



DLP

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Research Paper 21

From Islands of Integrity to Understanding the Politics of Corruption Reduction

Phase One: Statistical identification of 'positive outliers'

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Introduction¹

Under what circumstances does a reduction in the patterns of corruption occur? To what extent is this associated with changing structural conditions, or with formal or informal institutional change, or with more effective implementation? To what extent can it be attributed to the role of individuals, organizations and coalitions that pursue and promote reform? How do such factors combine? Why have some public organizations or sectors seen a reduction in corruption (or a greater reduction than might be expected) while others have not? What explains the differences across or within countries and sectors? In short, what are the political processes that drive corruption reduction and what policy lessons can be learned from studying cases where it has happened? This paper, the first in a series on this topic, is part of a project that seeks to try to answer those questions, and is being undertaken by the **Developmental Leadership Program (DLP)** in conjunction with **Transparency International (TI)**. The paper outlines the way in which a 'long list' of cases has been identified by a careful statistical analysis of TI's *Global Corruption Barometer (GCB)*.² Over the coming months a second phase will take place that will establish a short list of cases. A third phase will follow that will drill down into the detailed political and historical processes of these cases in an attempt to answer these questions and generate some working hypotheses for possible further testing in a wider range of examples.

¹ The author would like to thank Dieter Zinnbauer and Finn Heinrich from Transparency International for their collaboration on the 'Positive Outlier' research project in general, and for their helpful comments and suggestions regarding this paper, specifically.

² A second and more technical paper on this first phase will be available on the DLP website in May 2012.

The challenges of corruption research

Corruption research commonly faces the challenge of trying not to succumb to fatalistic or grimly pessimistic lines of reasoning. In general, researchers have found it relatively easy to document and compellingly explain the logic, interlocking interests and self-reinforcing dynamics that are responsible for the rather gloomy status quo or the continuing deterioration in very corrupt and failing regimes of governance. At the same time, they find it difficult to dispel the associated sense of inevitability about this deterioration, or to identify the drivers and attributes that have helped some countries or sectors to reverse the pattern, that have allowed political entrepreneurs and coalitions for change to shift entrenched power balances, or that have enabled individual organisations to flourish in adverse conditions. At the practical policy level this means that corruption research has often had difficulty in teasing out policy implications that can inspire and help other countries to sequence reforms for making real progress.

A particularly promising approach to overcome this kind of seemingly self-reinforcing vicious circle is to focus on success stories or, in statistical terms, 'positive-outliers', i.e. identify countries and, perhaps, more interestingly, particular sectors at the national level that are doing better than comparators, or that have made significant progress over time despite adverse background conditions. Examples of this would include an accountable and trusted judiciary as an island of integrity in an otherwise weak and highly corrupt institutional setting; a police force that has markedly reduced corruption among its ranks; or a water service provider that is less prone to bribery than its peers in comparable circumstances. These and similar service providers are responsible for the bulk of day-to-day interactions that citizens have with their public sectors and governments. Thus, they are instrumental in shaping public trust in, and perceived legitimacy of, governments and the broader national governance frameworks in which they are located. Examining success stories at the level of such individual **sectors** provides, therefore, a very promising avenue for obtaining a better understanding of the role that leadership has in achieving a beneficial turn-around or leverage on other entry points for positive change.

The DLP and Transparency International 'Islands of Integrity' research project focuses on identifying positive-outlying sectors and explaining why these outlying sectors have lower levels of corruption or have experienced significant positive change in reducing corruption, under otherwise difficult circumstances. Specifically, the research project consists of three phases. Using Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer (GCB), the first phase of the project has applied a data-driven approach to identify specific sectors in developing countries that can be considered positive-outliers. From the pool of positive-outliers identified in this first phase, the second phase of the project will then select a shorter list of these sectoral success stories, and a third phase will involve closer examination of them through historical and process-tracing analysis in order to shed further light on the attributes of leadership, institutional and organisational integrity, sequencing and coalition-building for reforms that have proven conducive to these unexpected positive outcomes.

The overall approach is innovative, as it draws on a dataset that has not yet been exploited for this purpose. The project will contribute to a better understanding of the current role, and future potential

role, that civil society organisations, social accountability mechanisms and - most recently - social media applications are playing in these change processes. Additionally, by taking a more objective data-driven approach to case selection, the project will be able to transcend a common methodological challenge of selecting cases based on the role of a particular explanatory variable. Finally, the project fits nicely within the broader suite of case studies which the **DLP** is undertaking to explore (a) where, how and when developmental leaders and coalitions, and external supporters, have worked in a politically informed way to promote positive institutional and policy reform; and (b) the factors that have shaped their relative success or failure.

This paper summarizes the work undertaken to complete phase one of the overarching research program. Specifically, it describes the GCB data-set, as well as the steps taken to manage it. The paper also explains in more detail the key intuition behind statistical positive-outlier identification. Additionally, the full pool of positive-outliers rendered from these related analyses is presented, and the logic behind how the project has narrowed down this larger pool into potential case studies for examination in phase two is also summarized.

Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer (GCB): general considerations

The statistical approach used to identify sectoral positive-outliers relied on harvesting one of the largest and most comprehensive international household surveys on governance issues available: Transparency International's Global Corruption Barometer (GCB). Comparatively, Transparency International's GCB data is unparalleled; in its totality, the dataset contains the largest geographic/temporal reach of responses to questions probing people's experience with, and perceptions of, corruption across multiple sectors at the national level. Spanning the period from 2003 to 2007 and from 2009 to 2011, the GCB collectively includes the responses of over 450,000 respondents.³

Prior to this research project, the GCB existed in the Transparency International files as separate yearly datasets, making cleaning and merging the data into one inclusive dataset a first step to take within phase one of the project. Doing so facilitated an appraisal of what geographic and temporal samples had been asked the same or similar questions. Additionally, the availability of the produced, inclusive dataset will benefit corruption researchers in the future, beyond the purview of this research project.

Two sets of sector-specific questions were commonly asked on the GCB and were relied upon for the identification of positive-outliers. The first set deals with the *perception* of corruption within a particular sector and is specifically worded: "To what extent do you perceive the following categories [sectors] in this country to be affected by corruption?" To this question, respondents could choose from a scale between 1, meaning "not at all corrupt" and 5, meaning "extremely corrupt." The second set deals with the *experience* of corruption within a particular sector and is specifically worded: "In the past 12 months have you or anyone living in your household paid a bribe in any form to each of the following institutions/organisations [sectors]?" To this question respondents could (a) not respond; (b) say that they did not know; (c) say yes; or (d) say no. The following tables indicate which survey-years each sector question was asked.

³ However, most countries included in the entire sample were not surveyed every year. Almost half of the countries surveyed were surveyed every three years or less. Also, while some questions on the GCB have appeared in several consecutive annual surveys, other questions have not been consistently included across survey-years. For this reason, identifying yearly trends over time is particularly difficult.

Sector question coverage in GCB survey-years

Perception-Based	Sector	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009	2010	2011
	Customs							
Political Parties								
Parliament								
Police								
Business								
Media								
Public Officials								
Judiciary								
NGOs								
Religious Bodies								
Military								
Education								
Medical								
Permit								
Utilities								
Tax Revenue								

Experienced-Based	Sector	2004	2005	2006	2007	2009	2010	2011
	Customs							
Land								
Police								
Judiciary								
Education								
Medical								
Permit								
Utilities								
Tax Revenue								

* Shading indicates a survey-year when the respective sector question was included.

Because this project seeks to identify country/sector outliers, the responses to these questions by individuals had to be aggregated to a general country-year score. In the case of perception measures, a mean perceived level of corruption (in each sector) was calculated across each country-year. In Zambia's case, for instance, the average level of perceived business corruption in 2010 was calculated to be 3.08, (on a 1 to 5 scale), from the responses of over 1,000 respondents. For experience-based responses, a proportion of people who reported **not to have paid** a bribe (to each sector) was calculated across each country-year.⁴ For example, in Peru, 93.80% of the respondents reported to not have paid a bribe to the education sector in 2010.⁵

Conceptualizing positive-outlier identification

Statistically speaking, outliers are observations that predictive statistical models (regression analyses) find difficult to predict. Accordingly, the first step in conceptualizing how outliers are identified is to understand the basic intuition behind predictive models.

In essence, predictive models assess to what degree and how, the variation of independent variables can help to explain the variation in a dependent variable. In cross-national corruption research, for example, economic, political and social indicators are conventionally used to predict variations in cross-national corruption. Across large samples of countries, these types of analyses allow researchers to estimate the likely most associated variables with national indicators of corruption. For instance, in this literature, a country's level of economic development is commonly found to be associated with its level of corruption (Triesman 2007). Using estimations like this, researchers are not only able make statisti-

4 By focusing on a proportion of people who had not paid a bribe, as opposed to those that had, we tried to address one of the common problems with experience-based measures of corruption - the reluctance to report. Respondents who might be more reluctant to admit paying bribes might reply with "don't know" or give no answer, rather than "yes". Therefore, using those that confirm that they had not paid a bribe at all, versus those that admit to paying a bribe, possibly adjusts for some cases of reluctance to admit to paying a bribe (Triesman 2007: 239).

5 The proportions and means ultimately used to identify outliers were calculated based on the survey weights assigned, so as to reflect a nationally representative sample.

cally informed generalized statements about the correlates of corruption, but they are able to 'predict' the level of corruption a country is likely to have, based on its particular social, economic and political settings.

Conceptually, however, outliers are the observations that statistically surprise us. In the context of cross-national corruption research outliers are those cases where the actual level of corruption is much higher or much lower *than the predicted level*. For example, in cross-national corruption research where lower income countries are usually associated with higher levels of corruption, an outlier in this association would be a relatively poor country with surprisingly low levels of corruption. This research project, however, aims at identifying **sectoral positive-outliers**. Thus, outliers in this context are those sectors within a country that operate or are perceived to operate more cleanly than predicted, or where there has been positive change over time in *reducing* the perceived or experienced corruption, when stagnation or an increase in corruption levels was predicted. For these analyses, predictions are based on the general level of corruption in the country. By doing so, this approach is able to control for the country context, thereby identifying the positive-outliers as the country's sectoral 'shining stars'. For example, the approach detects countries where the medical sector has been paid far fewer bribes than might otherwise be expected, given the rate of bribe payments to other sectors. The approach also can detect a judicial system, for example, where a drop in the perceived level of corruption was observed, but certainly not anticipated, due to the relatively stagnant or increasing levels of perceived corruption of most other sectors in the country.

Types of outliers identified in the research

To this end, three types of positive-outliers were ultimately parsed from the GCB data. They include '2010 structural positive-outliers', 'improvement over time positive-outliers', and '2010 structural service sector positive-outliers.' The basic intuition behind each type is described below and the results rendered from each of the respective analyses are also included.

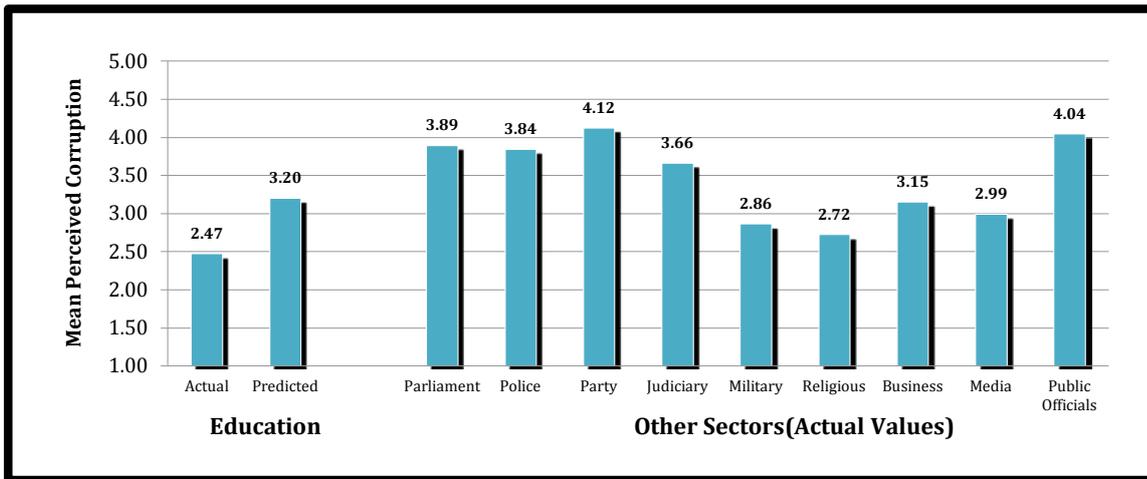
2010 Structural Positive-Outliers

For this type of positive-outlier, GCB 2010 data was used to identify sectors that have a *lower* level of perceived or experienced corruption than that which a general level of corruption in the country would otherwise have led us to expect. For example, in Argentina's case, the predictive analysis determined that due to the general level of corruption in the country, the likely level of perceived corruption in education would be a 3.20. (As a reminder, the scale of perceived corruption runs from 1, meaning not corrupt, to a 5, meaning completely corrupt). A score of 3.20 is just over the half way mark, towards the more corrupt end. Yet, Argentina's actual perceived level of education corruption was found to be a 2.47, which is about 15% lower than the predicted level. Argentina's education sector is thus considered to be an outlier because the difference between the actual and predicted perceived education corruption was extraordinarily unexpected. To be much more specific, statistically speaking there is an estimated less than 1% chance⁶ that an education sector would be perceived as being this clean, given how general corruption in the country is perceived.

A comparison of the other perceived levels of corruption in Argentina further illustrates this point. As figure 1 indicates, the perceived level of education corruption is less than that of any other sector, even the perceived level of corruption in religious bodies.

⁶ That is, following a statistical significance test, Argentina's actual perceived level of education corruption has an estimated *p*-value (or statistical significance level) of 0.01 or less, implying that, given how general corruption in the country is perceived, there is a 1% (or less) probability of this level of deviation from the predicted value occurring by chance.

Figure I: Mean Perceived Corruption, by Sector for Argentina in 2010



All positive-outliers identified by this approach are listed in the tables below, by sector, along with the predicted and actual values of perceived and experienced corruption. For experienced-based models a higher proportion of people who reported **not to have paid** a bribe to the sector, as compared to the predicted value indicates 'positive-outlierness'. In perception-based models, an actual value of a lower perceived level of corruption than predicted indicates 'positive-outlierness'. In perception-based models the degree of outlierness⁷ was also calculated. Specifically, all actual values listed in the perception-based models are estimated to be less than 5% likely, given the general level of corruption in the country, while those with a star have an estimated less than 1% chance of occurring.

⁷ Degree of outlierness throughout this paper was calculated through a statistical significance test. All values listed in the perception-based models have a p-value (or statistical significance level) of 0.05 or less, implying that, given the general level of corruption in the country, there is a 5% (or less) probability of this level of deviation from the estimated (or predicted) value occurring by chance. Those with a star alongside the values have an estimated p-value (or statistical significance level) of 0.01 or less, implying that, given the general level of corruption in the country, there is a 1% (or less) probability of this level of deviation from the estimated (predicted) value occurring by chance. The next paper from the second phase of this project will provide more detail about the methodology used.

2010 Structural Positive-Outliers

	Sector	Country	Predicted Value	Actual Value
Perception-Based	Business	Bangladesh	3.20	2.39
	Business	El Salvador	3.33	2.28*
	Business	Georgia	3.09	2.42
	Business	Uganda	3.10	2.39
	Education	Argentina	3.20	2.47
	Education	Bolivia	3.46	2.65
	Education	Columbia	3.22	2.49
	Judiciary	Israel	3.32	2.79*
	Judiciary	Papua N. G.	3.27	2.67*
	Military	Bangladesh	2.68	1.93
	Military	Kosovo	2.23	1.30
	Military	Liberia	2.99	2.33
	Military	Macedonia	2.79	2.08
	NGOs	Cambodia	2.62	1.94
	NGOs	Kosovo	2.51	1.84
	NGOs	Papua N. G.	2.58	1.92
	NGOs	Vanuatu	2.48	1.82
	NGOs	Vietnam	2.53	1.73
	Parliament	Azerbaijan	3.35	2.47
	Parliament	Vietnam	3.10	1.85*
	Parliament	Finland	3.41	1.89
	Parliament	Georgia	3.37	2.15
	Parliament	Kosovo	4.25	2.36
	Political Parties	Afghanistan	3.63	2.89
	Political Parties	Azerbaijan	3.37	2.60
	Political Parties	Liberia	3.77	2.90
	Political Parties	Vietnam	3.04	2.04*
	Public Officials	Afghanistan	3.69	3.11
	Religious Bodies	Georgia	2.56	1.37
	Religious Bodies	Kosovo	2.98	1.53*
Religious Bodies	Vanuatu	2.80	1.79	

	Sector	Country	Predicted Value	Actual Value
Experience-Based	Customs	Bangladesh	0.37	0.88
	Customs	South Africa	0.53	0.85
	Customs	Uganda	0.24	0.50
	Education	South Africa	0.69	0.91
	Education	Uganda	0.39	0.63
	Judiciary	Hungary	0.83	0.98
	Judiciary	South Africa	0.56	0.79
	Judiciary	Zambia	0.62	0.84
	Medical	Bangladesh	0.60	0.81
	Medical	Bolivia	0.83	0.96
	Medical	El Salvador	0.83	0.98
	Police	Hungary	0.77	0.98
	Police	Palestine	0.39	0.68
	Permit	Nigeria	0.50	0.78
	Permit	Uganda	0.27	0.46
	Utilities	Liberia	0.43	0.63
	Utilities	Vietnam	0.83	0.95

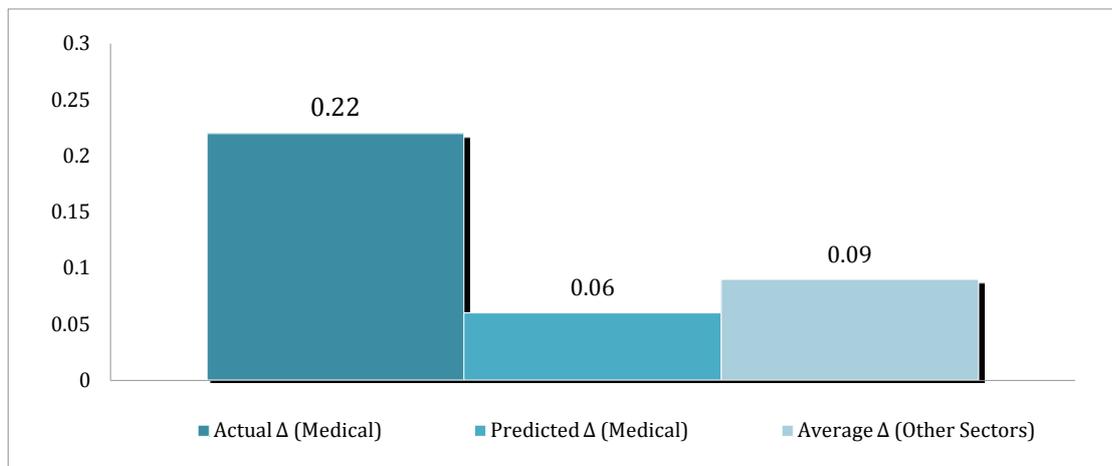
Improvement Over Time Approach

These positive-outliers are those countries where a sector improved more in terms of either the perceived or experienced level of corruption than would be expected, given the change in the general level of corruption in the country, over the same period of time. Two sub-categories of positive-outliers within this type were used: (1) Those where a worsening over time in the perceived or experienced level of corruption was predicted, but where an improvement actually took place; and (2) those where

an improvement was predicted, but where a larger improvement than predicted actually occurred.

For example, in the case of experienced medical corruption, the Philippines stands out as a positive 'improvement over time' outlier. Based on the change observed in the general experienced level of corruption in the Philippines, the analysis predicted that the proportion of people who had not paid a bribe to the medical sector would increase by only 6 percentage points over the 2006 to 2010 time period. However, the actual increase, or improvement, was far higher; the proportion of people who had not paid a bribe to the medical sector had increased by 22 percentage points. Figure 2 illustrates this concept with a comparison between the actual and predicted changes of the medical sector (first two columns) and the average change in all other sectors (last column). It is clear that the actual change superseded the predicted.

Figure 2: Experienced Medical Corruption Change: Philippines (2006-2010)



Because of the different years in which various questions were asked on the GCB survey, three different timeframes were used to identify 'improvement over time positive-outliers.' For all experienced based models the degree of improvement examined was from 2006 to 2010. For most perception based models a longer timeframe was used, 2004 to 2010. However, for perception-based models that examined the medical, utilities, tax and permit sectors, the time frame was from 2004 to 2007.

All related positive-outliers are listed in the table below, by sector. For experienced-based models an increase over time in the proportion of bribe non-payment indicates improvement, while a decrease in the perceived level of corruption indicates improvement in the perception-based models. In all models the degree of outlier-ness was also calculated. Specifically, all actual change values listed below are estimated to be less than 5% likely, given the change in general level of corruption in the country, while those with a star have an estimated less than 1% chance of occurring.

Improvement Over Time Positive-Outliers

	Sector	Country	Predicted Value	Actual Value
Experience-Based	Education	Nigeria	0.39	0.57
	Judiciary	Indonesia	-0.02	0.15
	Judiciary	Pakistan	0.02	0.21
	Medical	Philippines	0.06	0.22
	Permit	Indonesia	-0.06	0.34
Perception-Based	Business	Cameroon	-0.12	-0.62
	Business	Georgia	-0.38	-0.85
	Business	Indonesia	-0.19	-0.85*
	Education	Brazil	-0.77	1.35
	Judiciary	Brazil	-0.33	-0.96
	Judiciary	India	-0.28	-0.85
	Judiciary	Ireland	0.27	-0.58*
	Judiciary	UK	0.33	-0.27
	Media	Kenya	-0.40	-1.09*
	Media	Venezuela	-1.22	1.73
	Medical	Venezuela	-0.50	-1.30*
	Military	Kosovo	0.48	-0.07
	Military	Ethiopia	-0.73	-1.52*
	Military	Georgia	-0.43	-1.13
	Parliament	Bolivia	0.13	-0.51*
	Police	Georgia	-0.62	-2.03*
	Political Parties	Afghanistan	0.26	-0.21
	Political Parties	Taiwan	0.09	-0.50*
	Political Parties	Thailand	0.18	-0.32
	Religious Bodies	Cambodia	0.59	-0.03
	Religious Bodies	Ethiopia	-0.37	-1.00
	Taxes	Czech Republic	0.24	-0.31
	Taxes	Germany	0.04	-0.58
	Taxes	Lithuania	-0.28	-1.03*
Utilities	Cameroon	0.22	-0.36	

2010 Service Sector Structural Positive-outliers

This approach focused only on “service-related” sectors. Specifically, these analyses used a general level of corruption among service sectors to identify unusually well performing cases in 2010. Unlike the other approaches, this approach pits similar sectors against each other within a country and allows those sectors that have a distinctly lower level of perceived or experienced corruption to be highlighted. In doing so, this approach facilitates a comparison of sector performance **across** a group of similar sectors (service-related sectors). Outliers identified using this approach were those where the level of corruption in the sector of interest is lower than expected, given the level of corruption, more generally, among other service sectors.

For perception-based models, the following sectors were considered to be “service related”: education, judiciary, public officials and police. For experience based models, the following sectors were considered to be “service related”: education, judiciary, medical and police. All positive-outliers identified by this approach are listed in the tables below. In perception-based models, the degree of ‘outlierness’ was also calculated. Specifically, all actual values listed in the perception-based models are estimated to be less than 5% likely, given the general level of corruption in the country, while those with a star have an estimated less than 1% chance of occurring.

2010 Service Sector Structural Positive-Outliers

	Sector	Country	Predicted Value	Actual Value
Experienced-Based	Education	Afghanistan	0.53	0.76
	Education	Argentina	0.89	0.99
	Education	El Salvador	0.78	0.97
	Education	Greece	0.85	0.99
	Education	Hungary	0.80	0.96
	Education	Indonesia	0.85	0.98
	Education	Lithuania	0.69	0.89
	Education	South Africa	0.62	0.91
	Education	Uganda	0.31	0.63
	Judiciary	Greece	0.85	0.98
	Judiciary	Hungary	0.81	0.99
	Judiciary	Luxembourg	0.86	0.98
	Judiciary	Netherlands	0.91	1.00
	Judiciary	Vietnam	0.63	0.82
	Medical	Bangladesh	0.59	0.81
	Medical	Bolivia	0.73	0.96
	Medical	El Salvador	0.77	0.98
	Medical	Kenya	0.66	0.84
	Medical	Liberia	0.19	0.49
	Medical	Medical	0.49	0.75
	Medical	Nigeria	0.52	0.83
	Medical	South Africa	0.67	0.85
	Police	Hungary	0.81	0.98

	Sector	Country	Predicted Value	Actual Value
Perception-Based	Education	Argentina	3.73	2.47*
	Education	Bangladesh	3.78	2.61*
	Education	Bolivia	3.99	2.65*
	Education	Columbia	3.75	2.49*
	Education	El Salvador	4.01	2.64*
	Education	Ethiopia	3.12	2.05
	Education	Mexico	4.09	2.91*
	Education	Morocco	3.34	1.97*
	Education	Rwanda	3.33	2.15*
	Education	South Africa	3.58	2.57
	Education	Venezuela	3.84	2.69*
	Judiciary	Mozambique	2.83	2.70
	Judiciary	Sri Lanka	3.38	2.46
	Police	Iceland	3.07	2.16
	Police	Kosovo	3.29	2.36

Narrowing down the list

Thus far, this paper has summarized only the steps taken to identify statistically the positive-outliers from the GCB data. In total, however, this exercise yielded over 100 sectoral positive-outliers, which is far more than can be managed for the purposes of phase three of this research project. As a reminder, phase two will entail selecting the most interesting positive-outliers for a third phase of in-depth qualitative case study analysis that will explore the factors that made exceptional performance possible. The participants at a TI/DLP workshop, organized on November 8th, 2011, used the following selection criteria in order to reduce this large pool of positive-outliers to a manageable list of cases for further detailed analysis.

- Sectors considered to be difficult for qualitative research were less favoured for selection. For example, diffuse multi-actor sectors, like the media or business.
- Certain sectors were considered not to be of a primary interest to the broad research agendas of the DLP and Transparency International. Outlying observations in these categories were thus not selected, (such as religious bodies and NGOs).
- Sectors that were of direct relevance to others in the development field were favoured (e.g. Millennium Development Goals related).
- Experience-based outlying observations were preferred for selection over perception-based outlying observations.
- Outlying observations that were estimated to have a less than 1% chance of occurring were preferred for selection over other outlying observations (less than 5% estimated chance of occurring).
- Observations identified as 'improvement over time' positive-outliers were favoured for selection over 'structural' type positive-outliers.
- Observations were favoured for selection when they were found to be both a 'structural' and 'improvement over time' outlier
- Cases that were truly surprising or that have not been widely reported were given preference for selection.
- Only low and middle-income country-observations were considered for selection.

Also discussed was what the best overall mix of case studies would be, to maximize the investment made in the research project. For example, a debate was had over whether the research project would benefit most from having cases which reflected regional diversity or intra-regional comparisons. Equally, the merits of focusing on one sector cross-nationally were contrasted with the benefits of examining a variety of sectors cross-nationally. On the one hand, selecting a diverse set of sectors, it was argued, might produce a wealth of varied policy relevant information, which could not be garnered from focusing solely on one sector. However, it was also suggested that if the project were to focus on one or a couple sectors cross-nationally, the project would facilitate cross-national comparisons and provide rich information about multiple policy solutions to similar problems.

The discussion of the filtering criteria led to an important insight. It is clear that trade-offs exist between sets of criteria discussed and, because of this, the group did not necessarily settle on a definitive set of filtering criteria. Put differently, further filtering would have to subjectively balance the trade-offs

between the criteria discussed. Thus, the selection process first eliminated cases that did not fulfil criteria that were widely agreed upon (most of the above list), and finally, by participants picking and justifying to the group the cases that they found particularly interesting. This led to the following shortlist of 15 candidates for in-depth case studies.

Structural Outliers

1	Education	South Africa
2	Education	Uganda
3	Education	Argentina
4	Education	Bolivia
5	Education	Columbia
6	Judiciary	Papua N. G.

Outliers Over Time

7	Education	Nigeria
8	Medical	Philippines
9	Business	Indonesia
10	Education	Brazil
11	Judiciary	Brazil
12	Judiciary	India
13	Media	Kenya
14	Parliament	Bolivia
15	Police	Georgia

Conclusion

Some general lessons from this first phase of the exercise are worth noting for future corruption research and beyond.

- First, while a well performing case is sometimes the focus of qualitative development research, applying a systematic method for case selection strikes us as a useful and under-utilized approach. A systematic approach to case selection can help to overcome the common methodological challenge of selecting a case based on the role of a particular variable, or based on other pre-conceived notions of the case's success. Additionally, using a more objective approach to case selection may feature cases that were unobvious to the researcher and, in doing so, highlight new possible explanations of improvement.
- While this approach can ostensibly be used to focus on research in other fields (i.e. health, education, inequality...etc.), we think that corruption research stands to benefit particularly significantly from it. As others have noted, the quantitative relationships between corruption and its correlates are ill understood and/or under theorized, which has made teasing out specific policy implications for reform seekers challenging (Triesman 2007).
- Additionally, it is worth reiterating that the majority of corruption research has had much difficulty in explaining the drivers of success or improvement. Thus, while (anti-)corruption research stands to benefit significantly from more case-study research in general, we feel that concentrated research into positive outlying cases is a particularly useful avenue to pursue. By focusing on 'shining stars,' positive-outlier research innately generates important hypotheses about what factors might lead to success more broadly. In this respect, this type of research has the potential to contribute a great deal towards theory building and broader policy debates regarding solutions for reducing corruption.

It is therefore to be hoped that this research project can serve as an example of the utility to be gained from the approach adopted here. With the first phase completed and a 'long list' of 15 cases identified, researchers will now drill down a bit further into each of these to explore their 'researchability' with the aim of identifying five or six instances for detailed case study analysis. It is expected that this will be completed by May 2012 when the third and final phase will commence.

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