***</b>
	(0.010)	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.007)
2	0.083***	0.027***	0.028***	0.032***
	(0.010)	(0.003)	(0.006)	(0.007)
3	0.126***	0.043***	0.066***	0.067***
	(0.010)	(0.003)	(0.007)	(0.008)
4	0.176***	0.070***	0.083***	0.101***
	(0.010)	(0.004)	(0.013)	(0.016)
5 (pure post-materialists)	<b>0.255***</b>	<b>0.111***</b>	<b>0.147***</b>	<b>0.067</b>
_cons	0.235***	0.344***	-0.005	0.189***
	(0.025)	(0.020)	(0.024)	(0.031)
Number of observations	29 427	92 257	18 852	15 694

Why is it an important issue? Imagine two different situations. The micro level correlation between post materialism and corruption means, that post materialists, regardless of whether they are in minority or in majority on the societal level, have more negative attitude to corruption than materialists. We can suppose that to fight corruption, it is enough to have post-materialist state-officers, who will reject bribes.

The macro level correlation between post materialism and corruption means that the level of corruption will go down only if post-materialist values would dominate in the society.