

**EXPLORING THE DETERMINANTS OF CORRUPTION IN PRIVATE COMPANIES:
AN ANALYSIS OF MOTIVATIONS AND REMEDIES AS
HUMAN SECURITY ELEMENTS**

Abstract:	<i>This paper tries to improve knowledge of the factors that facilitate corruption in public and private entities and seeks to provide valuable insights for improved regulations and anti-corruption measures, as an efficient strategy for reducing the effects of corruption on human security. We believe the policymakers should first decide which approach is adequate within Romanian society. We argue that to sustain progress in preventing and combating corruption, public policy measures must adhere to the European legal framework and also consider the conceptual paradigms concerning the psychological and ethical underpinnings of engaging in corrupt behavior, suggesting a few remedies for reducing corrupt practices and also a few lines of further research which aim to improve human security.</i>
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Introductory remarks

Romania reaffirmed its commitment to fight corruption, democracy, and the independence of the judiciary⁴⁴⁵, as the foundation of future action for implementing national security policy. Economic challenges, the persistence of the underground economy, and corruption slow down Romania's potential for growth as well as its “capacity for achieving its political-military, diplomatic, and image objectives abroad”⁴⁴⁶.

As United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security (UNTFHS)⁴⁴⁷ states, the primary goal of human security is prevention. It focuses on identifying risks and accentuates early action by addressing the fundamental causes of vulnerabilities. It enhances community resources for resilience and encourages solutions that encourage cohesiveness in society and respect for human rights and integrity.

In late 2022, Romania saw the lifting of the Collaboration and Verification Mechanism (CVM), which had been implemented in 2007 to aid the country's efforts towards modernizing its judicial system and combatting corruption⁴⁴⁸. Subsequently, the Law on the Protection of Whistleblowers, which

⁴⁴⁵ *National Defence Strategy 2020-2024*, approved by Decision No. 22 of the Joint Meeting of the Senate and Chamber of Deputies on June 30th, 2020, p. 3, https://www.presidency.ro/files/userfiles/National_Defence_Strategy_2020_2024.pdf, (02.05.2023)

⁴⁴⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 28

⁴⁴⁷ United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security, *What is Human Security*, <https://www.un.org/>, (03.05.2023)

⁴⁴⁸ *Report From the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council on Progress in Romania Under the Cooperation and Verification Mechanism*, https://ec.europa.eu/info/files/progress-report-romania-com-2022-664_en, (28.02.2023)

transposes the European Whistleblower Directive 2019/1037, was published in the Official Journal on December 19th, 2022. Romania was supposed to collect almost 6 billion euros in 2022 if the deadlines in the National Recovery and Resilience Plan (PNRR) were respected by Romanian officials. The request for payment for the second tranche of the Plan went to the Commission, late, in December. In January 2023, the European Commission sent a letter to the Romanian Government, warning of unsolved problems and unmet milestones, including the inadequate regulation of whistleblowers' anonymous reporting, which is currently discouraged by the existing law, as highlighted by the press⁴⁴⁹.

As previously noted, the draft law underwent a process of reexamination before its adoption. The objective of this review was to modify certain aspects, including the provisions for investigating anonymous reports, the extension of the report retention period from two to five years to facilitate thorough investigations, and the retention of the principle of presumed good faith of the whistleblower⁴⁵⁰. Despite these modifications, the European Commission's findings reiterate our earlier concerns - "the actual implementation of the law will not adequately serve the scope of the law"⁴⁵¹. Therefore, even with the lifting of the Collaboration and Verification Mechanism (CVM), further public policy measures must be implemented to ensure the continued advancement of corruption prevention and suppression efforts.

Understanding the underlying mechanisms that drive corruption within public or private organizations is a vital step in developing effective regulations and anti-corruption strategies. Therefore, we argue that any necessary modifications aimed at meeting the European Commission's expectations for anticorruption regulations must consider the European legal framework (the transposition of European Whistleblower Directive 2019/1037 being mandatory), along with conceptual paradigms related to psychological explanations, ethical dilemmas surrounding the decision to engage in corrupt practices and the effect on human security components. These factors are discussed further below.

A conceptual framework for understanding the decision-making process behind engaging in corrupt practices; the determinants of bribes in the private sector

The notion of international business corruption encompasses three critical aspects⁴⁵². Firstly, it involves the engagement of an individual or organization in criminal activities. Secondly, it involves the abuse of power or authority, which violates current laws and regulations or operates outside legal boundaries. Lastly, it pertains to the exploitation of an individual or corporation's position of power for personal benefit, whether financial or non-financial, instead of prioritizing the interests of the nation or shareholders.

In the context of combating corruption, it is essential to consider the cultural differences in the perception of this phenomenon. Democratic cultures are primarily rule-based and distinguished by a clear separation between the public and private spheres, while other cultures are relationship-based. This cultural variation highlights the need for a nuanced and context-specific approach to anti-corruption strategies.

Another provocative perspective highlights the "corruption of the concept of corruption", regarding "ideological and theoretical biases, prevalent in mainstream economics and elsewhere, that have corrupted the concept of corruption"⁴⁵³. "The rare but real phenomenon of "noble cause corruption" suggests that corruption is not strictly and universally for private gain, despite selfish motives often being involved. Another distorting factor that pervades the literature on corruption is the utilitarian reduction of

⁴⁴⁹ <https://www.g4media.ro/surse-transa-a-doua-din-pnrr-in-valoare-de-3-miliarde-de-euro-blocata-la-bruxelles-europarlamentarul-dragos-paslaru-guvernul-vrea-sa-scape-de-reformele-pnrr-solicit-publicarea-scrisorilor-schimba.html>, (28.02.2023)

⁴⁵⁰ Alexandrina-Augusta Bora, *Whistleblower's Regulation – Legal and Ethical Perspectives on EU Directive Transposition into National Law*, in "Studia UBB Philosophia", Vol. 67, No. 3, December 2022, pp. 125-149

⁴⁵¹ *Ibidem*, p. 146

⁴⁵² Salman Bahooa, Ilan Alonb, Andrea Paltrinieri, *Corruption in international business: A review and research agenda*, in "International Business Review", Vol. 29, No. 4, 2020, p. 2

⁴⁵³ Geoffrey Hodgson M., Shuxia Jiang, *The Economics of Corruption and the Corruption of Economics: An Institutionalist Perspective*, in "Journal of Economic Issues", Vol. XLI, No. 4, 2007, p. 1044

morality to matters of utility or satisfaction. Consequently, the moral dimension of corruption has been dissolved into the hedonic calculus of individual gain or loss⁴⁵⁴.

The findings of a longitudinal study shed light on the variables that impact multinational corporations' corruption, revealing an intricate combination of different level components that causes corruption and impacts efficiency among leading international corporations⁴⁵⁵. The study identified two types of corruption: corruption within organizations and corruption by organizations⁴⁵⁶. The former includes people acting in their self-interest and causing harm to a firm (e.g., theft, fraud, embezzlement), while the latter is endorsed by corrupt organizations and seeks to get illicit advantages or rewards for the organization (e.g., bribes to sign contracts). When an organization is the culprit or offender, such acts will be punished and solved by independent bodies. Unethical pro-organizational behavior has also been theorized as "a set of unethical actions, but seek to further the interests of the organization or its agents"⁴⁵⁷. While traders are often used as scapegoats and characterized as outliers in cases of corruption within organizations, some researchers argue that the normalization of corruption develops within the emotional and cognitive environment of the organization⁴⁵⁸.

Some researchers regard corruption as a challenge for established approaches to leadership in global corporations: agency theory, transaction cost economics, the resource-based view, resource dependence, and neo-institutional theory. They argue that "the agency and resource-dependence theories are best for explaining the causes of corruption, whereas the resource-based view and neo-institutional theory are more appropriate for exploring the consequences of corruption"⁴⁵⁹. The greatest theory for deciding how to control corruption in international companies is the transaction cost theory. In addition, various conceptual paradigms have been studied to provide a psychological explanation for engaging in corrupt practices. The most widely studied models include the fraud triangle model and the neutralization theory⁴⁶⁰.

Neutralization techniques allow individuals to justify and rationalize their illicit or unethical actions, making them seem more acceptable and less problematic. This can help alleviate negative emotions associated with such behavior which are often influenced by denial, self-deception, and self-serving narratives or beliefs developed by individuals and communities⁴⁶¹.

The fraud triangle model highlights that when three factors, motivation, opportunity, and rationalization combine, they create the conditions that enable individuals to engage in corrupt activities. According to the neutralization theory, individuals who are considering engaging in corrupt activities employ linguistic techniques to neutralize the negative emotions associated with such behavior. This allows them to participate in corrupt activities while maintaining a positive self-image and social reputation. By doing so, these individuals remain attached to dominant social norms and rules without experiencing the negative emotions typically associated with such behavior. Some studies suggest that internal motivation and competence may play a role in making professionals resilient to physical appearance stereotyping and the appearance of the halo effect⁴⁶².

⁴⁵⁴ *Idem*

⁴⁵⁵ Leyla Orudzheva, Manjula S. Salimath, Robert Pavur, *Vortex of Corruption: Longitudinal Analysis of Normative Pressures in Top Global Companies*, in "Journal of Business Ethics" No. 163, 2020, p. 529

⁴⁵⁶ *Ibidem*, p. 531

⁴⁵⁷ Madhurima Mishra, Koustab Ghosh, Dheeraj Sharma, *Unethical Pro-organizational Behavior: A Systematic Review and Future Research Agenda*, in "Journal of Business Ethics", Vol. 179, 2022, p. 64

⁴⁵⁸ Edouard Pignot, *Bringing down the house (of Goldman Sachs): Analyzing corrupt forms of trading with Lacan*, in "Ephemera: Theory & Politics in Organization", Vol. 15, 2005, p. 405

⁴⁵⁹ Salman Bahooa, Ilan Alonb, Andrea Paltrinieri, *Op.cit.*, p. 6

⁴⁶⁰ Christian Hauser, *Fighting Against Corruption: Does Anti-corruption Training Make Any Difference?*, in "Journal of Business Ethics", 2019, p. 284

⁴⁶¹ *Ibidem*, p. 282

⁴⁶² Marc Eulerich, Jochen C. Theis, Junpeng Lao, Meike Ramon, *Do fine feathers make a fine bird? The influence of attractiveness on fraud-risk judgments by internal auditors*, in "International Journal of Auditing", Special Issue Articles, Wiley-Blackwell, p. 332

The findings show that exceeding both personal desires as well as societal standards increases the risk of participating in illegal behavior⁴⁶³.

The researchers also investigated the relationship between entrepreneurial intentions, risk aversion, and perceived corruption by comparing these variables across countries with varying levels of perceived corruption⁴⁶⁴. Understanding this relationship can help to shape public policies that increase entrepreneurial activity.

The outcomes demonstrate that corruption has a detrimental impact on entrepreneurial initiatives, particularly among risk-tolerant individuals. Therefore, "reducing the level of corruption may not only benefit countries by creating more transparent and efficient institutions but may also have a positive effect on entrepreneurial intention"⁴⁶⁵.

Still, studies conducted at the intersection of business and corruption revealed that while individuals may be able to recognize bribes in the public sector, they often fail to identify corruption in the private sector⁴⁶⁶. It is argued that organizational dysfunction emerges from an unethical work environment. For example, a corporation that accommodates bribery in its sales department to receive orders may be vulnerable to bribery in its procurement department when acquiring items.

Moreover, the normalization of corruption in one segment of an organization may suggest a lack of ethical standards in other areas, resulting in a climate that prioritizes personal gain over business objectives. This can lead to inefficient decision-making, negatively impacting employee morale, and damaging the company's reputation⁴⁶⁷. The author concludes that the "dominance of business reasons as an explanation suggests a disconnect between ethics and business"⁴⁶⁸.

A comprehensive review of scientific literature on corruption indicates three major approaches to describing its determinants. One group of studies suggests that corporations themselves can be a factor of corruption, while another collection of research contends that cultural variables are a determinant of corruption⁴⁶⁹. Finally, a third set of research suggests that economic issues can also be a predictor of corruption. Other studies investigate the determinants of employee silence "as a multidimensional construct that is triggered by specific motives rather than as a unitary concept"⁴⁷⁰, taking the form of quiescent, acquiescent, prosocial, and opportunistic silence. Acquiescent silence is associated with employees who have lost hope for progress and are unwilling to decide to open up or take action. Quiescent silence involves the intentional withholding of critical information to protect oneself, based on a fear that speaking up will lead to individual undesirable consequences. Prosocial silence refers to withholding relevant information with the justification of helping colleagues or the organization. Opportunistic silence involves withholding or giving "incomplete information with a purpose to mislead, disguise, or confuse"⁴⁷¹.

A more nuanced conclusion on the factors and determinants of corruption was drawn by an interesting study on the "prevention and detection of corruption in pharmaceutical companies"⁴⁷² which differentiates between accidental corruption and repeated corrupt behaviors: "financial pressure, an ethical rationalization, and a perceived opportunity are causal factors for accidental fraudsters, whereas a

⁴⁶³ Yuri Mishina, Bernadine J. Dykes, Emily S. Block, Timothy G. Pollock, *Why "good" firms do bad things: the effects of high aspirations, high expectations, and prominence on the incidence of corporate illegality*, in "Academy of Management Journal", 2010, Vol. 53, No. 4, p. 701

⁴⁶⁴ Luciana de Andrade Costa, Emerson Wagner Mainardes, *The role of corruption and risk aversion in entrepreneurial intentions*, in "Applied Economics Letters", No. 23 (4), August 2016, p. 292

⁴⁶⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 293

⁴⁶⁶ C. Gopinath, *Recognizing and justifying private corruption*, in "Journal of Business Ethics", Vol. 82, No. 3, 2008, p. 751

⁴⁶⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 749

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 752

⁴⁶⁹ Salman Bahooa, Ilan Alonb, Andrea Paltrinieri, *Op.cit.*, p. 4

⁴⁷⁰ Michael Knoll, Rolf van Dick, *Do I Hear the Whistle...? A First Attempt to Measure Four Forms of Employee Silence and Their Correlates*, in "Journal of Business Ethics", 2013, p. 349

⁴⁷¹ *Ibidem*, p. 351

⁴⁷² Dominic Peltier-Rivest, *The prevention and detection of corruption in pharmaceutical companies*, in "Pharmaceuticals Policy and Law", No. 19, 2017, p. 21

criminal mindset, arrogance, and a perceived opportunity are contributing factors for repeat offenders”⁴⁷³. Based on these findings, pharmaceutical companies should address these vulnerabilities by developing a prevention framework based on three components: *release pressures* (provide employee support programs, adjust unattainable performance targets based on sales or stock prices); *enhance ethics* (use inspirational management, provide staff training, and monitor accomplishments through accreditation); *minimize perceived opportunities* (adopt transparent procedures and confidential report systems, determine and evaluate global corruption threats, establish anti-corruption protections mechanisms, and uncover corruption networks utilizing red flag assessment⁴⁷⁴.

Despite the widespread belief that low income is a motivator for corruption, research has found no correlation between earnings and the degree of corruption across corporate purchasing employees. These findings provide more insight into the effect of salaries on corruption as well as the applicability of the principal-agent theory in the field of corruption⁴⁷⁵.

Moral disengagement is suggested to have contributed to the initial act of corruption by both facilitating and accelerating individual unethical decision-making that favors organizational objectives⁴⁷⁶. It is argued that moral disengagement contributes to organizational corruption by decreasing individuals' awareness of the ethical consequences of their decisions.

Remedies and conclusions

Analyzing a plethora of studies on the determinants of corruption, we discovered two approaches: a radical one that does not accept functional deviations within the company, and a more tolerant one that, while condemning corruption and proposing measures to reduce it, admits a certain amount of organizational functioning by breaking some rules in hopes of improving the operation. These two distinct paradigms also impact the recommended approaches for reducing corruption inside the organization.

Research has shown that sufficient disclosure on a critical issue, such as a company's efforts to combat corruption may impact stakeholders' perceptions and thereby improve a company's image. Building on this, researchers affirm that in the context of anti-corruption, transparency, and disclosure are positively linked to social reputation⁴⁷⁷.

A study examining the impact of corruption on the entrepreneurial environment in Romania has found that a high level of corruption negatively affects labor productivity, resulting in unfavorable economic outcomes and decreased investments⁴⁷⁸. However, the literature⁴⁷⁹ provides conflicting findings on the impact of corruption on business innovation. One perspective suggests a negative association between corruption and innovation – the “sand in the wheel effect”. In contrast, the “grease the wheel” effect of corruption on innovation indicates that corruption may promote innovation by facilitating the resolution of bureaucratic obstacles. For instance, firms may engage in bribery with governmental authorities to obtain contracts, licenses, and approvals, thus eliminating minor operational impediments.

The researchers also argue that relying solely on judicial sanctions neglects the most significant cost to shareholders of corporations engaged in acts of overseas bribery, which is reputational consequences. By emphasizing the various cost elements of bribery, we can better evaluate the real social

⁴⁷³ *Ibidem*, p. 21

⁴⁷⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 23

⁴⁷⁵ Gabriela De La Torre Campos, Katharina Radler, Bramantio Utomo Saptoadi, *Fighting Greed with Money: How Wage Levels Impact Corruption in the Private Purchasing Sector*, in “Management”, Vol. 12, No. 4, 2017, pp. 355-374

⁴⁷⁶ Celia Moore, *Moral Disengagement in Processes of Organizational Corruption*, in “Journal of Business Ethics”, 2008, p. 129

⁴⁷⁷ Igor Álvarez Etxeberria, Maider Aldaz Odriozola, *The social reputation of European companies: Does anti-corruption disclosure affect stakeholders' perceptions?*, in “Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management”, Vol. 25, Issue 5, 2018, p. 718

⁴⁷⁸ Bianca Avram, Stelian Brad, *How does corruption influence the entrepreneurial environment in Romania?*, in “Young Economists Journal/Revista Tinerilor Economisti”, University of Craiova, Faculty of Economics and Business Administration, Vol. 1(25), 2015, p. 36

⁴⁷⁹ Elchin Aghazad, Gaygysyz Ashyrov, *Corruption and firm innovation: evidence from post-Soviet countries*, in “Working Papers. Business Administration”, University of Tartu-FEBA, p. 3

costs of such corporate wrongdoing. It was shown that, on average, "the invisible hand of the market penalizes firms by about 4.5 times more than the visible hand of regulators"⁴⁸⁰. Therefore, companies may benefit from creating strong compliance and ethics programs that internalize legal norms of behavior, as bribery investigations can lead to considerable market value decreases⁴⁸¹. Additionally, as evidenced by researchers, organizations that are unable to anticipate the consequences of non-compliance are more likely to reject and resist policy initiatives⁴⁸².

Several methodologies have been suggested for controlling corruption in companies, such as "training of employees, the creation and use of codes of conduct, whistle-blower systems, indicators and metrics, and the deployment of various investigative methodologies aimed at handling corruption risks"⁴⁸³. Due diligence can also be employed to evaluate the reputation of possible partners before starting a business with them. While a great amount of the measures that can be taken to reduce corruption are dependent on government responsibility, companies have been encouraged to act as socially responsible economic actors and implement corporate self-regulation strategies to avoid liabilities. Encouraging corporations to implement internal anticorruption measures may limit bribery in the private sector⁴⁸⁴. However, not all programs have been equally successful in achieving this goal.

The implementation of anticorruption measures in organizations may be influenced by the personal characteristics of managers. Studies have found that personal values can be more effective and consistent in reducing unethical behavior and promoting work behavior than value congruence, regardless of the industry or age of managers. Therefore, hiring managers who prioritize personal values may discourage unethical behavior and promote positive work behavior⁴⁸⁵. Individual characteristics and regulations play a significant role in understanding the prevalence of misconduct, even if constrained by the environment and historical traditions⁴⁸⁶.

The "Corporate Integrity Assessment Questionnaire (CIAQ)" is a tool designed for public and private corporations to assess their efforts in developing and promoting ethical practices and to help organizations "assess and measure their progress in making a formal and transparent commitment to ethics and integrity in the workplace"⁴⁸⁷.

The Corruption Vulnerability Index (CVI)⁴⁸⁸ is another tool to evaluate corruption susceptibility at the organizational level. Unlike other assessments that focus on perceptions of corruption, the CVI assesses actual susceptibility to corruption. The tool can be applied at various levels, including industry, strategic business unit, department, and activity levels.

In the scientific literature, some arguments imply a positive link between corruption and innovative product development. However, research findings indicate that the potential advantages of corruption in new product development are restricted to emerging economies with inherent institutional weaknesses. As the degree of governmental development increases, the effect of corruption on businesses' new product

⁴⁸⁰ Vijay S. Sampath, Naomi A. Gardberg, Noushi Rahman, *Corporate Reputation's Invisible Hand: Bribery, Rational Choice, and Market Penalties*, in "Journal of Business Ethics", Vol. 151, 2018, p. 757

⁴⁸¹ *Ibidem*, p. 757

⁴⁸² David Motherway, Federica Pazzaglia, Kanar Sonpar, *Failures in Regulator-Led Deinstitutionalization of Questionable Business Practices*, in "Journal of Business Ethics", Vol. 149, 2018, p. 640

⁴⁸³ Hans Krause Hansen, Tang-Jensen Hove, Morten, *Making up corruption control: Conducting due diligence in a Danish law firm*, in "Ephemera: Theory&Politics in Organization", Vol. 15, p. 366

⁴⁸⁴ Rajeev K. Goel, Jelena Budak, Edo Rajh, *Private sector bribery and effectiveness of anti-corruption policies*, in "Applied Economics Letters", Vol. 22 No. 10, 2015, p. 765

⁴⁸⁵ Damodar Suar, Rooplekha Khuntia, *Influence of personal values and value congruence on unethical practices and work behavior*, in "Journal of Business Ethics", 97, 2010, p. 433

⁴⁸⁶ Hugo van Driel, *Financial fraud, scandals, and regulation: A conceptual framework and literature review*, in "Business History", 2019, Vol. 61, No. 8, p. 1290

⁴⁸⁷ Normah Omar, *Corporate integrity as an antidote to corruption and sustenance of organizational development: the renewed role of management accountants*, in "Malaysian Accounting Review", Vol. 14, No. 2, 2015, Accounting Research Institute, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia, p. 113

⁴⁸⁸ Vinayar Janardhanan, Ranjeet Nambudiri, *Developing a corruption-vulnerability index for organizations: a study of Indian state-owned enterprises*, in "Public Administration Quarterly", 2019, Southern Public Administration Education Foundation, Indian Institute of Management, Indore, p. 433

innovation will gradually decline⁴⁸⁹. The findings offer new perspectives on evaluating corruption in emerging economies, and present organizational implications regarding organizations' dilemmas regarding ethics; the solution is "to promote pro-market institutional reform to reduce the potential benefits of corruption"⁴⁹⁰. It is demonstrated that firms in emerging economies may confront considerable ethical challenges given that they must frequently operate within the framework of an environment of corruption to be able to remain operational⁴⁹¹.

These conclusions are reaffirmed by additional research findings which show the negative impact of corruption on entrepreneurship. When business conditions are unfavorable, the impact is lower but still harmful⁴⁹², corruption "causes tremendous damage to firms, creating the potential for moral hazards in managerial behavior"⁴⁹³. The findings imply that developing institutional mechanisms is the key to resolving ethical concerns⁴⁹⁴. Corruption negatively impacts established businesses, as well as decisions to start new companies in transition economies⁴⁹⁵. The influence of corruption perceptions on entrepreneurial aspirations is moderated by attitudes and perceived control.

A thought-provoking perspective in terms of corruption analysis and anticorruption strategies is that of "functional deviance", a notion developed to illustrate that organizations depend on both direct and implicit rule-breaking to remain flexible. It is suggested that present anti-corruption strategies, by prioritizing openness, accountability, and compliance, risk establishing an inflexible and unproductive framework by "discouraging functional deviance"⁴⁹⁶. Within this framework, the author makes a clear distinction between organizational corruption and functional deviance, highlighting the necessity for anti-corruption activists to comprehend the limitations of compliance and the challenges of shaming deviations. Nevertheless, corruption can certainly be addressed by "institutional fine-tuning" and a sociologically nuanced understanding of organizational transformation. In this regard, the concept of functional deviance can provide valuable insights for learning and improvement⁴⁹⁷. Further research is needed to determine the extent to which a society grappling with endemic corruption can embrace and internalize the notion of functional deviance.

To effectively prevent and combat corruption, public policy actions must adhere to both the European legal framework and the conceptual paradigms surrounding psychological explanations and ethical dilemmas of engaging in corrupt practices. To accomplish this, Romania must establish appropriate methodologies for controlling corruption at both the societal and organizational levels, as they emerge from extensive scientific research.

Since the European framework is clear enough, the transposition of the European Whistleblower Directive 2019/1037 being mandatory, we believe the policymakers should set focus on deciding which paradigm is suitable for Romanian society: a radical one that does not permit functional deviations inside the corporation, and a more forgiving one that, while criticizing corruption and offering steps to decrease it, allows for some organizational functioning by disregarding some regulations having the goal of enhancing the operation. Based on empirical observation and public reports, we are reluctant to suggest a „functional deviance tolerance” approach, since corruption offenses in Romania seem to already have a functional role, providing easy illegal solutions to problems. We think this paradigm could become a risk from the human security perspective. The human security approach involves not only a detailed

⁴⁸⁹ Xuemei Xie, Guoyou Qi, Kevin Xiaoguo Zhu, *Corruption and New Product Innovation: Examining Firms' Ethical Dilemmas in Transition Economies*, in "Journal of Business Ethics", No. 107, 2019, p. 107

⁴⁹⁰ *Ibidem*, p. 107

⁴⁹¹ *Ibidem*, p. 121

⁴⁹² Nabamita Dutta, Russell Sobel, *Does corruption ever help entrepreneurship?*, in "Small Bus Econ", No. 47, 2016, p. 179

⁴⁹³ Xuemei Xie, Guoyou Qi, Kevin Xiaoguo Zhu, *Op.cit.*, p. 122

⁴⁹⁴ *Ibidem*, p. 123

⁴⁹⁵ Diana Traikova, Tatiana S.Manolova, Judith Möllers, Gertrud Buchenrieder, *Corruption perceptions and entrepreneurial intentions in a transitional context—the case of rural Bulgaria*, "Journal of Developmental Entrepreneurship", Vol. 22, No. 3, 2017, p. 16-17

⁴⁹⁶ Fran Osrecki, *Fighting corruption with transparent organizations: Anti-corruption and functional deviance in organizational behavior*, "Ephemera: Theory & Politics in Organization", 2015, Vol. 15, p. 337

⁴⁹⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 358

evaluation of needs, vulnerabilities, and capacities but also a review of the security and empowerment actions required to prevent or minimize the recurrence of insecurity.

The researchers showed that corruption and all its elements had an impact on human security throughout every one of its parameters, leading to a deterioration or inability to attain them⁴⁹⁸, especially within society in transitions.

Therefore, we believe that Romania should conduct its research to account for any cultural biases that may exist within the country regarding corruption and then decide on the adopted paradigm and subsequent anti-corruption strategies to minimize human security vulnerabilities.

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