

# Lustration Matters: a Radical Approach to the Problem of Corruption

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**Abstract** Do radical anticorruption measures such as lustration reduce corruption by systematically limiting the political participation of former authoritarian actors? While research has largely overlooked the role of transitional justice in addressing corruption, some scholars claim that lustration may increase corruption by reducing bureaucratic expertise. Analyzing original panel data from 30 post-communist states from 1996 to 2011, we find that lustration is effective in lowering corruption. Lustration disrupts the political, economic, and administrative malpractice of the preceding regimes by limiting opportunities for corruption of former communist elites. To illuminate the causal mechanism, we examine the cases of Estonia, which has adopted lustration and lowered corruption; Georgia, which has reduced corruption since first considering lustration; and Russia, which has not adopted lustration and maintains high levels of corruption. This study breaks new ground with a novel system-level explanation and an integrative approach to causation for the entire post-communist world.

**Keywords** Corruption · Lustration · Post-communist · *Nomenklatura* · Transitional justice

Corruption in the former communist world represents a major problem for policy makers and scholars alike. Whether in the form of administrative malpractice, asset stripping, or state capture, post-communist corruption has been pervasive and difficult to fight (Karklins 2005). As a theoretically driven problem, studies on corruption have boomed, but anticorruption research remains “a young métier” (Schmidt 2007). The

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impact of the anticorruption efforts is ambiguous (Sampson 2010) and the lack of theoretical debate limits research progress.

Particularly puzzling is the absence of a major theoretical issue: the impact of transitional justice. If purging corruption is a matter of justice and integrity in societies after a regime change (Anechiarico 1996), why have scholars been silent on whether transitional justice affects post-communist corruption? There have been country-specific studies regarding the impact of international banks and organizations (Michael 2004), domestic anticorruption agencies, civil society, and the media (Hough 2013) on corruption. However, little research has assessed the mechanisms of transitional justice as anticorruption tools.

Lustration is analogous to the transparency and anticorruption legislation that screens politicians for unethical behavior (Alt et al. 2006) and has been viewed as a radical anticorruption measure (Holmes 2006). As a form of social and administrative justice, lustration scrutinizes individuals for links with the previous authoritarian leadership, bureaucracy, or security services and limits their political and civic participation. While it has been often used as a tool for political competition rather than justice (Rožič 2012), we find that lustration coincides with low levels of corruption. Using the discourse of the past to justify lustration against political opponents, political elites reduce corruption when they debate and implement lustration. This correlation raises the unaddressed question about the causal link between lustration and corruption.

Lustration addresses a major anticorruption challenge. Since post-communist corruption “is rooted in systemic features of the preceding regimes and the transition from them” (Karklins 2002, p. 22), lustration disrupts the patterns involved in corruption through the removal of potentially corrupt individuals. The often inexplicit and perhaps unintended potential of lustration processes to curb corruption relates to the yet untested assumption that the targets of lustration coincide with the highly corrupt elites and their reproduction. Moreover, lustration enhances other anticorruption efforts by increasing political and social capital through the improvement of judicial security and public accountability. Even though it may initially reduce bureaucratic expertise by systematically limiting the political participation of former authoritarian actors, it also weakens the elites most prone to corruption.

In order to defend this argument, we explore the comparative dimensions of corruption and examine recent empirical findings, interviews, and field work on corruption in the countries of East-Central Europe and the former Soviet Union. We study the systemic interplay of several domestic and international factors that either curb or foster corrupt practices. Analyzing original panel data from 30 post-communist states from 1996 to 2011, we demonstrate that lustration matters in lowering corruption. The study breaks new ground by introducing a novel explanation and by both extending its reach to the post-communist world and combining probabilistic and qualitative approaches to causal inference.

This article unfolds by hypothesizing a causal link between the exercise of public authority, post-communist corruption, and lustration. We then define the dependent variable, corruption, and introduce the explanatory variable of lustration. After presenting alternative theories of what may cause and prevent corruption, we embark on a nested analysis, combining quantitative and qualitative testing. To illuminate the statistical findings, we examine Estonia, which has adopted lustration and lowered corruption; Georgia, which has reduced corruption since first considering lustration;

and Russia, which has not adopted lustration and maintains high levels of corruption. The conclusion discusses the relevance of the findings for policy and research agendas within and beyond the post-communist world.

## Corruption and Lustration: Theoretical Framework

The main thesis of this study is that successfully implemented lustration policies decrease corrupt behavior by reducing the corrupt legacies and opportunities of former communist actors. This potentially controversial theory contradicts the common view that purges increase corruption by reducing bureaucratic expertise and by harming both corrupt and noncorrupt officials—and should therefore “be used with extreme caution if at all” (Holmes 2006, p. 244). Two accounts from Russia’s immediate post-Soviet era confirm this challenge.

After the coup [of 1991], I was offered to work in the Administration, in the Government building. [There were] many empty offices [and] Anatoly Chubais [the Minister of the privatization sector] asked me: “Do you want to work for the government?” I refused. I was there by coincidence, visiting friends, economists. (R 13)<sup>1</sup>

Another social scientist, a close ally to President Yeltsin and a member of his office said:

I couldn’t stand communism. But, I wanted to see the state apparatus with more old functionaries. [...] The mild and new liberal democrats couldn’t provide such quality work in the state apparatus. [...] The new regime of the first few months was a nightmare, absolute chaos. When the old bureaucrats returned, there was order. (R 29)

Controversial debates about the ethics and efficacy of lustration have roiled post-communist polities. Lustration has threatened to hurt the functioning of a state bureaucracy. It has been an advantageous policy for new political elites to gain an edge over their opponents (Rožič and Grodsky 2015). It has relied on evidence of collaboration that was normally drawn from communist secret service records, many of which were at least partially destroyed or tampered with by the ongoing regime.

While lustration represents a challenging and a radical approach, it remains piecemeal and is not a wholesale purge of entire agencies. Moreover, we demonstrate that lustration helps lower the embedded forms of corrupt behavior among political elites over time. The main reason lies in the link between the (formerly communist) exercise of public authority and corruption.

<sup>1</sup> Quotations are from interviews conducted in Russia in 2011; identity withheld at interviewees’ request.

## Public Authority, Regime Type, and Corruption

The quality of the functioning of public authority is determined by both its institutions and the people who carry out the work of these institutions. This paradigm has been aphoristically formulated by K. Popper: “Institutions are like fortresses: they should be well designed and inhabited” (1992, p. 165). The human factor has a significant impact on the exercise of public authority. This impact is evident even in well-designed institutional environments where checks and balances and other measures minimize the potentially corrupt effect of human agency.

The impact of human agency and institutions on the functioning of public authority varies according to the type of political regime. In more democratic regimes, the quality of those inhabiting the institutions of public authority depends on the multifaceted mechanism of external control (Warren 2004). One facet is fair and transparent political competition in the election process and in periods between elections. Through the turnover of elected and appointed officials, political competition may lead to the early resignation of underperforming officials. The meritocratic component of appointment and promotion processes may additionally improve the quality of public officials. Another facet is civilian control. The control exercised by citizens and autonomous associations facilitates the cleansing of governmental bodies from dishonest and incompetent officials. Assumptions about the impact of these state and civilian factors and controls have been carefully analyzed and tested in research focusing on well-functioning democracies (Andersson 2008; Bhattacharyya and Hodler 2010; Fjelde and Hegre 2014).

In countries transitioning from authoritarian or totalitarian rule, the process of improving the quality of public officials requires additional procedural components. A major reason for post-communist corruption is often the legacy of communism with its centrally planned economy, closely knit elitism, and even hypocrisy (Holmes 2006, pp. 282–3). It would be naive to ignore the relative continuity of former officials’ behavior patterns into the new regimes and the transmission of these practices to their successors.

The informal networks of powerful elites and regular citizens that characterized Soviet-style regimes have left an imprint on post-communist developments (Karklins 2005, p. 75). The ingrained legacies and embedded personnel inevitably perpetuate various forms of corruption. As old habits and legacies cannot simply be ignored, good governance may be limited without a radical anticorruption approach. In these (formerly) authoritarian regimes, power may derive from corrupt networks which thwart power shifts to new and potentially more qualified players. Yet, exactly how and why would lustration effectively counter corruption after a regime change?

### Lustration Matters

First of all, lustration counters corruption by addressing the formative patterns of the *nomenklatura*. As the main governing social stratum, the *nomenklatura* operated like the administrative apparatus of a professional corporation (Nisnevich 2007, p. 239). It was formed through formal appointments by the ruling Communist Party, while these assignments were carried out under the patronage of party functionaries. Based on personal dedication, party functionaries provided leading positions in their spheres of

influence for relatives, friends, and personnel (Djilas 1992, p. 221).<sup>2</sup> This enabled the *nomenklatura* to use power for personal financial enrichment and social privilege (Yakovlev 2003, p. 683). After a regime change, the key operating feature of corruption subsystems may remain the same. These subsystems continue to be relatively stable networks rather than exceptional, independent, and individual events (Nielsen 2003).

Lustration disrupts the continuity and the reproduction of the *nomenklatura* in various sectors of sociopolitical life due to its function of limiting or removing the former communist elites. While lustration laws usually target positions in the government and state administration, they often reach beyond politics to include the business sector, such as (state-owned) enterprises and banks, or even academia (cf. laws in CZE 1991, Poland 1997, Macedonia 2008, Ukraine 2014). In cases even, such as Romanian parliamentary debates, lustration focused predominately on pushing ex-security agents from politically influential economic structures.<sup>3</sup>

Second, lustration is highly likely to counter corruption as it addresses the judicial, legislative, and bureaucratic functioning of the state apparatus by removing potentially corrupt individuals. The assumption is that even minor efforts through lustration would lead to changes in anticorruption processes in general and in the makeup of the personnel of a public institution in particular.<sup>4</sup> Under communism, public authority and administrative resources enabled the *nomenklatura* to meet their material and social aspirations. By limiting the sociopolitical participation of former authoritarian actors, such corrupt activities may be reduced later. We presume that the agency in post-communist corruption plays such an important role that the removal or the limitation of the old elite curbs corruption even if certain corruption-prone structures persist. Old elites also devote costly efforts to capture the state as they fear the loss of influence if new interest groups emerge. While lustration aims at sanctioning past oppressors for abuses of power or human rights, it may neutralize the influence of people who were closely connected to the former regime (Fombad 2012). Lustration thus either deliberately or inadvertently removes or limits from public service a crucial share of *potentially* corrupt, abusive, and incompetent officials. We presume that once legislative debates on lustration take place, a double movement occurs: First, corrupt individuals

<sup>2</sup> The Soviet *nomenklatura* emerged from the old Russian patrimonial rule, relying on a long-existing practice of “blat.” Based on personal networks for obtaining goods and for circumventing formal procedures (Ledeneva 2006), *blat* was seen as necessary to compensate for the inefficiencies of socialism and to adjust to a harsh state system. Similar informal networks existed in other communist societies.

<sup>3</sup> As we presume that lustration removes or constrains those usually responsible for corruption from not only office but also access to rents, two counter-arguments should be considered. First, a prior cause may be responsible for both higher lustration and lower corruption. However, research shows that, for example, the degree of rupture with the previous system, such as elite turnover (McFaul 2002) or displacement of former communist incumbents in first elections (Fish 1997), is a not significant predictor of lustration or corruption while controlling for each (Rožič 2012). Second, while lustration usually addresses high officials, lustration could miss its target as an anticorruption measure since many of these officials would have left politics for the economic sector. Such an argument is difficult to quantify. Lustrative provisions usually do not allow the assessment of whether a law’s respective targets meet their match. In the best of cases, such an approach would require a particularly thorough in-depth analysis. Moreover, we can further speculate that those post-communist officials who moved to the business sector need the support of those remaining in political office, the removal of which (the ladder) would affect the corrupt practices of the former.

<sup>4</sup> Our measure of lustration treats legislative discussions of lustration—even if the plan was rejected and not implemented—as an instance higher on the Lustration Index than instances where lustration was not even discussed. While we do not claim that having rejected a lustration bill leads to cleaner government, we show that the mere process of discussing or attempting lustration makes corrupt officials less secure and powerful.

are more likely to preemptively limit their malpractice as a result of these debates' signal sending; once a lustration law is implemented, a large number of corrupt officials will in fact be lustrated because we presuppose that corruption is high among the officials and individuals of communist background. Second, debates on, and implementation of, lustration affect people's perception of corruption. We thus anticipate that the more lustration is debated and implemented, the more the perceived levels of corruption will be low. Moreover, for this double causal movement to prevail, the sociopolitical environment must be a democratizing one. First, it is only after a country achieves a sufficient level of democracy that the elites of the new regime aim at lustration. Second, the higher the level of democracy a country enjoys, the more likely, extensively, and lastingly is the country to lustrate (Rožič 2012).<sup>5</sup>

In short, it is in its function of replacement and limitation that lustration is likely to address and affect corruption in various sociopolitical arenas of democratizing states by disrupting the systemic features of the preceding regimes and to reduce opportunities for malpractice.

## Data

### The Dependent Variable: Corruption

In order to guarantee the reliability of our analysis, we used three different measures of corruption in the public sphere. The first is the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI). Measured by Transparency International (2013), the CPI defines corruption as the misuse of entrusted power for private benefit. The second is the Control of Corruption Indicator (CCI). The CCI has been defined since 1996 by the World Bank (2012) as a measure of the extent to which public power is exercised for private gain, including state capture, the elites' private interests, and the strength of a country's institutional framework to combat corruption. When comparing CPI and CCI, studies show that they could be used interchangeably in the analyses of corruption in countries with high levels of corruption. For countries with medium and low levels of corruption, the CPI proves to be a more sensitive indicator than the CCI (Rožič 2012). Finally, we employ Freedom House's corruption index (FHC). This indicator incorporates public perceptions of corruption, the business interests of top policymakers, laws on financial disclosure and conflict of interest, and the efficacy of anticorruption initiatives (Freedom House 2011).<sup>6</sup> The inclusion of the FHC is particularly important since CPI and CCI cannot allegedly be compared over time because the components of each measure may differ for different years and may be less precise than that of Freedom House (Knack 2007; Treisman 2007). The use of three separate indices also assuages the concern about the difference between perceived and real corruption, which could

<sup>5</sup> Without the possibility of minimally open competition granted through democratization, new political elites will have weaker incentives to challenge their old-regime rivals through lustration. Under this view lustration is an outcome of a particular politics of democratization. It may serve the transitional elites to fight political opponents in their power struggle and use lustration as a tool for political gain.

<sup>6</sup> We invert the corruption indices, as demonstrated in the Appendix (CPI<sub>N</sub>, CCI<sub>N</sub>, FHC<sub>N</sub>) and normalize the first two. The higher the score, the more corrupt a country is.

allegedly explain the improvement of a country's reputation for clean government as a result of implementing lustration.

### The Explanatory Variable: Lustration

Lustration limits participation of former elites and their collaborators through specific procedural restrictions. According to a “lustration program,” individuals in publicly important positions are scrutinized for involvement with the communist leadership, bureaucracy, or security services, bearing collective responsibility for past abuses.<sup>7</sup> They are restricted from assuming or holding specific positions and/or required to address their past collaboration under a specified threat such as disqualification, forced confession, or exposure. Furthermore, we consider lustration programs to be implemented when they produce a “lustrative effect.” This means that in a particular year, a given country verifies at least one lustrable position, i.e., it screens the background of an applicant to, or a holder of, a lustrable position.

As a specific mechanism of transitional justice, lustration was pioneered in the 1990s in a number of countries of East-Central Europe after the collapse of Soviet regimes. While in the post-Soviet region, lustration has not been implemented (except in the Baltic states and minimally in Georgia), there has been a significant variation in the application of lustration in East-Central Europe. In post-communist Germany, about 42,000 citizens were removed from public office by 1997. Hungary has banned only a few hundred. Poland requires individuals to acknowledge their past collaboration under threat of removal for lying about their past links. Moreover, there is considerable variance among the negative cases. While some states debated but rejected lustration through a parliamentary vote (e.g., several former Yugoslav republics), others never considered it (e.g., most Central Asian states).

We measure lustration according to the original Lustration Index (Rožič 2012, 2014). The Lustration Index (LI) uses a 0–7 ordinal scale, where 0 represents the complete absence of lustration, 1–4 different levels of legislative success of passing a lustration program (yet to be implemented), and 5–7 increasing implementation of lustration programs (see Table 1).<sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> As a legislative or executive decision, “lustration programs” include three characteristics: (1) suspected past involvement, based on collective responsibility for past abuses, which is determined on its own terms by specific lustration programs; (2) protected present or future public positions; and (3) specific methods or procedures (such as screening), which include a potential threat (such as removal or public exposure).

<sup>8</sup> The variation in the Lustration Index may raise theoretical concerns, particularly with regard to the combination of the adoption and screening parts of the variable. While an isolated use of the screening part would be beneficial for statistical analyses, the rich variation among the negative cases in the adoption level would be lost. In order to prove the index as internally consistent, we provide three different levels of statistical models, using separately the LI as well as its adoption and the implementation portions (see Tables 7 and 8, Appendix 2). Moreover, the combination of the two portions is empirically justifiable. Once lustration is debated and potentially adopted, it is usually enforced, and there is a high correlation between the three measures of lustration. Finally, the LI correlates reasonably well with currently available scales of lustration (Nisnevich 2012).

**Table 1** Operationalizing the Lustration Index

Institutional Adoption	Coding	Variable	Percent of Screened <i>Per Capita</i>		Coding <sup>a</sup>
No Lustration {0}		Binary	Lustration {1}		
LP is Non-Existent	0	Multi-Level	Lenient	0.00005 - 0.059	5
LP is Introduced	1		Intermediate	0.066 - 0.083	6
LP is Voted On	2		Harsh	0.145 - 0.491	7
LP is Adopted, no commission	3				
LP is Implemented, no screening	4				

Source: Rožič (2012)

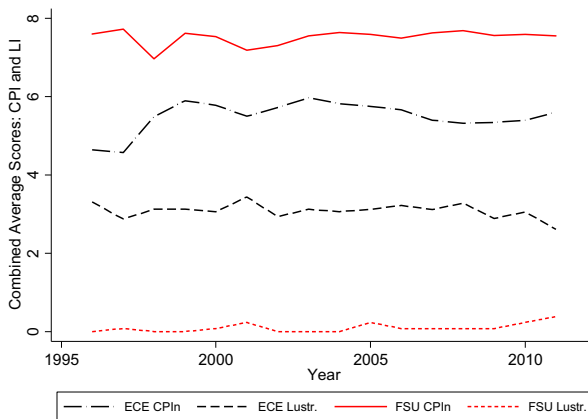
*LP* lustration program

<sup>a</sup> The categories of the screening section of the Lustration Index are determined by the standard deviation from the median (0). See Appendix 1, Table 5

### Empirical Comparisons of Corruption and Lustration

For a better presentation of corruption and lustration scores, we divided the post-communist states into two geopolitical clusters: East-Central Europe (including the Baltic states) and the remaining countries of the former Soviet Union. Using the average CPI for each of the clusters, Fig. 1 indicates a sharp distinction between the two regions. The average corruption in the region of the former Soviet Union is significantly higher than the average corruption in East-Central Europe.

The explanation for this difference in corruption between the two regions may be the use or nonuse of lustration. For both regions, Fig. 1 points to a high correlation between the levels of lustration and CPI. Moreover, an increase in lustration corresponds to a decrease in corruption. Statistical correlation (Pearson) between the CPI and LI is very high for the post-communist world as a whole at 0.75 ( $p$  value  $\leq 0.001$ ). Dividing the region into two clusters, the correlation between the two variables for East-Central Europe is 0.60, and 0.29 for the countries of the former Soviet Union ( $p$  value  $\leq 0.001$ ).



**Fig. 1** Combined corruption (CPI<sub>N</sub>) and lustration scores per year and region. *ECE* East-Central Europe (including Baltics), *FSU* countries of the former Soviet Union. Note: The higher the CPI<sub>N</sub> score (1–10), the higher corruption; the higher the LI score (0–7), the more lustration



## Alternative Explanations

Scholars have produced a number of hypotheses to explain the variation of corruption within and across the countries emerging from communism. In this section, we discuss the most prominent alternative system-level theories. Moreover, since countries that adopt and implement lustration differ in many regards from countries *nonlustrants*, our statistical analysis controls to an unprecedented degree for these differences by alternative explanations. These controls are particularly relevant as they are highly correlated with post-communist corruption (See Appendix 1, Table 6). The variables are explained in greater detail in Appendix 1 (Table 5).

### Past Legacies

Past institutional contexts have shown lasting effects on post-communist societies. The effectiveness and malpractice of current state and bureaucratic apparatuses depend indirectly upon the inherited legacies. While post-communist countries share a common history of one-party rule, they exhibit important differences. One such difference is the length of communist rule (Huyse 1995; Killingsworth 2010). A systematic communist domination may result in such embedded corruption that the anticorruption projects find it difficult to overcome. The theory is that prolonged communism and corruption have a positive relationship.

Another corruption-related difference within communist systems was the level of formal bureaucratization. While bureaucratic systems were massive across the post-communist world, they ranged from incompetent and patrimonial to professional and formal (Ekiert 1999). The resources of actors who defended or attacked the bureaucratization of these regimes varied accordingly. During transition, such diversity translated into different configurations of bargaining power among communists and noncommunists. This diversity also affected the choices of new institutions (Kitschelt 2002). The hypothesis is that the more the communist bureaucracy was institutionalized along formal principles, the less post-communist corruption there will be.

As a past legacy, Protestant tradition and Protestant population may also play a role. Empirical corruption literature seems to be converging on the finding that countries with higher percentages of Protestantism have lower levels of corruption (Gokcekus 2008). Treisman argues that Protestant religious traditions may help “in monitoring and denouncing abuses by state officials” as the separation of the church and state in Protestantism leads to a civil society that more effectively monitors the state (2000, p. 403). Others have claimed that the Protestant work ethic promotes economic development (Weber 1930), which is inversely related to corruption, and that Protestantism may reduce corruption “because of its association with individualistic, not familistic relations” (Lipset and Lenz 2000, p. 428).

### Regime Type and Civil Society

Scholars claim that democracy reinforces good governance. For example, without the possibility of minimal democratization, new political elites will have weaker incentives to challenge their old-regime rivals, which may be more prone to corruption. The weakness of such incentives stems from limited change of the elite. In fact, the type of political

regime influences the character of what Tarrow (1994) calls “political opportunity structures,” thus providing the abovementioned conditions under which lustration is more likely to occur as both a tool of power and an anticorruption mechanism. Furthermore, democracy may help drive down the private rents that can be appropriated by officials, since offers of favorable treatment for special interests can be undercut by the opposition (Ades and Di Tella 1999). However, regime type may not have a linear effect on corruption. Montinola and Jackman (2002) find that while democracy inhibits corruption, corruption tends to be lower in dictatorships than in partially democratized countries.

Strong civil society is also considered as related to good governance. Civil society represents social capital and accountability, which empower citizens to oversee and fight corrupt practices. A growing body of research suggests that civil organizations contribute to reductions in corruption. Some have found that civil society alone robustly explains 70 % of the variation in post-communist corruption (Mungiu-Pippidi 2010, p. 10). Anticorruption NGOs and the media have been seen as most efficient in tackling corruption as they generate public pressure against corrupt officials (Pawelke 2010; Sadiku 2010; Themudo 2013).

### **Political Competition**

As mentioned above, political competition and a meritocratic mindset in advanced democracies provide external and public control on the exercise of authority and lower corruption. This may not be the case in societies in transition, where levels of corruption could reflect the power consolidation at the time of a regime change. While post-communist societies share historical legacies of hostility to competition (Jowitt 1992), democratic institutions arose amidst intense political struggles that varied from country to country (Ekiert 1999). The hypothesis is that the dispersion of power within the national government combined with electoral competition creates an especially potent impetus to trade liberalization and decrease in malpractice (Bussell 2012; Frye and Mansfield 2003). Moreover, political competition coupled with a credible fear of losing an election may constrain the elites’ state-extraction behavior (Grzymala-Busse 2007) and their patronage-led state expansion (O’Dwyer 2006).

### **Oil Rents**

In oil-exporting countries, particularly in countries where wealth is highly concentrated (Luong and Weinthal 2006), and political institutions are weak (Weinthal and Luong 2006), oil rents may increase corruption. Resource-rich countries tend to manage their economies poorly, particularly because state ownership of the resource industry can lead politicians to abuse political power for private purposes (Ross 2001). As rent income in petrostates accrues directly to the government, the political elite can easily divert it into their own pockets (Arezki and Brückner 2011). Since a number of post-communist states are resource abundant, we include this resource curse theory—albeit increasingly contested (Treisman 2010)—in our statistical test.

### **Human Development**

Particular syndromes of corruption may be linked, via participation and institutions, to deeper problems in development. Some scholars have found a strong correlation

between the Human Development Index (HDI), as developed by the UN Development Program, and corruption. According to Johnston, development, through higher life expectancy, income, and education, creates “political and economic alternatives that leave people less vulnerable to corrupt exploitation” (2005, p. 33). Similarly, corruption may be more pervasive in low-income countries (Montinola and Jackman 2002). Finally, as countries with high urbanization are associated with higher education standards and life expectancies, their societies may show a preference for pro-reform parties over the old-regime parties as well as for stronger anticorruption policies. We tested the effect of the HDI, GDP *per capita*, and urbanization on corruption.

## The European Union

Membership in the European Union, or the possibility of such membership, may have a significant impact on the anticorruption efforts of post-communist states. Proximity to capitalist markets and EU institutions tends to support democracy and transparency (Hanson 1995; Kopstein and Reilly 2000). As EU policies have required lowering corruption, the conditionality exercised through the admission process to the EU may have induced compliance in targeting corruption and state capture (Hollyer 2010). According to Kostadinova, we should thus find that EU aspirations and integration lead to a higher likelihood of reduction in corruption rates (2012, p. 59).

## Research Design

Having defined the model and its variables, we now outline case selection, the statistical model, and case study techniques. The research design uses a “nested analysis” (Lieberman 2010): the probabilistic perspective broadens the scope and maximizes generalization, while the study of cases illustrates whether, and how, the main theoretical determinants affect corruption in specific countries. The qualitative section relies on a comparison of Estonia, Georgia, and Russia, providing narrative accounts in order to test theoretical propositions as these countries fit with the hypothesized causal pattern.

The post-communist world represents the specific context of this study. While the definitions of corruption and lustration provided above could apply to cases outside the post-communist world, we focus on countries in which a significant period of communist rule has ended and a new regime has emerged. In such states, lustration is a meaningful possibility and the effect of its use or nonuse on corruption can be investigated.<sup>9</sup> The selection of cases yields a cohort of 30 countries for the 1996–2011 period. More than 350 observations increase the degrees of freedom and guarantee a minimization of biases due to aggregation effects. Using this cohort, statistical modeling will weigh the strength of the main argument against other explanations in

<sup>9</sup> This study’s level of analysis is a domestic and a systemic one. We locate the causes of corruption within specific states and within a system-wide level in all post-communist states. The unit of analysis is a country and observation is a country in a particular year. Case selection represents a theoretical leverage since scope conditions are considered as constants and do not feature in the model. We select cases sharing similar structural and historical constraints on corruption. Case selection is partly limited by data availability: corruption indexes are mostly available from 1996.

order to provide a robust answer to the puzzle presented in the introduction. Since the cross section units (30 countries) of this study are more numerous than the temporal units (16 yearly observations), making it “cross-sectional dominant” (Stimson 1985), least squares regression models focus on random effects.<sup>10</sup>

Assuming a linear relationship between corruption and lustration (see Fig. 2, Appendix 2), and observing variables of the same cross-sectional unit, i.e., a country ( $i$ ), over time ( $t$ ), we construct the basic random-effects estimation model (Eq. (1)), where  $Y_{it}$  is the level of corruption of the  $i$ -th country in the  $t$ -year and  $\beta$  the average level of corruption.

$$Y_{it} = \beta + \beta_1 \text{Lustration} + \beta_2 \text{Control1}_{it} + \beta_3 \text{Control2}_i + \dots + \nu_i + \varepsilon_{it} \quad (1)$$

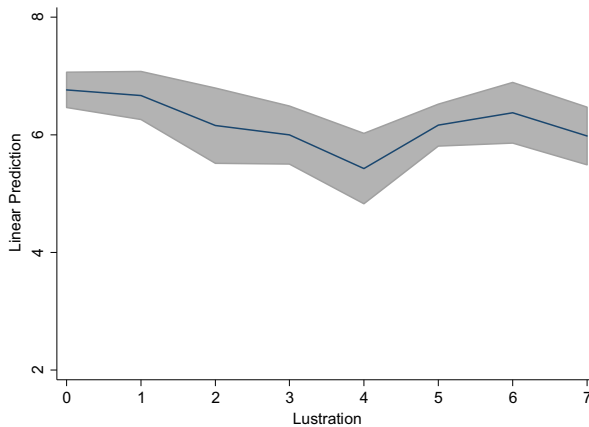
The term  $\nu_i$  is the country-specific random effect (measuring the difference between the average score in the country  $i$  and the average score in the entire set of countries) and the term  $\varepsilon_{it}$  represents individual-specific (idiosyncratic) error, i.e., the deviation of the  $t$ -th yearly score from the  $i$ -th country.

## Cross-National Statistical Results

The main hypothesis is that lustration reduces corruption and that the higher the degree of lustration, the lower corruption expected. As alternative explanations, we hypothesize that more democratic regimes allow for less corruption, while specific elements of past legacies, human development, and EU membership could further thwart corruption. Hence, the analysis should find to what extent lustration and other factors affect corruption. Multivariate regression analyses report likelihood estimates, standard errors, and significance levels for the post-communist world between 1996 and 2011 (see Table 2). The table presents a random-effects panel regression analysis, using three inverted indicators of corruption: the Corruption Perception Index (CPI<sub>N</sub>, models 1–2), the Control Corruption Index (CCI<sub>N</sub>, models 3–4), and the Freedom House’s index of corruption (FHC<sub>N</sub>, models 5–6).

As predicted, the effects of lustration on corruption show the highest and most robust results. The level of democracy and Protestant legacy, and to a lesser extent, communist duration and its bureaucratization, as well as gross domestic product per capita (GDPPC), show significant but less consistent effects. When controlling for civil society, the effect of democracy diminishes as civil society proves to be a more robust predictor. More specifically, the post-communist countries employing lustration are less likely than nonlustrants to suffer high levels of corruption. Models 1–6 (Table 2) all demonstrate that the more a country lustrates, the better governance it has. That is, the higher level a country achieves on a lustration index in a given year, the more likely it is

<sup>10</sup> The random effects use is justified by relevant literature (Podestà 2006) and the Breusch-Pagan multiplier test. For example, for model 2 (Table 2), the test shows that {Prob>chi2=0.000}, meaning that there is within-unit variation requiring a random effects approach. The Hausman tests are less useful here due to the invariant nature of several terms in our models for which the fixed-effects estimator cannot provide separate estimates of the parameters. Unlike fixed effects, random-effects coefficients represent average change within units, estimated from all units whether they experience change or not. We nevertheless provide statistical results for fixed-effect models in Table 9 (Appendix 2). Moreover, we evaluate the impact of lustration on corruption through a marginal-effects analysis (Tables 3 and 4 and Fig. 2).



**Fig. 2** Marginal effects: adjusted prediction with 95 % CIs on  $CPI_N$

to have a lower corruption score. Moreover, models explain at least 85 % of the variance and they systematically incorporate additional control variables (models 2, 4, 6). Their inclusion increases the statistical coefficient for the term of lustration, which at the same time maintains high statistical significance.

These findings are particularly important since the statistical term for lustration remains relevant and significant even when we control for other factors across different models. While some classical predictors such as the Protestant legacy and civil society (and not necessarily democracy), as well as bureaucratic efficiency and to a lesser extent EU membership, display statistically significant effects, the effect of lustration does not go away. Moreover, these latter factors do not receive consistently significant support. Finally, the statistical test demonstrates that other control variables have minimal if any significance. The terms for human development, oil rents, and urbanization seem not to be contributing factors either.

Since the variables in the panel regression cannot all be normalized, coefficient sizes cannot be directly compared. For this reason, it is useful to calculate changes in probability, i.e., the marginal effect of each level of lustration on corruption.<sup>11</sup> The marginal effect (ME) of corruption is the margin of the effect of lustration, where “effect” means either a derivative or a difference. Table 3 and Fig. 2 reveal that for the expectation of corruption, a country is more likely to reduce corruption if lustration levels increase. The marginal-effects analysis at representative values (MER) shows that in the bivariate relationship, the impact of the Lustration Index on the reduction of corruption ( $CPI_N$ ) is significant. In line with our theory, corruption generally decreases with the increase on the lustration scale.

The effect of lustration on corruption differs according to specific values on the Lustration Index. While the general causal trend is that of an inverse binary relationship, an important shift appears at the level at which the implementation of lustration laws begins (LI values of 5 and 6). Once there are actual screenings of the *lustrati*, the

<sup>11</sup> Computing marginal effects means that predictions are calculated at every observed value of  $x$ . In order to compute the LI’s marginal effect at different levels, i.e., to uniquely identify margins, the factor variable of *i.lustration* is used. This also means that with this approach, the LI is treated as a categorical variable, which addresses the concern about the potentially noncontinuous nature of the lustration index as used in the panel regression analysis above.

**Table 2** Influence of lustration and alternative factors on corruption perceptions

	CPI <sub>N</sub> 1	CPI <sub>N</sub> 2	CCI <sub>N</sub> 3	CCI <sub>N</sub> 4	FHC <sub>N</sub> 5	FHC <sub>N</sub> 6
Lustration	-0.055* (0.03)	-0.084** (0.03)	-0.0057** (0.00)	-0.0048* (0.00)	-0.083*** (0.02)	-0.041* (0.02)
Communist bureaucracy	0.21* (0.10)	-0.14 (0.12)	0.018 (0.01)	0.0079 (0.01)	0.24* (0.10)	0.10 (0.10)
Years under communism	-0.0051 (0.01)	-0.013 (0.01)	0.00030 (0.00)	-0.00076 (0.00)	0.024** (0.01)	0.020* (0.01)
GDP/PC (1000)	-0.056*** (0.01)	-0.13*** (0.03)	-0.0057*** (0.00)	-0.0053* (0.00)	-0.014 (0.01)	-0.054** (0.02)
FH democracy <sup>a</sup>	-0.18*** (0.04)	-0.042 (0.06)	-0.025*** (0.00)	-0.0066 (0.01)	-0.19*** (0.04)	0.084* (0.04)
EU membership	-0.21* (0.10)	-0.038 (0.09)	0.0089 (0.01)	0.014 (0.01)	-0.053 (0.07)	0.16** (0.06)
Protestant % 1980	-0.031*** (0.01)	-0.028*** (0.01)	-0.0018** (0.00)	-0.0022** (0.00)	-0.020** (0.01)	-0.024*** (0.01)
Political competition		-0.032 (0.03)		-0.0022 (0.00)		-0.022 (0.02)
FH civil society		-0.21** (0.07)		-0.028*** (0.01)		-0.43*** (0.05)
Oil rents		0.0058 (0.01)		0.00081 (0.00)		-0.0024 (0.01)
HDI		2.79 (2.13)		-0.099 (0.18)		1.29 (1.33)
Population density		-0.0034 (0.00)		-0.00017 (0.00)		-0.0026 (0.00)
Constant	7.62*** (0.77)	9.14*** (1.76)	0.66*** (0.07)	0.90*** (0.15)	3.70*** (0.64)	4.93*** (1.21)
Observations	366	238	356	219	340	239
r <sup>2</sup> overall	0.852	0.872	0.839	0.877	0.859	0.882

Panel-corrected SE in parentheses

\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\* $p < 0.01$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.001$ <sup>a</sup> We have also tested EU conditionality as an instrument in reducing corruption. Regression analysis shows that pre-accession experience is not a robust predictor of corruption once lustration term is introduced

**Table 3** MER of LI, by level, on CPI<sub>N</sub>

	CPI <sub>N</sub>
0.lustration	6.77**** (0.15)
1.lustration	6.67**** (0.21)
2.lustration	6.16**** (0.33)
3.lustration	6.00**** (0.25)
4.lustration	5.43**** (0.31)
5.lustration	6.17**** (0.18)
6.lustration	6.38**** (0.26)
7.lustration	5.98**** (0.25)
Observations	369
$r^2$ overall	0.49

Standard errors in parentheses;  
random-effects panel regression  
\*\*\*\* $p < 0.0001$

coefficient rises and then falls again with the maximum LI value (7). This pattern may be due to the following reason. As LI levels 0–4 measure the different success levels of adopting a lustration program (see also Table 7, Appendix 2), levels of perceived corruption decrease. Yet, when actual screenings occur (see Table 8, Appendix 2), the perception of corruption may increase due to a strengthened awareness of corruption, which is now based on perceived screening and potential removals of former elites. The logic behind this thinking may be that once the citizenry becomes cognizant of the actual people screened, their perception of corruption increases. This corresponds to earlier findings that perceived pervasiveness of corruption predicts the corruptibility of a public official (Tavits 2010).

Table 4 reports a positive and highly significant effect of lustration on the reduction of corruption for the entire post-communist region between 1996 and 2011. The average marginal effect (AME) of lustration on the probability of corruption is  $-0.08$  (model 1). In other words, since the AMEs compute the amount of change in corruption that is produced by a 1-unit change in lustration, the probability of lustration changes on average by  $-0.08$  as LI changes by 1. The AME of GDPPC at  $-0.13$ , of civil society at  $-0.21$ , and of Protestant legacy at  $-0.03$  is also significant. The AMEs of other variables are not significant. Model 2 (Table 4) further supports the findings above. For example, it is estimated that the increase of LI from 6 to 7 decreases corruption by a score of 0.84. Alternatively, holding other covariates constant, the effect of lustration on corruption decreases the level of corruption by a massive 84 % when reaching the level of 7 on the lustration level.

## The Study of Cases

In order to illuminate the phenomena underlying the statistical models, we now present qualitative evidence. As the validity of causal inferences depends on the selection of cases, we select those cases that allow us to maximize the variation in the variable of interest (lustration) and minimize variation of the confounding factors. In order to confirm or refute the main hypothesis, we identify cases that are “crucial” (Gerring

**Table 4** Marginal effects on corruption perceptions

	CPI <sub>N</sub> 1	CPI <sub>N</sub> 2
Lustration	-0.08** (0.03)	
1.lustration		0.00 (0.13)
2.lustration		-0.53* (0.25)
3.lustration		-0.32 (0.22)
4.lustration		-0.85*** (0.24)
5.lustration		-0.24+ (0.14)
6.lustration		-0.38+ (0.20)
7.lustration		-0.84*** (0.25)
Communist bureaucracy	-0.14 (0.12)	-0.14 (0.11)
Years under communism	-0.01 (0.01)	-0.01 (0.01)
GDPPC (1000)	-0.13**** (0.03)	-0.12**** (0.03)
Political competition	-0.03 (0.03)	-0.01 (0.03)
FH democracy	-0.04 (0.06)	-0.05 (0.06)
FH civil society	-0.21** (0.07)	-0.22*** (0.07)
EU membership	-0.04 (0.09)	-0.08 (0.09)
Oil rents	0.01 (0.01)	0.01 (0.01)
HDI	2.79 (2.13)	1.76 (2.06)
Population density	-0.00 (0.00)	-0.00 (0.00)
Protestant % 1980	-0.03*** (0.01)	-0.03**** (0.01)
Observations	238	238
<i>r</i> <sup>2</sup> overall	0.872	0.889

Standard errors in parentheses; random-effects panel regression

\*\*\*\**p*<0.0001; \*\*\**p*<0.001; \*\**p*<0.01; \**p*<0.05; +*p*<0.10

2007) or “typical” (Seawright and Gerring 2008), i.e., confirmatory of the stipulated causal mechanism and representative, given the specified relationship.

The cases of Estonia, Georgia, and Russia add leverage to the quantitative analysis as they control for a number of factors, and they illustrate the theory of how lustration affects corruption levels. We explore the causal pathways purportedly related to corruption and lustration in Estonia, which has achieved the lowest level of corruption among all post-Soviet States; in Georgia, where corruption is dynamically decreasing as a result of partial managerial lustration; and in Russia, where the state remains dependent on Soviet legacies.

## Estonia

Empirical data show Estonia scoring low on various corruption scales. We attribute this result mainly to various lustrative policies employed. One such policy was a special “written oath of conscience,” mandated of persons seeking elected or appointed office. If a person’s statement, avowing that he/she had never been a member of a foreign security service or participated in persecution, were untrue, the person could be



dismissed from the position. While this measure resulted in very few convictions, another policy that we might call “nation-state” lustration had a more significant impact. This lustration took the form of citizenship regulation through the 1992 Law on Citizenship. The policy aimed at driving non-Estonian, Russian speakers too closely associated with the former regime out of the country. The law was amended so that the majority of those who were permanent residents and citizens of the Estonian SSR in 1991, but were neither citizens of the pre-war Estonian Republic on 16 June 1940 nor the descendants of such citizens, became “foreigners” (Poleschuk 2005, pp. 9–31). According to the estimates of the Department of Citizenship and Migration in 1992, 32 % of the total population was “persons with undetermined citizenship.” This policy continued to be implemented along with the 1993 Aliens Act and the 1995 Law on Citizenship and Language.

Although more data are required, we estimate that the overwhelming majority of the party-economic *nomenklatura*, which ruled Estonia under the Soviet regime, fell into the category of “persons with undetermined citizenship.” Lustration policies prevented them from participating in political activities and from working in positions of public authority. While this “nation-state” lustration in the name of de-Sovietization and denomenklaturization may not have been particularly democratic, it led to further institutional measures to fight corruption. Recent empirical research confirms this hypothesis by indirect evidence. About 30 % of Estonia’s population is non-Estonian, the majority of which are Russians or Russian-speaking people. Tavits has found that non-Estonian officials appear to be statistically more corruptible than their Estonian counterparts (2010, p. 1269).

Concomitant with these policies in the 1990s was the decrease in the number of Estonian police by half. The minimum salary for police was increased to approximately the average wage. The criminal code of Estonia, adopted in 2002, established a significant risk of liability for corruption, including a 10-year prison term for acceptance of a bribe. In 2010, Estonia acceded to the UN Convention against corruption with all attendant legal and institutional implications (Kondratova 2013). Finally, as a result of introducing a specific electronic government model in 2000, in 2012, the index of development of electronic government placed Estonia in 20th place among the 193 member states (United Nations 2012).

The case of Estonia highlights the potentially controversial and nontrivial nature of our thesis. While we demonstrate the high degree of statistical likelihood of, and case-based evidence about, the positive effect of lustration in reducing corruption, such anticorruption policies may come with a cost. Low levels of corruption in the Estonian case has come with a serious tradeoff of less democratic inclusiveness of the non-Estonian population.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Lustration as well as other mechanisms of transitional justice have pointed to this nondemocratic tradeoff based on ethnicity. For example, property restitution became a way for political leaders to bolster their competitive advantage. In the Baltics, even political leaders not known for their nationalist tendencies could profit from a restitution program that primarily benefited the titular nationality (e.g., Estonians in Estonia, Lithuanians in Lithuania) at the expense of ethnic minorities, particularly Russians (Rožič and Grodsky 2015).

## Georgia

The Republic of Georgia exemplifies a case where attempts to lustrate or carry out partial lustration policies contributed to a decrease in corruption. Prior to the 2003 Rose Revolution, Georgia was ruled by representatives of the former Soviet *nomenklatura*. From 1992, it was headed by former first Secretary of the Georgian Communist Party E. Shevardnadze. As was true in other states of the former Soviet Union, except the Baltics, Georgia was highly corrupt. As noted by Burakova, “Thieves-in-law, and corruption, were the hallmark of Georgia” (2011, p. 74).

Since February 2004, Georgia has witnessed a drastic reduction of the state apparatus. A key principle of the reform of executive power was “the minimum state.” The policy was implemented by a new team under President M. Saakashvili. The number of ministries was reduced from 18 to 13. Eighteen departments were transformed into subordinate institutions, and the total number of subordinate agencies decreased from 52 to 34. The number of employees of ministries and agencies has decreased almost by half (Burakova 2011, p. 63). The overall process had the nature of administrative lustration. The process stripped executive power from many incompetent and corrupt officials of the previous Soviet and post-Soviet regimes.

The lustration-like administrative reform starting in 2004 was preceded by frequent calls for political lustration. These calls were issued by civil society and took place even in the Georgian legislature under Shevardnadze. Since 2001 in particular, lustration was a key priority on the to-do list of the main opposition and pro-democratic forces. With the Rose Revolution, these pro-democratic and pro-lustration forces took important positions in politics and the broader society (Rožič 2012).

One of the key steps in optimizing state management in Georgia since 2004 was the reform of law enforcement agencies. This reform affected several structures, including the Prosecutor’s office, the police, the border service, courts, the penitentiary system, and the financial police within the Ministry of Finance. The USA and the European Union rendered substantial assistance in reforming the law enforcement system of Georgia, especially through projects supported by international experts (Kukhianidze 2005). While relying on Western aid, the case of Georgia belies the theory that geographic context (Kopstein and Reilly 2000) might play an additional role in supporting or hindering the effectiveness of lustration policies. In 2014, for example, Georgia still fared better on the corruption index than some formerly communist EU members such as the Czech Republic, Croatia, Bulgaria, or Romania. The spatially dependent nature of the diffusion of norms and institutions may not be necessary to fight post-communist corruption.

Probably the most effective facet of Georgia’s reform was the restructuring of the Ministry of Internal Affairs. This reform was of a cardinal importance, strict and decisive. Some 15,000 officers were fired from the Ministry. The State Automobile Inspectorate was abolished, so that for two summer months of 2004, there were neither road inspectors nor patrols (Panfilov et al. 2008). A new patrol police was formed on the Western model, capable of securing law and order, traffic safety, and the suppression of street violence. In short, calls to lustration and the lustration-oriented reforms significantly contributed to the reduction of corruption.

Finally, the 2011 “Charter of Freedom” legislation introduced lustrative restrictions to former employees of special services of the USSR and former officials of the

Communist party and the Komsomol. The law prevents these persons from working in the bodies of representative and executive authorities. While this law was adopted 20 years after the fall of the Soviet Union, it legally ensures the processes of de-Sovietization and de-nomenklaturization of public authorities. The expectation is that the 2011 lustration law could further reduce the level of corruption in Georgia. While it is too early to assess the full effect of the lustration law, since 2011—as well as since the 2012 electoral defeat of the “Saakashvili regime” and his departure as President in 2013—Georgia has continued the trend in reducing corruption (cf. World Bank data 2012–2014).

## Russia

The Russian Federation serves as an example of the persistence of the informal, corrupt, and network-based features of the governing system in Russia (Ledeneva 2013). We claim that the lack of lustration allowed the Soviet *nomenklatura* and its direct heirs to hold onto power structures after the collapse of the Soviet regime.

In the beginning of the 1990s, the Soviet Union witnessed a regime change through two social groups. On the one hand, there was a relatively small, but active and democratically oriented segment of Soviet society. On the other, there were average and lower levels of the Soviet *nomenklatura*. The conglomeration of leaders from the democratic movement and the representatives of progressive-minded Soviet *nomenklatura* took over the state apparatus headed by its Soviet-type representative Boris Yeltsin (Nisnevich 2007, p. 221).

During the revolutionary events of 1991–1993, the formation of the new Russian state bureaucracy already acquired the form of *nomenklatura*. Once in power, the representatives of the old Soviet *nomenklatura* began to recreate the characteristic corruption patterns through the decision-making processes within the governmental structures. While there was a partly new environment in composition, the old *nomenklatura* mechanism remained. The post-Soviet officials soon ousted from power the representatives of the democratic movement as alien elements (Rožič 2012; Nisnevich 2007, p. 227).

The inclusion of former Soviet bureaucrats into the new systems could be justified by their professional expertise. However, taking into consideration the corrupt “professionalism” of the Soviet party-state bureaucracy, it would be naive to believe that the lack of change was due only to the interest of the country and the new government and not also to the mercantile interests of the old elite.

Lustration was actively discussed in the democratic movement after the ban of the Communist party in August 1991.<sup>13</sup> The pro-reform and anticorruption-oriented democrats pushed for de-Sovietization and de-nomenklaturization of the state apparatus. Limiting the right to holding public office from persons of the old *nomenklatura* and the repressive enforcement agencies could have served as an effective mechanism of protection from the corrupt legacy of the USSR. Yet, their attempts were unsuccessful.

<sup>13</sup> In 1992, Deputy G. Starovoitova authored a bill “On the ban on the profession for conductors of policies of the totalitarian regime” for the Supreme Council of the RSFSR that was approved by the III Congress of the movement “Democratic Russia.” In 1997, she again tried to bring this bill to the State Duma, without success.

The privatization process that began in 1992 has thus contributed to the formation of the Russian *nomenklatura* as the ruling social layer. During this process, a part of the *nomenklatura* from the Soviet economic managers, and above all, young party and Komsomol workers, successfully converted their links into the structures of federal and regional capital and private property. These groups accumulated sufficient financial and material resources during the second stage of privatization, which began in 1994, and had largely a corrupt nature (Karatsuba et al. 2005, p. 613). Financial and industrial groups took control of major oil, gas, and mining companies and influenced the public authority through state capture. They directly incorporated their own interests into the structures of public authorities, creating ruling *nomenklatura*-oligarchic clans.

The lack of lustration appears to have played a decisive role in the persistence of corruption. Russian *nomenklatura* became the ruling political and social elite. By the end of Yeltsin's second presidential term, 77 % of Russian political actors and 41 % of those in the economic sector came from the Soviet *nomenklatura* (Kryshtanovskaya 2005, p. 318). Yet, the final formation of Russian *nomenklatura* occurred during the "operation successor." Held during the presidential elections of 2000, this operation resulted in new President Vladimir Putin. While there was a change of person at the post of President, the political and social establishment of the institution of presidential power remained. An authoritarian regime of the corporate type thus permanently established its own rule. Without lustration, systemic corruption became the basis for the functioning of the state.

## Conclusion

This study addressed the question of what causes and curbs corruption in the post-communist world. It tested a new theory that implementing radical anti-corruption measures such as lustration dislodges the embedded forms of post-communist elites' corruption. The theory of this radical anticorruption approach highlighted the interactive effect of transitional justice factors of lustration on corruption. The comparative analysis of the origins of post-communist corruption supported the hypothesis that lustration matters. Our random-effects panel-data regression analysis showed that lustration has a positive effect on lowering corruption. Qualitative tests showed that lustration contributed to limiting the adverse impact of corrupt relations and management practices from previous regimes. In short, successfully implemented lustration policies have led to a decrease in corrupt behavior and have served as a favorable starting point for the realization of complex anticorruption measures.

The findings of this study have important policy and research implications. Despite the causal relationship between lustration and the lowering of corruption, such anticorruption efforts should not be viewed as a cure-all. Countries considering lowering corruption through lustration may engage in processes that end up increasing divisions within the society and polarizing the political elite. A possible way to address this challenge is through the participation of

international actors. The international arena has proven to influence lustration prospects (Rožič 2012). International players, such as the European Union, could provide those countries in transition, many of which aspire to join various EU programs, with unambiguous guidelines regarding transitional justice and the EU's expectations with regard to lustration processes and their link to anticorruption efforts.

The variations touched on in this study provide some indication that several established theories have insufficient power to predict corruption from a broader comparative perspective. Within the post-communist world, prominent theoretical alternatives—such as political regime and competition, human development, or EU membership—have proven to play a modest role, or no role at all. The results also point to avenues for future research, with implications for countries beyond the post-communist world. Based on the determinants uncovered in this study, some countries may not experience a decrease in corrupt practices without addressing their authoritarian past through processes similar to lustration. Initialized but failed attempts at lustration in Afghanistan and Egypt clearly converge with the problem of corruption and the findings of this study (Ayub et al. 2009; Raslan 2011). Moreover, the findings problematize the contemporary understanding of corruption and transitional justice. The process of lowering corruption through lustration may be considered to be a by-product of occasionally undemocratic politics in democratizing regimes. The pro-lustration elite are igniting a powerful yet divisive type of political discourse at the fledgling levels of the democratic processes. The choices of benefit-seeking elites may affect anticorruption efforts in ways that account for lustration as an ambiguous means toward less corrupt governance.

While lustration has affected numerous institutions and prevented tens of thousands of members of the communist regime from holding office in new governments, not all of these can be considered corrupt simply because of their potential involvement with the past regime. As a controversial measure with potential side effects, lustration requires a balanced approach through approved government laws and authorized institutions that relate to other anticorruption processes. Lustration as the purification of public authorities is just one of the available tools that helps create and sustain successful anticorruption initiatives. These precautions nevertheless do not weaken the argument that despite its potentially controversial and insufficient nature in dealing with post-communist corruption, lustration offers an efficient mechanism for cleansing public authorities of the old and new *nomenklatura* with their corrupt practices of governance.

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## Appendix 1: Coding of the Variables and Summary Statistics

**Table 5** Overview of variables, definitions, coding, and data sources

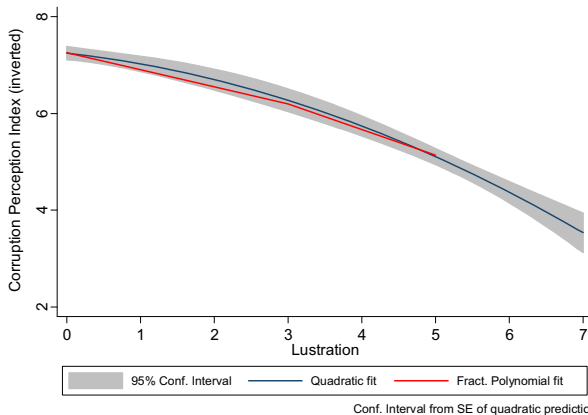
Variable	Definition, coding, and measurement	Data source
Lustration Index	A 0–7 scale based on the number of screened persons <i>per capita</i> . Coding: 0–4 no lustration, 5–7 lustration: 0 = lustration program (LP) nonexistent; 1 = LP introduced; 2 = attempted, 3 = adopted, 4 = implemented without screening; 5 = 1StD from median (0) of screened <i>per capita</i> ; 6 = between 1st and 2nd StD from median; 7 = above 2nd StD from median	Rožič (2012)
Lustration (adoption)	A 0–4 scale measuring the degree to which a lustration program has been adopted through legislative or executive procedures	Rožič (2012)
Lustration (screening)	Variable measuring the number of screened persons per capita in a given year (in percent)	Rožič (2012)
Duration of communism	Number of years under the communist rule; time invariant	Rožič (2012)
Communist bureaucracy	Levels of formal communist bureaucratization: 1 = high (bureaucratic-authoritarian), 2 = mix, 3 = intermediate (national-accommodative), 4 mix, 5 low (patrimonial); time invariant	Kitschelt et al. (1999)
Population density	Population per country by year	WDI (World Bank 2012)
GDP/capita (in \$1000)	GDP per capita a year at PPP (constant 2005 international \$), in thousands	WDI (World Bank 2012)
Oil rents	The difference between the value of crude oil production at world prices and total costs of production	WDI (World Bank 2012)
Corruption (CPI and CPI <sub>N</sub> )	Perceived levels of corruption by year, ranging from 10 (corruption-free) to 0 (corrupt); we use the inverted version of this variable, CPI <sub>N</sub> : 0 (absent) to 10 (very high)	Transparency International (2010)
Corruption (CCI and CCI <sub>N</sub> )	Measuring the exercise of power for private gain, the CCI varies from –2.5 (very high impact) to 2.5 (the impact of corruption is virtually absent). We use the normalized index CCI <sub>N</sub> , which varies from 0 (virtually absent) to 10 (very high)	WDI (World Bank 2012)
Corruption (FH)	Public perceptions of corruption (and other criteria) by year; the original 1–7 FH scale was reversed, ranging from 7 (highest) to 1 (lowest, i.e., corrupt). Data for 1999–2011	NIT (Freedom House 2011)
Political rights (FH democracy)	Each pair of political rights (PR) and civil liberties (CL) ratings is averaged to determine an overall status of “free” (7.0–5.5), “partly free” (5.0–3.0), or “not free” (2.5–1.0); scale reversed	NIT (Freedom House 2012)
Political competition	The degree of institutionalization of political competition and the extent of government restriction on political competition. Scale ranges from 1 (suppressed) to 10 (competitive)	NIT (Freedom House 2012)
Civil society	Assesses NGOs’ growth, organizational capacity, sustainability, and political environment. FH scale reversed, ranging from high (7) to low levels (1); data: 1997–2010	NIT (Freedom House 2012)
EU membership year	Dummy variable coded 1 for all the years of a country being a EU member, 0 otherwise	Rožič (2012)
Protestant 1980	Protestants as percentage of population in 1980	La Porta et al. (1999)

**Table 6** Summary statistics of the variables and bivariate Pearson correlation with corruption (CPI<sub>N</sub>)

Variable	Summary statistics					
	Mean	St.D.	Min	Max	Obs	Corr.
Corruption (CPI <sub>N</sub> )	6.35	1.52	1.7	8.7	369	1.00
Corruption (CCI <sub>N</sub> )	0.57	0.13	0.24	0.79	358	0.93
Corruption (FHC <sub>N</sub> )	4.84	1.35	2	6.75	346	0.89
Lustration	1.83	2.44	0	7	459	-0.75
Lustration (adoption)	1.12	1.42	0	3	459	-0.70
Lustration (screening)	0.01	0.05	0	0.49	459	-0.43
Duration of communism	56.20	13.17	41	72	459	0.66
Communist bureaucracy	4.17	1.18	1	5	459	0.73
Population density	79.26	47.06	6	237	459	-0.56
GDP/capita (in 1000)	9.68	7.11	0.86	34.57	455	-0.86
Human development	0.75	0.08	0.51	0.92	362	-0.81
Oil rents	4.23	10.21	0	61.89	398	0.37
Regime (FH political rights)	4.66	2.13	1	7	455	-0.72
Political competition	7.13	2.97	1	10	415	-0.57
Civil society (FH)	4.44	1.63	1	6.75	387	-0.76
EU membership year	0.20	0.40	0	1	459	-0.66
Protestant % 1980	6.30	14.60	0	66	471	-0.70

Note: All correlations (with the CPI<sub>N</sub>) are statistically significant at the 0.001 level

## Appendix 2



**Fig. 3** Two-way quadratic prediction plot between CPI<sub>N</sub> and LI with confidence interval

**Table 7** Influence of lustration adoption and alternative factors on corruption perceptions

	CPI <sub>N</sub> 1	CPI <sub>N</sub> 2	CCI <sub>N</sub> 3	CCI <sub>N</sub> 4	FHC <sub>N</sub> 5	FHC <sub>N</sub> 6
L's Instit. adoption	-0.098* (0.04)	-0.12** (0.04)	-0.013*** (0.00)	-0.0086* (0.00)	-0.13*** (0.03)	-0.073** (0.03)
Communist bureaucracy	0.23* (0.10)	-0.11 (0.12)	0.018 (0.01)	0.0090 (0.01)	0.26** (0.10)	0.11 (0.10)
Years under communism	-0.0053 (0.01)	-0.014 (0.01)	0.00021 (0.00)	-0.00081 (0.00)	0.023** (0.01)	0.020* (0.01)
GDPPC (1000)	-0.054*** (0.01)	-0.13*** (0.03)	-0.0055*** (0.00)	-0.0053* (0.00)	-0.013 (0.01)	-0.054** (0.02)
FH democracy	-0.17*** (0.04)	-0.039 (0.06)	-0.024*** (0.00)	-0.0063 (0.01)	-0.18*** (0.04)	0.083* (0.04)
EU membership	-0.20* (0.10)	-0.031 (0.09)	0.0097 (0.01)	0.014 (0.01)	-0.041 (0.07)	0.16** (0.06)
Protestant % 1980	-0.032*** (0.01)	-0.030*** (0.01)	-0.0018** (0.00)	-0.0023** (0.00)	-0.021*** (0.01)	-0.024*** (0.01)
Political competition		-0.036 (0.03)		-0.0027 (0.00)		-0.026 (0.02)
FH civil society		-0.20** (0.07)		-0.027*** (0.01)		-0.42*** (0.05)
Oil rents		0.0055 (0.01)		0.00084 (0.00)		-0.0014 (0.01)
HDI		2.61 (2.12)		-0.093 (0.18)		1.32 (1.32)
Population density		-0.0032 (0.00)		-0.00016 (0.00)		-0.0024 (0.00)
Constant	7.52*** (0.77)	9.08*** (1.75)	0.67*** (0.07)	0.90*** (0.15)	3.61*** (0.63)	4.85*** (1.18)
Observations	366	238	356	219	340	239
r <sup>2</sup> overall	0.852	0.873	0.843	0.880	0.861	0.885

Panel-corrected SE in parentheses

\**p*<0.05; \*\**p*<0.01; \*\*\**p*<0.001



**Table 8** Influence of Lustration Implementation and Controls on Corruption Perceptions

	CPI <sub>N</sub> 1	CPI <sub>N</sub> 2	CCI <sub>N</sub> 3	CCI <sub>N</sub> 4	FHC <sub>N</sub> 5	FHC <sub>N</sub> 6
Screen PC	-2.45*** (0.69)	-2.75*** (0.70)	0.0032 (0.07)	-0.0076 (0.12)	0.15 (1.02)	0.024 (0.75)
Communist bureaucracy	0.16 (0.10)	-0.16 (0.12)	0.021* (0.01)	0.011 (0.01)	0.29** (0.09)	0.13 (0.10)
Years under communism	-0.0039 (0.01)	-0.010 (0.01)	0.00047 (0.00)	-0.00053 (0.00)	0.024** (0.01)	0.021* (0.01)
GDPPC (1000)	-0.064*** (0.01)	-0.13*** (0.03)	-0.0058*** (0.00)	-0.0051* (0.00)	-0.018 (0.01)	-0.0509** (0.02)
FH democracy	-0.20*** (0.04)	-0.077 (0.06)	-0.026*** (0.00)	-0.0073 (0.01)	-0.21*** (0.04)	0.075 (0.04)
EU membership	-0.23* (0.10)	-0.068 (0.09)	0.0076 (0.01)	0.013 (0.01)	-0.039 (0.07)	0.16** (0.06)
Protestant % 1980	-0.031*** (0.01)	-0.029*** (0.01)	-0.0021*** (0.00)	-0.0024*** (0.00)	-0.023*** (0.01)	-0.025*** (0.01)
Political competition		0.00064 (0.03)		-0.0014 (0.00)		-0.015 (0.02)
FH civil society		-0.23*** (0.07)		-0.029*** (0.01)		-0.45*** (0.05)
Oil rents		0.0057 (0.01)		0.00097 (0.00)		-0.0017 (0.01)
HDI		1.73 (2.11)		-0.13 (0.18)		0.91 (1.34)
Population density		-0.0033 (0.00)		-0.00012 (0.00)		-0.0022 (0.00)
Constant	7.87*** (0.76)	9.67*** (1.78)	0.64*** (0.06)	0.88*** (0.15)	3.49*** (0.63)	4.92*** (1.21)
Observations	366	238	356	219	340	239
r <sup>2</sup> overall	0.848	0.854	0.838	0.874	0.844	0.870

Note on Tables 7 and 8: Like in the models using the Lustration Index, the models using the adoption portion of the LI show that lustration in terms of the level of legislative adoption remains a significant and robust predictor across the models (Table 7). However, using the screening part of the LI, the results are weaker (Table 8). Lustration understood as numbers of screened persons significantly affects corruption only if corruption is understood as defined by Transparency International. In other models, the term for lustration as screening has no effect. This finding, however, does not undermine our argument. The result may be due to the fact mentioned above that in countries with lower corruption levels, the CPI proves to be a more sensitive indicator of corruption. It is precisely in less corrupt countries that screenings actually occur. Panel-corrected SE in parentheses

\**p*<0.05; \*\**p*<0.01; \*\*\**p*<0.001

**Table 9** Influence of lustration and controls on corruption perceptions (fixed-effects models)

	CPI <sub>N</sub> 1	CPI <sub>N</sub> 2	CCI <sub>N</sub> 3	CCI <sub>N</sub> 4	FHC <sub>N</sub> 5	FHC <sub>N</sub> 6
Lustration	-0.054 (0.03)	-0.080** (0.03)	-0.0061* (0.00)	-0.0044 (0.00)	-0.071** (0.02)	-0.025 (0.02)
Communist bureaucracy	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)
Years under communism	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)
GDP/PPC (1000)	-0.035* (0.02)	-0.11*** (0.03)	-0.0052*** (0.00)	-0.0034 (0.00)	-0.0028 (0.01)	-0.042* (0.02)
FH democracy	-0.16** (0.05)	-0.0098 (0.06)	-0.024*** (0.00)	-0.0062 (0.01)	-0.16*** (0.04)	0.11*** (0.04)
EU membership	-0.29** (0.10)	-0.089 (0.10)	0.0082 (0.01)	0.0093 (0.01)	-0.070 (0.07)	0.14* (0.06)
Protestant % 1980	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)	0 (.)
Political competition		-0.044 (0.03)		-0.0031 (0.00)		-0.034 (0.02)
FH civil society		-0.30*** (0.07)		-0.030*** (0.01)		-0.47*** (0.05)
Oil rents		-0.0032 (0.02)		-0.00098 (0.00)		-0.010 (0.02)
HDI		0.92 (2.62)		-0.16 (0.21)		0.77 (1.41)
Population density		-0.083** (0.03)		0.00036 (0.00)		-0.023 (0.01)
Constant	7.68*** (0.33)	15.3*** (3.02)	0.74*** (0.02)	0.89*** (0.22)	5.70*** (0.22)	8.23*** (1.54)
Observations	366	238	356	219	340	239
r <sup>2</sup> overall	0.768	0.236	0.813	0.800	0.818	0.514

Note: Since the terms for communist bureaucracy and for the length of communist regime are time invariant, they are dropped out of panel regression models using the fixed-effects approach. Panel-corrected fixed-effects SE in parentheses  
 \**p*<0.05; \*\**p*<0.01; \*\*\**p*<0.001

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