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Does everyday corruption affect how Russians view their political leadership?

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ABSTRACT

Do Russians' personal experiences with corruption influence how they evaluate their political leaders and, if so, in what direction? In addressing this question, we focus specifically on small-scale corruption that arises when Russians encounter employees of service provision organizations. We analyze survey data gathered in the summer of 2015 from Russia to trace the links between personal corrupt behavior and political attitudes. We show that participation in everyday corruption lowers a person's support for the political regime, both as a bivariate relationship and in a multivariate model with controls. Being involved in corrupt transactions reduces support for the regime through two indirect mechanisms: by making the political leadership's performance seem worse and by heightening perceptions that corruption is widespread among the country's leaders. We find no support for arguments in the literature that bribery and other forms of bureaucratic corruption help citizens pursue their needs in the face of inefficient state institutions and less developed economies. In Russia, those who frequently encounter corruption are less, not more, happy with the regime.

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Because Russian President Vladimir Putin heads a highly personalized authoritarian political regime, Russians' approval for him and his lieutenants is crucially important. Debate therefore continues about the sources of Russians' support for their political leaders, particularly Putin's high job approval ratings.¹ Strong empirical evidence shows that, at least until recently, the state of Russia's national economy pushed leadership approval up or down, as it does in most countries (Rose, Mishler, and Munro 2011; Treisman 2011, 2014). At present, though, oil prices have collapsed, wage arrears have recommenced, inflation is high, pensions are endangered, and many desired goods are unavailable, yet Putin's ratings are declining only somewhat if at all. Some observers believe that public approval is "sticky" due to the regime's smart use of Russian identity symbols via Kremlin-controlled mass media (Shlapentokh 2011). Most critically, the 2014 annexation of Crimea played to Russians' imperial nostalgia and longing to be a great power (Laruelle 2014, 2016; Babayan 2015).

Against the backdrop of debate over such "macro" determinants of regime support, we should look for explanations that bring out differences within the society – the "micro" level. Russian citizens are likely to base their support for political leaders in part on how positively or negatively they experience everyday life. Among such experiences are citizens' dealings with officialdom. These dealings directly link citizens' personal or family situations with the state or social order. Of particular interest should be encounters that involve corruption, which may be psychologically or financially taxing. We therefore

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ask a question not previously addressed in the Russian context: Do Russians' personal experiences with corruption influence how they evaluate their political leaders? In addressing this question, we focus specifically on small-scale corruption, such as bribery exchanges in everyday encounters between individuals and employees of service provision organizations. We refer to these transactions as "bureaucratic corruption."

Analyzing unique survey data gathered in the summer of 2015 from Russia, we are able to trace the links between personal corrupt behavior and political attitudes. We show that participating in everyday corruption lowers a person's support for the political regime, both as a bivariate relationship and in a multivariate model with controls. Everyday interactions that citizens have with bureaucrats help form those citizens' views about something far removed from most citizens' lives: the country's political leadership. While the direct link between engagement in everyday corruption and political support is modest, its substantive impact is larger through two *indirect* mechanisms. First, Russians who experienced more bureaucratic corruption over the preceding year think the political establishment is more corrupt, which in turn plays a major role in shaping support for the regime. Second, Russians who experienced more bureaucratic corruption came away from these encounters with dimmer views of the officials they dealt with. These dimmer views in turn lower their views of how Russia's leaders are performing. Their judgments about leadership performance strongly shape regime support.

We begin by explaining how we understand bureaucratic corruption and how it connects to support for the political regime. We then explore how bureaucratic corruption and support for the regime vary across key social groups in Russia. We conclude by exploring the relationship between Russians' recent experiences with low-level corruption and their attitudes toward the political system, explaining both the direct and indirect paths by which corruption experiences have their impact.

Bureaucratic corruption and regime support

Our focus is on *bureaucratic corruption*: under-the-table payments, gifts, and favors that citizens provide to bureaucrats in exchange for performing their job-related duties or extending additional, extralegal benefits to their clients (Hellman, Jones, and Kaufmann 2000; Humphrey 2000; Jain 2001, 75; Karklins 2005; Holmes 2006; Osipian 2008, 2009; Zaloznaya 2012). Petty bribes, presents, and favors can be extorted by service providers or offered voluntarily by their clients. Such corruption has been shown to be a commonplace part of post-Soviet daily life (Varese 2000; Karklins 2005, 3; Polese 2008; Round, Williams, and Rodgers 2008b; Rimskii 2013) – although, as we will show, only a minority report having engaged in it over the preceding year. It occurs in a variety of public and private organizational settings, such as hospitals and clinics (Miller, Grødeland, and Koshechkina 2001; Rivkin-Fish 2005), universities and secondary schools (Osipian 2007, 2008, 2009, 2012; Zaloznaya 2012), police and traffic police control posts (Gerber and Mendelson 2008; Polese 2008; McCarthy, Frye, and Buckley 2015), and private firms (Round, Williams, and Rodgers 2008a). We use petty, street-level, everyday, or low-level corruption as synonyms of bureaucratic corruption.

In examining how corruption relates to regime support, we depart from most prior investigations, which examine *perceptions* of corruption: that is, whether the public believes politicians and officials are corrupt. These studies find that perceptions of elite corruption correlate with lower levels of trust in or support for regimes (Manzetti and Wilson 2006; Chong et al. 2011; Linde 2012; Chaisty and Whitefield 2013; Klačnja and Tucker 2013). In other words, people who believe that politicians are crooked and self-serving are likely to withdraw their support. But what happens when people themselves are engaged in corruption? Does this engagement affect their attitudes toward the regime? As we explain below, analysts disagree about how people's attitudes are affected. Do citizens become accomplices of the regime or, on the contrary, do they resent the regime for putting them into corruption-conducive circumstances? Only Seligson (2002) and Tavits (2010) have yet tackled these issues, in Latin America and Estonia, respectively. But further work is needed, both because the two studies reach different conclusions and to include a wider range of societies.

When we refer to regime support, we mean what Norris (2011, 26–28) calls “support for regime principles.”² In her recasting of Easton’s (1965) treatment of political legitimacy, she distinguishes five dimensions: (1) feelings of national pride and identity; (2) support for general regime principles; (3) assessments of the regime’s performance; (4) confidence in state institutions; and (5) trust in officeholders. Citizen attitudes can vary differently for each. In a democracy, for example, some citizens will strongly distrust an incumbent officeholder without losing faith in the democratic process and without weakening their patriotic feelings. In non-democratic regimes, however, it is harder than in democracies to separate support for general regime principles from support for the regime’s leaders and top institutions.

At present, most scholars concur that Russia’s regime is fully (hegemonically) authoritarian (Levitsky and Way 2010; Gelman 2014, 518). Of course, managed elections continue. They play an important role, including as plebiscites on the regime’s popularity (Hanson 2011). Still, Russia better fits Brooker’s (2013, 8–12) description of a “democratically disguised authoritarian regime” than the definition of a hybrid regime (Diamond 2002; Bogaards 2009; Morlino 2009). Freedom House (2015) gives Russia the second lowest score of 6 on both political rights and civil liberties. Also noteworthy about contemporary Russian politics is the extent of Putin’s personal role. Those who classify authoritarian regimes by type of rule – rather than extent of authoritarianism – judge Russia to be a personalist autocracy (Geddes, Wright, and Frantz 2014). Although the party United Russia plays an important role in organizing elections, it cannot constrain Putin (Roberts 2012). The regime’s personalism has increased in recent years, as the role of formal institutions in policy-making has declined and a narrowing circle of elites is allowed input into decisions (Gaaze 2014; Melville and Mironyuk 2015; Baturu and Elkink 2016).

Russia’s authoritarian regime enhances the possibility that everyday corruption matters for the regime’s support. In countries with authoritarian regimes, “clarity of responsibility” is high, while legitimate channels for changing the leaders are few. The literature on clarity of responsibility began with comparisons among democracies (Powell Jr. and Whitten 1993; Whitten and Palmer 1998; Nadeau, Niemi, and Yoshinaka 2002). Yet, its logic applies in non-democratic settings as well: when a regime’s institutions make clear which set of leaders is responsible for policies, the public can more easily blame those leaders for economic troubles or other problems. Authoritarian regimes, personalist ones in particular, generally have quite clear responsibility. At the same time, non-democracies lack – or provide weakened versions of – channels for the public to express dissatisfaction and potentially change leaders. As a result, corruption’s challenge to regime stability may be higher than in democracies.

How might engagement in bureaucratic corruption alter regime support? We argue that Russians whose daily affairs bring them into situations of corruption will tend to hold more negative views of their political leadership than others. Past work on corruption suggests several mechanisms through which corruption engagement may reduce regime support. Before explaining those mechanisms, however, we need to note that this expectation is opposed by two rival perspectives. Some argue that engaging in petty corruption will have little or no effect on people’s judgments, whereas others propose that doing so may promote more favorable views of the country’s rulers.

A recurrent theme in the literature on corruption in Eastern Europe is that it has long been “normalized” (e.g. Ledeneva 1998; Rimskii 2013). From *blat* (in-kind, delayed reciprocity exchanges), which was widespread during the Soviet era, to immediate monetary transactions, common in the present day, bureaucratic corruption has been an integral, embedded part of life for the region’s population for many decades. People therefore may not see engaging in petty corruption as deviant.

The second perspective offers several reasons why corruption engagement might enhance attitudes toward a country’s political leaders. First, it may make the person involved feel economically better off. Utilizing informal mechanisms of achievement may create a sense of personal resourcefulness and therefore more economic security. Second, the ability to give bribes, in and of itself, may indicate a certain economic status: only people with some disposable income have the ability to partake in corruption as bribers or gift-givers (Miller, Grødeland, and Koshechkina 2001; Glaeser, Scheinkman, and Shleifer 2003; Jong-Sung and Khagram 2005; Dincer and Gunalp 2012). Since, generally speaking, those better

off financially will be more positive about the political system, this perspective expects corruption to be associated with higher regime support.

Third, if people participate in corruption, they may well have more positive interactions with bureaucracies, getting what they need from officials or getting it more promptly, and therefore have higher satisfaction with the regime. A long line of theorists has portrayed corruption as “grease” in the wheels of ineffective organizations (Key 1949; Nye 1967; Huntington 1968; Scott 1969; Becquart-Leclercq 1989). They suggest that corrupt organizations can deliver results despite lacking sufficient resources, motivated employees, effective laws, and administrative and regulatory support structures. As such, petty corruption is construed as a coping mechanism that makes ordinary citizens’ lives bearable in the context of impoverishment and institutional decay. Many studies have reached this conclusion about communist and post-communist societies (Di Francesco and Gitelman 1984; Sampson 1987; Grossman 1989; Yang 1994; Ledeneva 1998; Rose 2000; Rivkin-Fish 2005; Polese 2008; Round, Williams, and Rodgers 2008b). Based on a series of qualitative interviews with university affiliates in Ukraine, Zalzoznaya (2012) finds that many local students and parents have a positive view of bribery, as it allows them to navigate the inflexible higher educational system, receive the treatment that they want, and avoid the burdensome requirements of an outdated curriculum. She also describes similar attitudes among Belarusian parents in relation to bribery in secondary schools: many ordinary Belarusians see bribery as the best way to ensure that their children receive sufficient attention from the teachers (Zalzoznaya, *forthcoming*). If corruption could indeed offer a coping mechanism that alleviates the hardships of institutional dysfunction, personal engagement in it might be associated with higher levels of support toward incumbent political leadership and the regime it upholds.

Theorists have proposed equally compelling reasons why we should expect – contrary to the two perspectives just noted – that engagement in corruption will sour citizens on their political leaders and institutions. Compared to others, people who engage in corruption may be more likely to conclude that the national economy is performing poorly because the state lacks sufficient economic capacity to ensure the functionality of public agencies and to provide for the livelihoods of public servants.³ Because people judge incumbent political leaders, the country’s political institutions, and the regime broadly by how well the economy is performing,⁴ corruption that erodes perceptions of the economy will erode support for the political leadership. A second argument that has been made notes that citizens who give bribes or presents may believe it drains their resources in a non-trivial way (Klašnja, Tucker, and Deegan-Krause 2016).

The third argument comes from the theory of procedural fairness (Tyler 1990, 2006; Gilley 2009). It posits that people will judge the institutions they interact with to be operating fairly (or justly) when the agents of those institutions apply laws and regulations impartially and consistently to everyone who is entitled to a public service (Galbreath and Rose 2008, 53–55). According to this theory, fairness is more important to people than whether policies benefit them. Procedural justice theory has received support from numerous analyses (e.g. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002; Seligson 2002; Gangl 2003; Kluegel and Mason 2004; Grimes 2006; Gilley 2009; Tankebe 2010). In this perspective, encounters with corrupt officials reveal to ordinary citizens that public institutions are functioning improperly; the rules are being applied dissimilarly. People who draw that conclusion will view the political regime less favorably.

It might be, of course, that procedural fairness theory performs less well in post-Soviet societies. According to many observers, Weberian procedural legitimacy was weak in the Soviet Union and continues to be weak in many post-Soviet societies (e.g. Pipes 1974; Lovell, Ledeneva, and Rogachevskii 2000; Hosking 2003; Hanson 2010). Even so, we should not conclude that post-Soviet citizens place no value on fair treatment from institutions and authorities. The Communist Party’s ideology and the social transformations it promoted did impart support for equality of treatment by the state, and that value remains strong in the post-Soviet societies. In addition, survey research shows that large majorities in many post-Soviet states, particularly the European ones such as Russia, hold “modern” (i.e. non-traditional) values such as “secularism, cosmopolitanism, autonomy, and rationality” (Inglehart and Welzel 2010, 553).

Patterns of bureaucratic corruption in Russia

In June–July 2015, we organized a representative national survey in Russia. Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 2,000 respondents. Interviews occurred in 266 sampling points across 52 regions from all eight of the pre-2014 federal administrative okrugs or districts.⁵ With these data, we can empirically tackle the issues of corruption and Russia's regime support discussed above. In this section, we present information on the levels of engagement in bureaucratic corruption, both for Russia as a whole and across important geographic and social groups.

We gathered information on respondents' engagement with bureaucratic corruption through a series of questions. We began by asking – with reference to the preceding 12 months – with which of several types of officials they had made contact in order to receive services. We presented and read to the respondents a card on which 12 different types of officials were listed:

- Officials of the judicial system (judges, clerks, justice department officials, attorneys prosecutors, and other officials)
- Doctors, nurses, medical workers, or hospital administrators
- Inspectors (in health, construction, food quality, sanitary control, and licensing)
- Officials issuing certificates and permits (marriage/death/birth certificates; construction permits)
- Officials in housing and communal services
- Officials who issue governmental tenders
- Politicians at the local level (mayors; local executive heads/heads of raions)
- Professors/Instructors in higher educational institutions
- Police officers
- Tax officials
- Teachers and school administrators
- Traffic police

(Respondents could also indicate some other category, which was recorded. Only 15 people, or 0.75% of our sample, used this option). The next question asked how satisfactory they found these experiences. After that, two questions turned to respondents' corruption experiences. The wordings were:

- Now, please tell me, from the officials with whom you had contact, which ones, if any, asked you for a bribe (extra money), a present, or a favor in exchange for their services?
- Some people say that offering officials additional incentives is the only way to get decent services in contemporary Russia. To which of these officials did you give a bribe (extra money), a present, or do a favor in exchange for a service?

We have, then, for each respondent a series of responses pertaining to those types of officials with whom they had contact: were they asked (yes–no) and did they give (yes–no)? A person might have neither been asked nor given a bribe, gift, or favor in the previous 12 months to officials in any of the bureaucratic spheres. Some, however, had that experience when dealing with one, two, or more types of bureaucracies. Note, too, that respondents could indicate that they decided to give a bribe, gift, or favor without having been asked.

Of our 2,000 respondents, a total of 393, or 19.7% of the sample, reported that they had been asked for or given a bribe, gift, or favor to at least one type of official over the past year. In other words, one-fifth of all Russians came into contact with corruption as they went about their lives. Of those who reported having a bureaucratic encounter in the preceding year, 17.7% stated that they did give a bribe, gift, or favor in exchange for service. For a society often described as having pervasive or even ubiquitous corruption (e.g. Varese 2000), these proportions might seem low. Yet, it seems fairer to view one-fifth as a large proportion. We should expect variety in bureaucratic experiences among a large, diverse populace such as Russia's. Because our questions refer only to the preceding year, some of our respondents surely have encountered bureaucratic corruption, but prior to our cut-off. For comparison, we can note the results from parallel surveys we conducted, also in 2015, in Ukraine and Georgia.

The equivalent proportion in Georgia is 4.7%, making Russia's total seem quite large, although it is lower than in Ukraine, where 26.7% reported engaging in bureaucratic corruption over the preceding year. Given Russia's 143.5 million population, our finding implies that almost 29 million Russians participated in corruption as clients of service provision organizations in the preceding year. They and other citizens also could have participated in corruption as recipients of unsanctioned compensations in bureaucracies as well as corruptors or corruptees in other types of exchanges.

We believe our estimate of petty corruption's span accurately reflects actual patterns even though asking people directly about any sensitive matter can potentially result in what is called "social desirability bias" (Spector 2004). In this case, the issue is whether some of our respondents hid their engagement in petty corruption because consciously or subconsciously, they did not want to admit their involvement to the interviewer. If this happened frequently, our estimates would be lower than they should be. Yet, the danger of this happening is likely to be relatively low. Many studies document that, in Russia as well as other post-communist countries, small-scale corruption is accepted as a normal part of life, with little or no stigma against those who participate (Varese 2000; Polese 2008; Rimskii 2013; McMann 2014). Qualitative work on the region reveals that ordinary people often openly talk about their involvement in such exchanges and, when they do, they rarely think of petty corruption as crime (Karklins 2005; Shlapentokh 2013, 155–156; Zaloznaya, *forthcoming*).

Nonetheless, we took steps to reduce the extent to which social desirability influences the answers we received. All respondents were promised anonymity, interviewers were instructed to insure that respondents had privacy, and the study was described as focusing on political and economic developments in the country. The questions that asked about corruption were embedded in the series of questions focusing on the quality of interactions with bureaucratic officials.

In addition, our questionnaire included a survey experiment designed to estimate in a potentially more accurate way the number of those who have given a corrupt incentive to a bureaucrat in the preceding year. This procedure, described more fully in the supplemental materials, involves randomly assigning respondents into two groups. Both groups are presented with a list of statements and asked to indicate how many of the statements they agree with, but not to indicate which ones. One group's list has four items, the other's has the same four plus the statement "Over the last year, I gave or accepted a bribe." Because people are placed into the two groups randomly, the increase in the number of agreed-with statements can be used to estimate how many respondents agreed with the bribery statement. This experiment resulted in an estimate of 18% having engaged in bribery in the preceding year. This figure is almost identical to the result from our direct questions, suggesting that our respondents had accurately reported their experiences.

With what organizations do Russians engage in bureaucratic corruption?

In Figure 1, we break out the patterns of engagement with officials and of corruption behaviors in different bureaucratic spheres. The first bar chart, in the upper left, shows the proportion of all our respondents who report encountering each type of official over the past year. The bar chart to its right shows the percentage – from among those who encountered that type of official – reporting that the official requested a bribe, present, or favor. The bar chart in the lower left reports in what percentage of encounters for each organization the person reports having given a bribe, present, or favor. Because respondents could indicate that they offered a bribe, present, or favor without having been asked, the final bar chart, in the lower right, shows the number of givers per 100 extortions. Numbers above 100 indicate a sphere in which Russians were inclined to extend something even without being asked while numbers below 100 indicate a sphere in which many felt able to say no when an official asked for a bribe, present, or favor.

The chart of encounters with officials shows that Russians dealt with medical personnel significantly more frequently than with bureaucrats in other spheres over the preceding 12 months. Over two-thirds reported such an encounter, with the next most frequented sphere being housing and communal services at 38%. The third most frequented bureaucrats were school officials, at 23%, followed closely

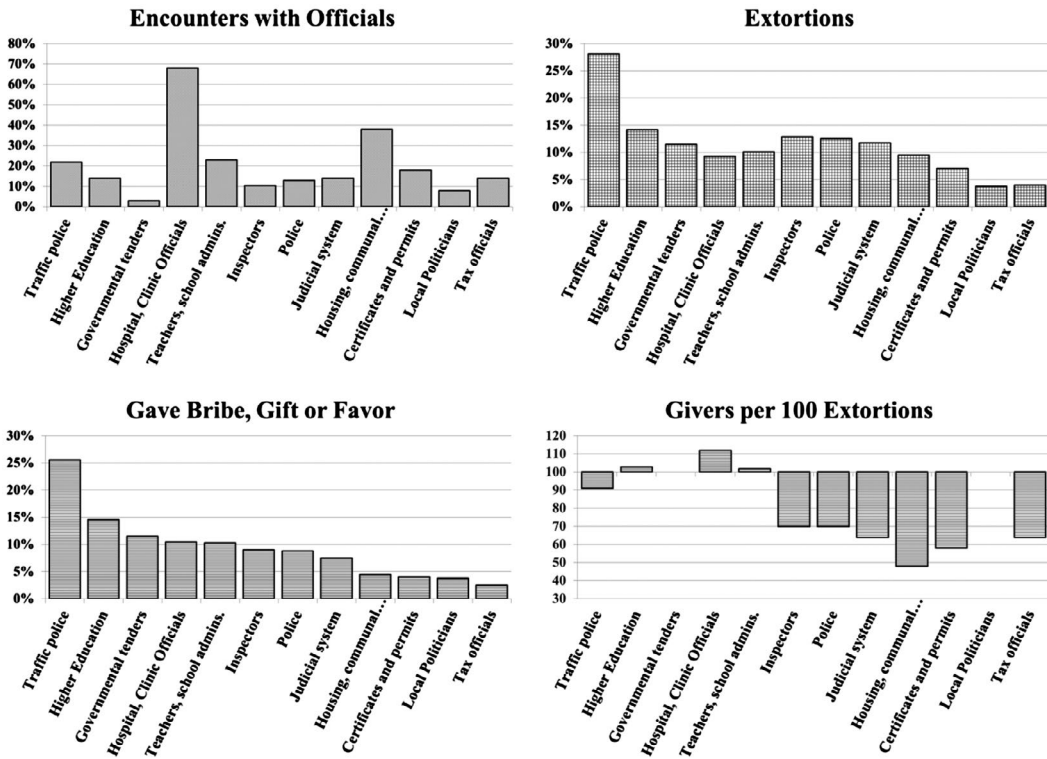


Figure 1. Bureaucratic corruption, frequency by organization, $N = 2,000$. Source: Reisinger, Claypool, and Zaloznaya (2015).

by traffic police, at 22%. Only local politicians and those who oversee governmental tenders, along with the “other” category, were encountered by less than 10% of the sample. These proportions reflect Russians’ patterns of everyday life.

Quite different are the rank orders in the upper right and lower left charts, which indicate corrupt activities. For these charts, the percentages are of those who encountered each type of official. The traffic police were the most likely to extort a bribe, gift, or favor, at 28% of those they encountered. The second most common sphere of official extortion (excluding the “other” category) involved university and college officials, but at only half the frequency of the traffic police. Inspectors, other police, and judicial officials follow, with frequencies of about one in eight encounters.

The traffic police also lead in frequency of bribes being paid. University professors and instructors, though only eighth in the number of encounters, take second place with 15% of the encounters involving the citizen extending a bribe, present, or favor. While medical officials are the most frequently encountered, they are only tenth in frequency of asking for a corrupt incentive, yet fourth in frequency of receiving something.

The bottom right chart, which indicates bribe giving as a proportion of bribe requests, reveals large differences across the bureaucratic spheres. When extorted by a member of the traffic police, most Russians pay up, although 10% decline to do so. Those in higher education receive bribes, gifts, or favors slightly more frequently than they ask for them. All the officials in charge of governmental tenders and all local politicians who asked for a bribe received one. One sphere stands out for citizens giving more frequently than they are asked: the medical sphere. The remaining spheres are ones in which many Russians skip providing a bribe, present, or favor even when the official indicates that one is expected. When dealing with housing and communal services officials, fewer than half of the demands for a

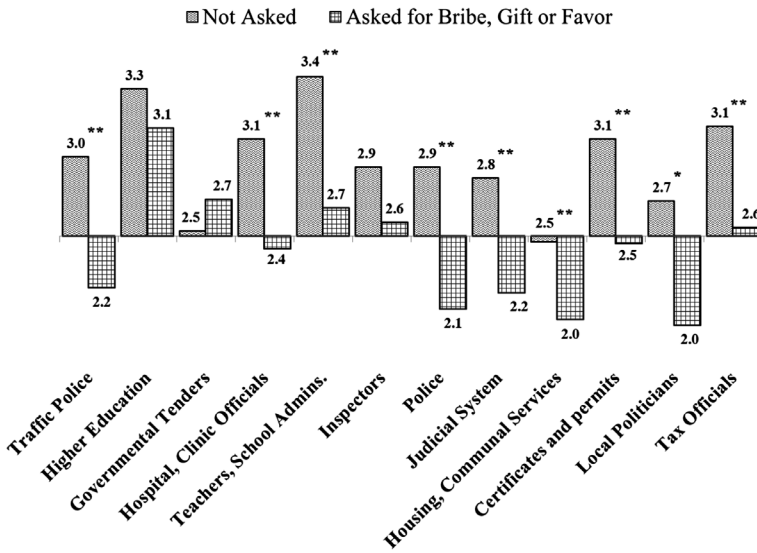


Figure 2. Satisfaction with bureaucratic encounters, by organization.
 Note: **t*-test of the difference in means is significant (one-tailed) at .05 or less; **significant at .01 or less.

bribe were met, three-fifths of the occasions when dealing with issuers of certificates or permits, and two-thirds of the time when dealing with judicial officials.

To explain these cross-organizational patterns – why Russians bribe some types of officials at different rates than others – would require analysis beyond the scope of this article. We can note, however, that previous work in post-communist societies has proposed several potentially useful hypotheses. This variation may depend on: the instrumental and cultural factors that influence the bureaucrats’ bargaining power vis-à-vis their clients (Miller, Grødeland, and Koshechkina 2001, 226–238, 265–278); whether the political leadership has targeted a sector for enhanced oversight and punishment (Zaloznaya, forthcoming); how resource deficient a specific organizational sector is (Rivkin-Fish 2005); or how readily citizens can turn to alternative, legal ways of procuring specific bureaucratic services (McMann 2014).

Satisfaction with bureaucratic encounters

As noted above, some observers argue that corrupt transactions are valuable for citizens by helping them meet their needs. Because we asked our respondents how satisfied they were with their encounters, we can assess this proposition. Respondents could indicate that they were very satisfied (4), satisfied (3), unsatisfied (2), or very unsatisfied (1) with the official(s) they dealt with in each organizational sector. In Figure 2, we take the responses for each of the 12 organizational sectors and compare the average score on the 1–4 satisfaction variable when an official requested a bribe, gift, or favor vs. when he or she did not. Higher numbers indicate more satisfaction with the encounter on average. Bars that extend downward indicate an average that falls in the dissatisfied range. For each type of organization, the darker bar on the left indicates the average for people whose encounter with bureaucrats from that sector did not involve the official seeking a bribe, gift, or favor. For 11 of the 12 organizational sectors, that bar is higher: an encounter that involves a request for corruption leaves people less satisfied. Often, the gap is large. The asterisks next to most of the averages show that the *t*-test of the difference between the means is significant.

Dissatisfaction with corrupt officials is greatest for those dealing with local politicians, housing and communal services officials, regular police, and then judicial officials and traffic police. Encounters in those same spheres that do not involve corruption tend to leave the citizen satisfied, as shown by the

upward bars and significant differences between the two scores. The exception is the housing sphere, where the average is on the dissatisfied side of the line even without corruption.

In several spheres – inspectors, government tenders, higher education, tax officials, and schools – both the corrupt and the non-corrupt encounters produce a positive average level of satisfaction, as shown by both bars being above the line. In several of the spheres, it is more accurate to say that our respondents rate the corrupt encounters neutrally, minimally above the 2.5 mid-point. For professors and other officials in higher education, however, the average satisfaction level is high, regardless of whether a corrupt request was made or not.

The exception to the general pattern of corruption requests souring people on their experiences comes in the realm of governmental tenders. Relatively few respondents had an encounter in this sphere in the prior year: 52 total, with 7 reporting that the official requested something. Both with and without corruption, the average score falls on the “satisfied” side of the scale. Even so, satisfaction is higher, albeit not statistically significantly, without corruption.

It is difficult to explain each sector’s pattern of satisfaction and dissatisfaction. Why, for example, does corruption do little to make people less satisfied with official encounters in universities? Is it because the encounters occur under more pleasant circumstances, the officials can more readily provide what the citizen seeks or, perhaps, the public expects less from university officials than others? The format of our survey did not permit us to probe into what provoked people’s dissatisfaction, and we must leave it for other research to test rival explanations. What the results in Figure 2 highlight, though, is the importance of attending to within-country cross-organizational differences. In some sectors, we find that encounters tend to generate satisfaction, regardless of whether corruption is present, while in one sector, the average response is dissatisfaction even without corruption. In most spheres, though, when corruption enters a transaction, citizens judge the encounter more harshly. As we will show below, this difference in satisfaction has implications for citizens’ views of officialdom more generally.

Which Russians are more likely to engage in bureaucratic corruption?

Bureaucratic corruption varies importantly not only based on the bureaucracy but also among individuals. Not only will different people have different propensities to engage in such corruption, but those in different social circumstances will vary in the frequency with which they need to engage with different bureaucracies. It is therefore important to examine which Russians have higher or lower levels of corruption engagement.

To capture Russians’ overall level of engagement with bureaucratic corruption, we created an index variable. For each type of official they had dealt with, we gave respondents a score of: 1 if the official had asked for a bribe/gift/favor but they did not give one; 2 if they were not asked but gave one anyway, 3 if they were asked and gave one; and 0 otherwise. Each step up along this scale indicates involvement in a more corruption-infused situation. We then added respondents’ scores across the 12 types of officials and the “other” category. The resulting variable ranges from 0 to 19, with an average of .75 and standard deviation of 2.0. As noted above, only one-fifth have a non-zero score. Of those who were in a corruption situation over the preceding year, the modal value was 3 (115 respondents, or 5.75%).

Using this measure, we note first that individuals encountering corruption are more likely to be found in some parts of Russia than others. Figure 3 shows how respondent experiences differ across the eight federal administrative districts into which Russia’s regions are divided. The map depicts Russia’s pre-2014 regions and the boundaries of the federal districts. Next to each district is indicated the average for the measure of corruption engagement and what percentage of respondents living in the district had any engagement at all (a non-zero score on the engagement measure). Corruption is highest in the central and southern districts. It is quite a bit lower in the three federal districts east of 60° E. Longitude as well as in the northwest district, which includes St. Petersburg.

We can only speculate about what drives these geographic differences. Our results may, however, be in line with Dininio and Orttung’s (2005) argument that lower economic development and higher proportions of government employees in the workforce correlate with regional corruption levels.

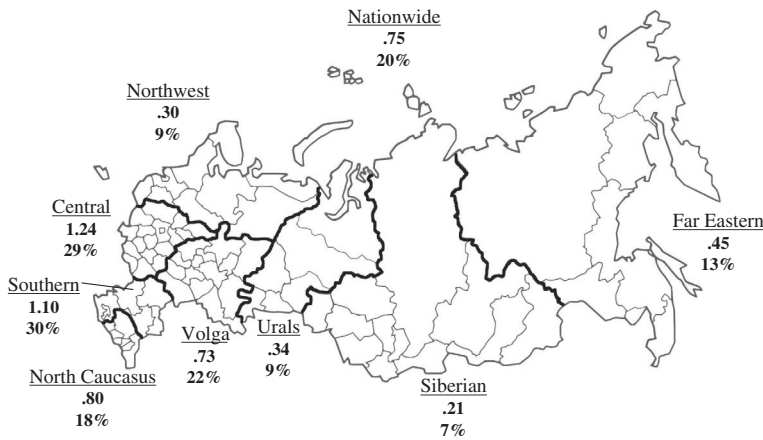


Figure 3. Engagement in bureaucratic corruption, by federal district. Source: Modified by William M. Reisinger from a map by Ezhiki available on Wikimedia Commons ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Russia_-_blank_map_\(2008-01\).svg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Russia_-_blank_map_(2008-01).svg)).

Notes: The first number for each federal administrative district is the average corruption engagement score among respondents living in that district. The second number is the percentage of those respondents having any corruption engagement.

Table 1. Engagement in bureaucratic corruption, by size and type of residence.

Respondent's residence	Average corruption engagement	
	score	Percent having any engagement (%)
Overall	0.75	20
Cities of over 1 million population	0.73	23
Cities from 500,000 to 999,999	0.77	21
Cities from 100,000 to 499,999	1.05	25
Cities under 100,000	0.79	18
Rural areas	0.49	13
t-test of difference between urban and rural	3.43 (.001)	4.47 (.000)

Regions in the North Caucasus and the southern federal districts are the least developed on average,⁶ and both districts exhibit high levels of corruption engagement. The average level of development for regions in the central federal district is higher, but if we exclude the city of Moscow and Moscow Oblast, the district's regions fall to sixth among the eight federal districts. Moscow City and Moscow Oblast, while not poor, do have a higher proportion of bureaucrats than most regions. Alternatively, we note that the southern and central federal districts contain regions that are adjacent to the North Caucasus, Crimea, or Ukraine – three sites of recent or ongoing regionally concentrated conflicts. In separate work (Zaloznaya, Hesli Claypool, and Reisinger 2016), we find that citizens are more likely to offer bribes to bureaucrats if they live in the areas affected by military conflict because they may have higher need to resort to informal ways of obtaining bureaucratic services and be less apprehensive of detection and punishment.

Given our focus on bureaucratic encounters, we might expect higher rates of corruption engagement in urban settings, where bureaucracies tend to be located. We do, indeed, find this pattern. Table 1 uses the same two measures as Figure 3 but breaks them down by size and type of residence. Corruption engagement is higher in cities of various sizes than in the countryside. By grouping cities of different size together, we find that they differ significantly from the rural areas.

Men are more likely to be involved with bureaucratic corruption than women. The average score on our measure of corruption engagement is .89 for men, well above the overall national average of .75, with women averaging .65. The *t*-test of the difference in means is 2.72 (.007). Twenty-two percent of the men in our sample had experienced some engagement over the preceding year, while only 18% of the women had.

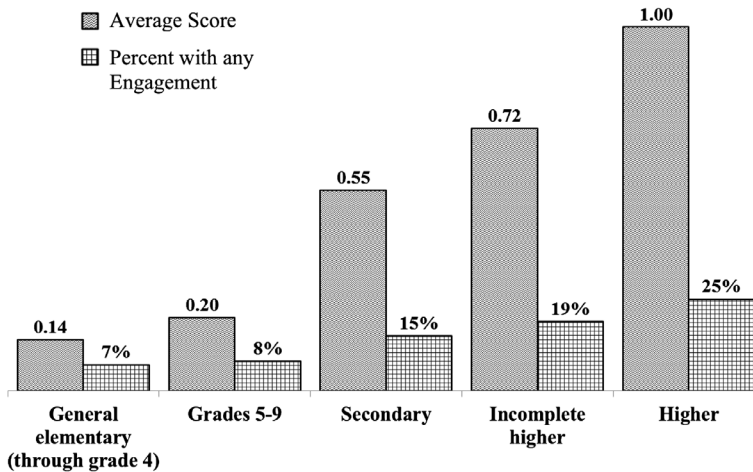


Figure 4. Engagement in bureaucratic corruption, by level of education.

Notes: *t*-test of the difference in engagement score between those with and without higher education: -3.88 (.000). *t*-test of the difference in whether one has engaged at all between those with and without higher education: -4.09 (.000).

Older Russians are less frequently engaged in corruption. Our corruption measure correlates negatively with age at a modest but significant level: $-.06$ (.007). The drop-off is noticeable at age 50: the *t*-test of the difference between those under 50 and those 50 and over is 2.89 (.004). It is stronger, yet between those 60-plus and others: the *t*-test is 3.84 (.000). It is likely that those in the older age groups need to seek services from fewer bureaucracies or are helped by someone younger in those dealings.

Corruption in Russia is more prevalent among the better educated. We asked respondents to indicate their highest level of education. We coded their responses into categories, from general elementary through completed higher education. Educational level correlates modestly but positively with corruption engagement: $.111$ (.000). Figure 4 shows the average scores and the percentage having any engagement at each education level. Corruption engagement rises monotonically with education.

The correlation between education and corruption engagement may reflect that the better educated Russians also have higher incomes (correlation = $.25$ [.000]). All else equal, bribery is easier when one has disposable income. We asked respondents to report the monthly income in rubles of their entire family living with them. As is typical in surveys, a relatively high number declined to answer the question about their income. Anticipating this non-response, we also asked about income in a different way, which 97% of our respondents were willing to answer. We had them select a statement that best fit their family's situation:

- We do not have enough money even for food.
- We have enough money for food, but it is difficult to buy clothes.
- We have enough money for food and clothes and we can save some amount, but it is not enough to buy expensive things (such as a TV and refrigerator).
- We can afford to buy some expensive things (such as a TV and refrigerator).
- We can afford anything we want.

Although most respondents selected the middle category, many chose the other categories, except for the wealthiest category, which only 16 people, or under 1%, selected. Figure 5 illustrates how our measure of corruption engagement varies across the five income groups. Russia's "one-percenters" are sharply more engaged in corruption than those in less wealthy circumstances. Among the other four groups, the average engagement with corruption varies but not in a monotonic way.

Most of these personal characteristics retain their influence in a multivariate analysis of corruption engagement. Table 2 shows the results of a multivariate regression of the corruption engagement

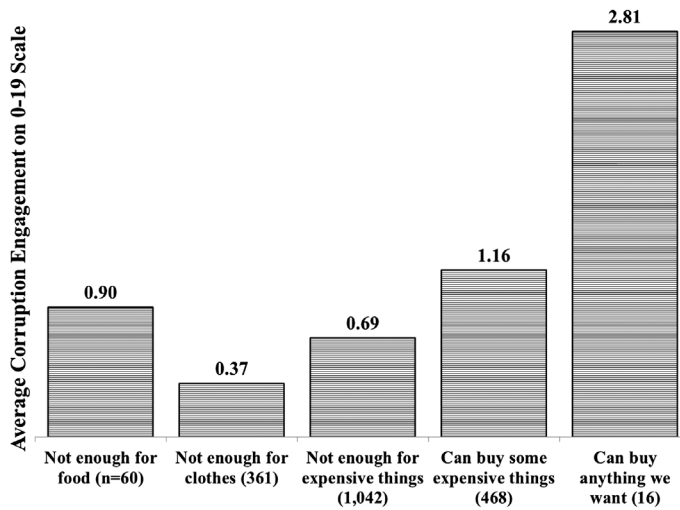


Figure 5. Engagement in bureaucratic corruption, by family finances.

Table 2. Multivariate analyses of engagement in bureaucratic corruption.

	Level of corruption engagement		Whether had any engagement or not
	Coefficient (std. error)	Beta weight	Odds ratio (std. error)
Interpersonal trust?	.187 (.109)		1.09 (.142)
Sixty or over?	-.289* (.102)	-0.06	.52** (.094)
Female?	-.222* (.102)	-0.05	.79 (.098)
Rural?	-.260** (.092)	-0.06	.56** (.086)
Higher education?	.226* (.105)	0.05	1.26 (.158)
Religious believer?	-.029 (.114)		1.00 (.141)
Family finances	.174* (.076)	0.07	1.40** (.129)
Lives in the Central Federal District	.658** (.119)	0.15	2.14** (.285)
Lives in the Southern Federal District	.601** (.158)	0.09	2.77** (.515)
Constant	.148 (.240)		.08** (.026)
Adj. R-squared: Pseudo R-squared:	0.06		0.07

Notes: Standard errors for the level of corruption engagement are heteroscedasticity-corrected using the hc2 method; those for whether someone had any corruption engagement are robust standard errors. Beta weights are standardized coefficients, shown only for statistically significant variables. They indicate by how many standard deviations the dependent variable changes when $N = 1,902$, the explanatory variable changes by one standard deviation.

*Significant at .05; **Significant at .01 or lower.

score as well as a logistic regression showing how each variable influences the odds that someone had been in a corruption situation. For the latter, an odds ratio below one indicates that an increase in the independent variable lowers the odds that the person was involved in corruption. Those above one indicate that higher scores on the independent variable make it more likely.⁷ The regressors are demographic characteristics of the respondents, dummy variables for the two federal administrative districts in which the rate of corruption engagement is highest, and a measure of the respondent’s interpersonal trust. The latter is a dummy variable where one indicates they chose “most people can be trusted” rather than “one needs to be careful in dealings with people.”

The bivariate relationships discussed above continue to hold in this model. The elderly have significantly lower engagement scores, as do women and those living in the countryside. Higher education and better family finances both have a positive impact on corruption engagement. The higher prevalence of corruption in the central and southern districts of the country remains in this multivariate model. This

Table 3. Regime support regressed on corruption engagement and controls.

	Coefficient (std. error)	Beta weight
Corruption engagement	-.031** (.010)	-0.08
Interpersonal trust?	.209** (.037)	0.12
Sixty or over?	.088 (.047)	0.04
Female?	.174** (.036)	0.11
Rural?	.065 (.041)	0.04
Higher education?	.020 .037	0.01
Religious believer?	.216** (.042)	0.12
Family finances	.144** (.024)	0.14
Lives in the Central Federal District	.034 (.039)	0.02
Lives in the Southern Federal District	.196** (.060)	0.08
Constant	-.814** (.086)	-
Adj. <i>R</i> -squared:		0.09

Note: *N* = 1,898.

*Significant at .05; **Significant at .01 or lower.

model only explains a low proportion of the overall variance, shown by an adjusted *R*-squared of .06 for the regression and a pseudo-*R*-squared of .07 for the logistic regression. This model is not meant to provide a full explanation of Russians' propensity to engage in corruption, but rather to demonstrate that key demographic characteristics have independent influences when controlling for multiple factors. We will employ these same regressors as controls in the remaining analyses. For a more complete exploration of the influences on individual engagement in corruption, see Zaloznaya, Hesli Claypool, and Reisinger (2016).

How experience with bureaucratic corruption influences regime support

Given a literature full of plausible but contradictory perspectives, our survey data provide us with a new way to find out whether experience with bureaucratic corruption increases, reduces, or leaves unchanged public support for the political regime. Previous work on Russia has been unable to link these two at the individual level. Yet, individual corruption experiences drawn from our nationally representative sample provide an unequivocal answer: they reduce regime support. The higher a person's engagement in corruption over the past year, the lower his or her support for the political regime.

As we noted above, support for Russia's political regime must include orientations toward top leaders and institutions. Our measure of regime support is an index constructed from five questions.⁸ Three questions asked about how well President Putin, Prime Minister Dmitrii Medvedev, and United Russia was/were fulfilling his/their duties.⁹ Two additional questions asked about trust in the overall political leadership and in the judiciary. We find that how Russians evaluate their political leadership does vary. The variable ranges from -2.89 as the least supportive score and 1.52 as the most supportive score.¹⁰

The average score on this measure of regime support is .023 for those who had no corruption engagement in the previous year but -.141 for those who did. The *t*-test of the difference in these two means is 3.761 (.000). Regressing regime support on corruption engagement, without other variables, produces a coefficient of -.024 with a standard error of .009, which is significant at .005. Table 3 shows the results of regressing regime support on corruption engagement plus the set of control variables that we used in Table 2. Russians with significantly higher levels of regime support include those expressing interpersonal trust, women, the religious, the better-off, and those in the southern federal administrative district. Corruption engagement continues to exert its significant negative influence while controlling for the other variables.

This negative relationship between street-level encounters and judgments about the country's leadership is important, given the debates we reviewed above.¹¹ By itself, however, the direct relationship may understate how corruption engagement can damage regime support. It can also do so indirectly, by altering other important determinants of citizens' views. With regard to regime support, we should expect that how Russians view their political leaders' performance should powerfully influence the

Table 4. Regime support regressed on assessment of leadership performance and official corruption.

	Coefficient (std. error)	Beta weight
Extent of official corruption	-.162** (.018)	-0.19
Assessment of leadership performance	.465** (.029)	0.40
Interpersonal trust?	.110** (.035)	0.07
Sixty or over?	.038 (.045)	0.02
Female?	.100** (.033)	0.06
Rural?	.054 (.039)	0.03
Higher education?	.006 (.034)	0.00
Religious believer?	.223** (.038)	0.12
Family finances	.085** (.023)	0.08
Constant	.571** (.081)	-
Adj. <i>R</i> -squared:		0.29

Note: $N = 1,714$.

*Significant at .05; **Significant at .01 or lower.

degree to which they support the regime. We therefore turn to examining whether corruption engagement alters (a) perceptions of how corrupt the country's officials are and (b) assessments of the job that the political leadership is doing.

To measure perceptions of official corruption, we created an index measure composed from three questions that asked how many national, regional, and local leaders are corrupt: hardly any, not very many, many, or almost all. To measure assessments of the job performance of the country's political leadership, we use a broad-based index measure comprised of eight intercorrelated questions that cover the state of the economy, fighting corruption, rights protection, crime reduction, national security, and standing in the world. As Table 4 shows, views on elite corruption and job performance both strongly influence regime support.

The perceived extent of official corruption has a significant negative coefficient, indicating that Russians who perceive higher levels of official corruption express lower support for Russia's political regime. Particularly sizable is the coefficient for how the respondent assesses the political leadership's performance. Its significant and positive coefficient indicates that those who view the leadership's performance positively express strongly higher regime support. The results also show that women, the religious, and those with better finances all show higher levels of regime support, but popular judgments of politicians' behavior matter much more in explaining regime support.

Therefore, if corruption engagement influences perceptions of elite corruption or of elite performance, that engagement will indirectly influence regime support. First, our data make clear that corruption engagement significantly raises perceptions of official corruption. In other words, Russians are extrapolating from their experiences with street-level bureaucrats to reach conclusions about the actions of the political leaders who govern them. The average score on our measure of perceptions of official corruption, which ranges from just under -2 to $+1.5$, is $-.10$ among Russians with no corruption engagement but $.25$ among those with it. The t -score of the difference between these means is -6.597 (.000). Table 5 shows that this relationship remains strong in a multivariate regression. Corruption engagement has a strong and significantly positive influence on perceptions of elite corruption. In Russians' eyes, corrupted bureaucrats are representatives of the system for which they work.¹²

Table 5 also shows that, when controlling for other variables, women, rural residents, and believers tend to perceive less corruption among political leaders, while those living in the southern administrative district perceive more leadership corruption. These are intriguing and possibly counterintuitive results. Although our goal is not to explain the etiology of corruption perceptions, existing literature does suggest possible reasons for the patterns we find. The gender and urban-rural differences, for instance, may be related to Čábelková and Hanousek's (2004, 390) finding in Ukraine that more contact with state institutions raises perceptions of corruption, or to work showing that those employed in the public sector have lower perceptions of official corruption (Melgar, Rossi, and Smith 2010). Alternatively, what matters between urban and rural areas or between different parts of the country might be political:

Table 5. Perceptions of official corruption regressed on corruption engagement.

	Coefficient (std. error)	Beta weight
Corruption engagement	.055** (.012)	0.12
Interpersonal trust?	-.069 (.049)	-0.03
Sixty or over?	-.079 (.056)	-0.03
Female?	-.118** (.045)	-0.06
Rural?	-.164** (.053)	-0.08
Higher education?	.010 (.049)	0.01
Religious believer?	-.113* (.053)	-0.05
Family finances	-.039 (.030)	-0.03
Lives in the Central Federal District	.070 (.053)	0.03
Lives in the Southern Federal District	.189** (.074)	0.06
Constant	.250* (.103)	-
Adj. <i>R</i> -squared:		0.04

Note: *N* = 1,717.

*Significant at .05; **Significant at .01 or lower.

Table 6. Structural equation regression of assessments of leadership performance.

	Coefficient (std. error)	Beta weight
<i>Satisfaction with bureaucratic encounters</i>		
Corruption engagement	-.058** (.009)	-0.15
Interpersonal trust?	.180** (.041)	0.11
Age	-.005** (.001)	-0.11
Female?	.112** (.039)	0.07
Rural?	.033 (.045)	
Higher education?	.108** (.040)	0.07
Believer?	.044 (.045)	
Family finances	.187** (.027)	0.18
Constant	2.403** (.110)	-
<i>Assessments of leadership performance</i>		
Satisfaction with bureaucratic encounters	.190** (.022)	0.23
Corruption engagement	-.007 (.009)	
Interpersonal trust?	.237** (.031)	0.17
Age	.002* (.001)	0.05
Female?	.061* (.030)	0.05
Rural?	.016 (.033)	
Higher education?	.022 (.031)	
Believer?	-.004 (.034)	
Family finances	.077** (.020)	0.09
Constant	-.960** (.101)	-

Note: *N* = 1,902.

*Significant at .05; **Significant at .01 or lower.

different levels of political competition and press freedom (Sharafutdinova 2010) or of public sector oversight (Rose-Ackerman 2001).

Do experiences with corruption also change how Russians assess their leadership's job performance, the strongest influence on regime support in Table 4? Our data show an indirect but clear relationship. Views of the leadership's performance are strongly influenced by how satisfied Russians are with the bureaucrats they encounter.¹³ The more satisfied citizens are with their various bureaucratic encounters, the more highly they rate the job the national political leadership is doing. And, the two strongest influences on satisfaction with bureaucratic encounters are the state of one's finances and whether the encounters entailed corruption.

We demonstrate this in Table 6, which presents the results of a structural equation model estimating the path from corruption engagement through evaluation of bureaucratic encounters to assessment of the national leadership's job performance. One equation shows the influences on how people react to their bureaucratic encounters, including corruption engagement. The other estimates how people's

satisfaction or dissatisfaction with bureaucratic encounters influences their assessments of leadership performance, again including corruption engagement and other controls.

The upper portion of Table 6 shows that, controlling for personal attributes, corruption engagement has a strong and significantly negative impact on satisfaction with official encounters. That is, whether people recall their bureaucratic encounters with satisfaction or not depends on whether those encounters involved being asked for or giving a bribe, gift, or favor. Beyond that, older respondents tend to be less satisfied with their bureaucratic encounters, while those possessing more interpersonal trust, women, the better educated, and those with higher income tend to be more satisfied. Family finances play the largest role among these factors, as bureaucratic corruption hits the poor hardest.

Because corruption engagement decreases satisfaction with bureaucratic encounters, it also drives down assessments of leadership performance. The lower portion of Table 6 shows how Russians' evaluation of leadership performance is influenced by their satisfaction with bureaucratic encounters and other variables. Higher satisfaction has a significant and strongly positive influence on how Russians assess their political leaders' performance. The higher a person's satisfaction with his or her official encounters over the preceding year, the better the job he or she considers the country's political leaders are doing. This finding is striking because the encounters we asked our respondents about involved settings far removed from national political leadership. Again, as with people's judgment about the extent of official corruption, street-level encounters help shape conclusions about the broader political system.

We have, in sum, shown that Russians' experiences with bureaucratic corruption reduce their level of regime support through three pathways. First, our data show a direct effect: corruption engagement lowers support, with and without control variables. Second, corruption engagement heightens the perception that political leaders are corrupt, a significant negative influence on regime support. Third, corruption engagement detracts from satisfaction with low-level bureaucratic encounters and thereby lowers judgments about how well the political leadership is doing its job, a significant positive influence on regime support.

Conclusion

We employ data from a nationally representative survey in Russia in 2015 to explore patterns of bureaucratic, or everyday, corruption and what they imply for the public's views of their political leaders. We show that how often Russians engage in bureaucratic corruption differs significantly along numerous dimensions. It varies among types of service providing organizations. This variance includes how often bureaucrats seek a bribe, gift, or favor and how often the citizen feels the need to provide it, but also how often the citizen provides something without being asked. Corruption engagement is also more frequent in certain parts of the country. Moscow and the regions around it lead the way, but St. Petersburg and the other regions in the northwest federal district lag behind. Corruption is more frequent in cities than in rural settings and more common among men, those below 60 in age, the better educated, and the financially secure.

Having found those patterns of regime support and corruption engagement, we turned to the paper's primary question: Does everyday corruption affect how Russians view their political leadership? Yes, it does: everyday encounters with officialdom create impressions that influence more general political judgments. Corruption makes those impressions negative. Being involved in corrupt transactions reduces support for the regime by making the political leadership's performance seem worse and by heightening perceptions that corruption is widespread among the country's leaders. We find no support for arguments in the literature that bribery and other forms of bureaucratic corruption help citizens pursue their needs in the face of inefficient state institutions and less developed economies. In Russia, those who frequently encounter corruption are less, not more, supportive of the regime. The effect on the regime's public support is not, of course, immediate or overwhelming. Effective messaging, the charisma of the country's leader, and much else go into how Russians respond to the current political regime. Nonetheless, street-level corruption is corrosive of the body politic. Our results, thus, are an important step toward resolving a longstanding debate among those who study corruption.

Our findings also bear on the sources of stability for authoritarian regimes. As Gerschewski (2013) has argued, these regimes deploy different combinations of strategies aimed at repression, elite cooptation, and mass legitimacy. We show that, in Russia, extensive low-level corruption undermines the latter. Moreover, a common strategy for elite cooptation is to allow them to profit through corrupt transactions (Darden 2008; Chang and Golden 2010; Gerschewski 2013). If tacit approval of corruption by high elites leads to similar tacit approval at lower levels (or the continuation of such behavior), a regime may find that what it gains in support from lower level elites, it loses in support from the public. In other words, it faces a tension between two legs of the triad of regime maintenance strategies. Over the medium to long run, Russia's leadership has strong reasons to implement serious measures to reduce the prevalence of street-level corruption. That may be impossible in the short run, though.

Notes

1. Some observers question the validity of the reported ratings in light of the heightened repression of recent years. Yet, as Frye et al. (2016) have shown, list experiments, which allow respondents to indicate their opinion without the interviewer knowing what it is, bear out the high level of support.
2. A political regime refers to "the formal and informal organization of the center of political power, and of its relations with the broader society. A regime determines who has access to political power, and how those who are in power deal with those who are not" (Fishman 1990, 428; see similar definitions by Schmitter and Karl 1991, 76 and Munck 1996, 4–6).
3. Both Manzetti and Wilson (2006) and Klačnja and Tucker (2013) find that interactions between *perceptions* of corruption and evaluation of economic performance influence confidence in the political regime. This is a different question than we ask since we focus on citizens' behavior. We do, however, relate those behaviors to perceptions of elite corruption and of the regime's performance in the multivariate analyses that follow.
4. For reviews of the literature on this point, see Weatherford (1984), Finkel, Muller, and Seligson (1989), McAllister (1999), and Lewis-Beck and Stegmaier (2007); regarding Russia, see Treisman (2011, 2014).
5. The Appendix for this paper contains more information on the survey (see Supplementary material).
6. Based on gross regional product per capita in 2012 (Russian Federal State Statistics Service 2014, 349–350).
7. For this and subsequent multivariate analyses, we report heteroscedasticity-corrected robust standard errors to control for skewness in our measure of corruption engagement (Kaufman 2013). They do not change the results substantially for any coefficient. In addition, we reran all analyses excluding the four cases with the highest values (18 or 19 on our measure). Because doing so resulted in only trivial changes in the model fits or coefficients, we report the results using all the cases.
8. We constructed this and our other index variables using Stata's alpha command, which first standardizes each variable and then takes the average of the standardized score across the five variables. Table A2 in the online appendix provides summary information on all the measures we employ.
9. Although the use of the word "duties" might seem to elicit views of job performance, these questions more probably elicited more broadly based reactions of support. They came early in the questionnaire, prior to questions that asked about leadership performance in specific areas.
10. Because the five component variables are strongly correlated with each other, the results we report using the combined index variable remain unchanged substantively when it is replaced with any of the component variables.
11. We cannot definitively rule out that the causal direction in this relationship is the opposite of the one we defend. It might be that supporters of the leadership have lower likelihoods of encountering street-level corruption or of reporting such involvement. For several reasons, however, we find this implausible. Tables 4–6 support the view that corruption engagement is causally prior, by revealing pathways through which corruption engagement helps explain the two attitudes that most strongly influence regime support. In addition, we can examine the corruption engagement of those who voted for Putin in the 2012 presidential election vs. others. This behavioral indication of support is a useful proxy that was not part of our attitudinal measure of regime support. We find only a small difference: 14% of those who voted for Putin reported giving a bribe at any point over the past year, while 15% of those who voted for a different candidate had done so. Using our measure of corruption engagement, which ranges from 0 to 19, the difference is also small: an average score of .69 for Putin voters vs. .82 for others. Neither difference reaches statistical significance in a *t*-test. We suspect that, to the extent that Putin voters report slightly less engagement in corruption, this is influenced by the higher proportion of Putin voters who are elderly and female, both of which (in our study and others) are less engaged in corruption. Regarding the possibility that regime supporters underreported their corruption engagement, the survey experiment we described earlier shows little evidence of bias in reporting overall.
12. Although not all of the organizational sectors we asked respondents about are state agencies, Russians understand them all, evidently, as being linked with the governing regime.

13. As discussed above, after asking whether respondents had contact with each type of official and prior to mentioning bribes, gifts, or favors, we asked whether that experience was satisfactory, somewhat satisfactory, somewhat unsatisfactory, or very unsatisfactory. We used the row mean of the resulting 13 variables.

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