

Anti-Corruption Student Network in SEE

So diverse, yet so similar

**Comparative analyses of research on corruption in higher
education in Croatia, Serbia, Macedonia, Bulgaria,
Moldova**

Anticorruption student network in South East Europe, March 2013.

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About Anti – Corruption Student Network in SEE and its member organizations

Anti-Corruption Student Network in South-East Europe is an international project which is comprised of Belgrade Open School's Centre for Development of Education in Serbia, student organizations from the Youth Society for Peace and Development in the Balkans (YSPDB) from Bulgaria, Monitor Statistica in Croatia, Youth Educational Forum in Macedonia and The National Center for Transparency and Human Rights (NCTHR) in Moldova. The project includes research on corruption in higher education, exchanges among the partners of the methodologies and findings, workshops and trainings for students.

The network members are informing and raising awareness about the level of corruption in higher education and advocating for institutional mechanisms for the prevention of corruption by organizing round tables, press conferences and training for students' empowerment for participation in reforms, protection of students rights, team work and lobbying.

The project has been active since 2003. To the date a comprehensive research on corruption in state universities in Serbia has been conducted and the team organized numerous educational programmes and workshops in which more than 450 students from Serbia participated. Also, four generations of BOS' Department for Advanced Undergraduate Studies students were included as assistants and junior researchers in surveys and qualitative research about specific corruption issues of higher education in numerous universities.

In the first phase of the project a regional research on corruption in five countries was conducted and the results were analyzed. In the second phase of this project (in 2005) the main aim of the network members was to inform and raise awareness of universities' communities and general public about the level and type of corruption at universities. The third phase of the project started in February, 2008. In this project cycle the network members focused on the monitoring of various corruption processes at higher education institutions in SEE.

The long term aims of the network members are to lower the level of corruption at universities and to create a transparent higher education environment in the region. As a logical follow up of these activities, there was an implementation of new regional research about corruption in high education system, during the 2012, with the accent not only on the manifestations but also on the experience and the attitudes towards corruptive deeds.

Belgrade Open School (BOS)

Belgrade Open School (BOS) is a not-for-profit, educational civil society organization established in 1993. BOS contributes to the overall development of society through further education and training of agents of social change, professional support to institutions, research and policy development in order to build a modern society based on democratic values. BOS is implementing its mission through activities of its Department for Advanced Undergraduate Studies and its eight centres: Centre for Development of Education, Centre for Capacity Building, Centre for European Integration, Centre for Research of Information Technologies, Career Guidance and Counselling Centre, Centre for Religious Studies, Educational Advising Centre and Centre for Publishing.

Centre for Development of Education (CDE) enhances the systems of education, training and employment through research and education, aiming to support the overall social development of Serbia, and promotes regional and international cooperation in order to introduce European educational best practices. Its activities are:

- Research and analyze of development processes and advocating policies in the higher and professional education, training and employment;
- Development, implementation and promotion of advanced teaching methods and innovations in education and training;
- Developing and designing tailor-made models of cooperation with social partners and stakeholders;
- Training of students' representatives for participation in managing and developing of the education system; and
- Networking, supporting and providing expert assistance to agents of education development on regional and international level.

BOS vision is better society based on freedom, knowledge and innovation.

Youth Educational Forum

History and Organization – The citizen's association Youth Educational Forum (YEF) is a nongovernmental, nonpolitical and nonprofit organization which was established in June 1999. Several centers throughout the country operate as part of YEF, which conduct activities from the main programs of YEF: Non-formal Education Program, Research and Youth

Policymaking Program and Youth Activism Program. The American Education Center (AEC) also operates under the umbrella of YEF. AEC represents a home of many youth initiatives, events, trainings, etc., and the latter is working on principal promotion of undergraduate and graduate scholarships for Macedonian students to study abroad. The YEF membership is on the rise, with over 400 active members and around 60 volunteers who participate in all programs as lecturers and trainers. The highest body in the organization hierarchy of YEF is the Assembly, which consists of all members. The Governing Board is a mixed body of seven members, which include representatives of the main programs and external members. The management of the YEF activities is coordinated by the Executive Director, President, Program Coordinators and project coordinators.

Field of activity – The programs which are realized by YEF are educational and youth oriented.

Mission and goals – The mission of YEF is to offer the students, high-school students, teachers and parents opportunities for active and argumentative participation in public discussion of issues of individual as well as community interest. This way they can contribute towards the establishment of an open and democratic society.

Goals of YEF: Youth education, targeting young people aged between 15 and 25 years old; Promotion of alternative ways of youth education, by using interactive methodology in the course of the lectures; Promotion of critical thinking and tolerance between high school students; Public speaking (rhetoric), team work, logic, argumentative presentation of positions, problem solving; Anticipation of the opposite positions as of equal importance as the ones personally endorsed; Openness to new ideas and positions contrary to the generally accepted.

Monitor Statistica

Monitor Statistica started in Zagreb in 2002 as an initiative of students involved in Mathematics Students' Society (MASS). The goal of their project was to explore corruption in higher education in Croatia, analyze its forms, frequency and how to prevent it. After the initial period of activities as a section of MASS, Monitor Statistica was founded as a civil organization in 2004 in Zagreb. In 2002 it was one of the founding members of Anti-Corruption Student Network in Southeast Europe. Since then the network members started a project with support from Open Society Institute dealing with questions of corruption in higher education that runs till today.

The Youth Society for Peace and Development of the Balkans (YSPDB)

The Youth Society for Peace and Development of the Balkans (YSPDB) was created in 1998 in Bulgaria as an informal alliance of NGO leaders. In the middle of 2001 it was officially registered as a non-governmental organization according to Bulgarian legislature. Its members are students, young people and citizens who work for:

- Strengthening the stability on the Balkans and South East Europe;
- Encouraging and promoting of the creative process in arts and sciences;
- Encouraging and promoting the Bulgarian Cultural Heritage;
- Creation of new practices of sustainable development;
- The establishment of new models in the area of secondary, higher and civil education;
- Improving the intercultural dialogue and overcoming of ethnic differences;
- Respecting the human rights;
- Improving the dialogue between NGOs and local and national authorities.

Since the beginning of 2003 the Society is part of the youth information network **Eurodesk**, with opportunity to exchange information with European NGOs. Within Bulgaria the Society is a partner of information centers, youth and civil clubs and NGOs working throughout the country. Since 2003, YSPDB is an associate member of the **European Bureau for Conscientious Objection (EBCO)** and representative of the same in Bulgaria. A representative of the organization – Veselin Iliev is an EBCO board member and its representative to the **European Youth Forum**.

YSPDB is a member and co-founder of the **Anti-corruption student network (ACSN) in the South-East Europe**. ACSN includes student organizations from Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova and Serbia.

The National Center for Transparency and Human Rights (NCTHR)

The National Center for Transparency and Human Rights (NCTHR) is the founder member of the Anti Corruption Alliance of the Republic of Moldova.

NCTHR' activities are primarily directed towards raising the students' and youth's awareness on the risks and consequences related to this phenomenon, but also the decision-makers

concerning the problems of corruption and fraud, transparency and information access. The direct beneficiaries of our programs are mostly students and youth organizations, the academic community in general and the policy makers in the field of education. Thereof, the organization's main goal is to continue the development in this direction by widening the scope of the actions and providing more assistance to its beneficiaries. Currently, the work of the center is concentrated on monitoring corruption and other academic fraud, development of recommendations and policies for the decision makers in the field of youth and education as well as assisting students and youth in protecting their rights and freedoms against the impact of corruption.

Key problems in high education systems in Network member states

Bearing in mind the overall social, economic and cultural development, but also a shared historical perspective in SEE countries, it is plausible to suggest that these countries share certain common problems in functioning of their institutions, and in the field of HEI as well. Several ACSN researches conducted since 2006 show that indeed the problems that arise in higher education in these countries share a common thread.

The regulatory framework is somewhat flawed and complicated, which gives the opportunity for them to be interpreted in different ways. The second regulatory problem is the non implementation of the Bologna reforms, which is possible due to the weakness of public institutions and university autonomy. Due to the university autonomy, the public institutions such as the Ministry of education have little authority over the conducts of the higher education institutions so its control role is quite restricted, which in some cases enables various misconducts. This is especially regarding the punishment system regulations, where even sometimes judiciary fails to solve these issues effectively.¹ The financing of higher education institutions is another serious problem: the pecuniary supplements from the public funds for the public faculties are not sufficient for maintaining high standards of teaching, and this issues is even worsened by the fact that there are a lot of misallocation of resources, which impediments the necessary investments. The financing system does not take into account indicators of efficiency but rather rely on lump sum financing either per institution or per student enrolled. Another problem that arises from this is the need of the faculties to rely upon other sources of financing, which usually means charging ever increasing student fees

¹for example, the Serbian “Index” affair where majority of the faculty teaching staff of Faculty of law of University in Kragujevac, were the accused “selling” exams in 2007. However the criminal court still hasn’t reached the verdict. Similar Croatian affair “Index” at the University in Zagreb was eventually solved, but in a longer time frame than it was necessary.

and charges, as well as tuition fees, in a non-transparent way, which means that student need to pay some of the faculty services without knowing what and how much are they paying for it.

Higher education system in Macedonia

For the purposes of this research we would like to present a short but comprehensive analysis of the Macedonian higher educational (HE) system.

The analysis is composed of two segments. Primarily we did an overview of what we find to be the most important elements of the HE system in Macedonia based on a desktop research. And in addition to that, some commentaries from the ACSN-SEE Macedonian team regarding some current developments in the HE.

The outline of this article is:

- ❖ The legal framework of the HE system in Macedonia
- ❖ The organisational structure of the regulatory authorities for HE
- ❖ The concept of HE and Bologna system
- ❖ The principle of University autonomy
- ❖ Financing the HE system in Macedonia

Legal Framework of the HE in Macedonia

When we are discussing the legal framework of the HE institutions in Macedonia, the principal source that we turn to is the Law on HE. This Law regulates the university autonomy and the academic freedom, the conditions and procedure for establishment and termination of HE institutions, the system for quality assurance and quality assessment in HE, the bases for organization, management, development and financing of HE (Art.1 of the Law on HE).

In addition, the Law on HE is considered *lex generalis* in this field. The Law was changed successively in 2009/10/11/12/13 and challenged in front of the Constitutional Court on the assumption that it's not in compliance with the constitutional provisions related to the right of association². Acts also related to HE are the following: Law on student dorms, Law

²<http://www.ustavensud.mk/domino/WEBSUD.nsf/ffc0feee91d7bd9ac1256d280038c474/126989affb036cd1c12574040040210d?OpenDocument>

on accreditation³, Law on adult education, Law on the Establishment of National Agency for European Educational Programs and Mobility, Law on HE Institutions of Religious Communities and others. These sets of laws create the legal framework regarding HE that is applicable for all the Universities in Macedonia.

While we are discussing the legal framework of the HE system in Macedonia, it is also worth mentioning that our Law on HE in Art.9 stipulates that the University, that is, every independent HE institution will have a basic document: a statute that will regulate in details the internal organization, the manner of carrying out the HE activity, the powers and the manner of operation and decision-making, and other issues of significance for carrying out the HE activity. The assembly of the Republic of Macedonia shall approve the statute of the Public University and the public independent HE institution, and the founder will approve the statute of the private HE institution prior of the ministry responsibility for issues in the field of HE.

However in our opinion, much of the legislation is adopted without much research or analysis done on the topic. Even when the legislation is created with the necessary research and analysis, these documents are rarely made available to the public. As we already mentioned, the legislative process usually does not incorporate consultation with those that are potentially influenced by the laws, which seriously harms the entire legitimacy of the proposed changes (even if the adopted text is with the lawmakers best intentions).

Organisational structure of the regulatory authorities

Some of the existing institution, agencies and bodies in the HE system in Macedonia are:

- **HE Department in the Ministry of education in Republic of Macedonia**

The HE department is a department within the Ministry of education and science of Republic of Macedonia. This department has three units in its organizational structure.

- Higher Education, International Cooperation, Tempus and CEPPUS Unit

Law on Higher Education ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" nos. 35/2008, 103/2008, 26/2009, 83/2009, 99/2009, 115/2010, 17/2011, 51/2011 and 123/2012). Decision of the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Macedonia, U. no. 80/2008 dated 3 December 2008, published in the "Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" no. 162/2008.

³Law on Accreditation ("Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia" no. 120/2009 and 53/2011).

- Support Unit for the Board of Accreditation, the Evaluation Agency and the Council of Higher Education
- Unit for Equivalence and Recognition of foreign higher education qualifications

- **National Agency for European Educational programs and mobility**

The National agency for European educational programs and mobility is a public institution established by Law adopted by the Parliament of the Republic of Macedonia. The aim of the National agency for European educational programs and mobility is to promote and implement the European educational programs into the Republic of Macedonia.

By implementing the programs, the National agency for European educational programs and mobility contributes to development of knowledge-based society, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and bigger social cohesion, at the same time providing environmental protection and especially exchange, collaboration and mobility into the areas of education and training.

Program beneficiaries are: learners, students, teachers, professors, educators and other personnel engaged in any stage of educational process, enterprises and other legal bodies including commercial entities, chambers of commerce and other associations of legal bodies in the field of industry, research centres and bodies, as well as citizen associations and foundations.⁴

- **Board for Accreditation and Evaluation in HE**

(Article 68, consolidated text of the Law on HE): The quality assurance and assessment of HE shall be carried out by the Board for Accreditation and Evaluation in HE.

(Article 69, consolidated text of the Law on HE):

The system for quality assurance and assessment of higher education shall cover:

- approval, confirmation and recognition of the higher education institution and the study programs for carrying out the higher education activity in accordance with this Law, achieved by accreditation (hereinafter: accreditation),
- assessment of the quality of carrying out the higher education activity, management,

⁴National Agency, about the agency, <http://www.na.org.mk/index.php/en/en-national-agency.html>

financing, academic and other activities and its priorities, made by the evaluation system (hereinafter: evaluation), and

- other activities and mechanisms through which the quality in higher education is developed and maintained, determined by the law and the acts of the bodies that assess the quality of the higher education.

The evaluation shall be made by evaluation methods as external evaluation, self-evaluation, as well as by the system for evaluation of the quality of the academic staff.

- **National Council for HE, science, innovation and technology**

A change introduced with the latest amendments in the Law on HE: The National Council should be an advisory and expert body to the state government. The National Council is consisted of 17 members (Minister for science and education, president of the Academy for art and science, representative from the Rector's Conference, six representatives from the Interuniversity Conference , 2 representatives from the business sector). The National Council should provide the basis and guidelines to the Government for drafting the National programme for HE and scientific research, propose legislation, policy development on the request of the Minister, conduct internal and external evaluation of the scientific research activities, create data bases, support and promote international cooperation etc. However the National Council during the time of writing the brief, still hasn't started working, so we're in no position to assess its work.

- **State education inspectorate⁵**

The purpose of this body is to provide supervision over the quality and effectiveness of the educational process. It uses evaluation and assessment over the law implementation, as its methods. More specifically, regarding HE, the Inspectorate has authority to work on the application of the state legislative taking in consideration, the bylaws and the University/Faculty practice.

The concept of HE & Bologna process

⁵<http://www.pravo.org.mk/documentlaws.php?name=&number=&year=&keyword=државен+просветен+инспектор&button=Барај>

The Law on HE in Macedonia in gives us an overview of the types of HE institutions.

Article 16 of that law reads:

- Higher education institutions shall be the university and the school of higher professional education
- Higher education institutions within the composition of the university shall be the faculty, art academy and school of higher professional education.
- Scientific institutions shall also be within the composition of the university, as units of the university.
- School for higher professional education may be established as an independent school for higher professional education or within the composition of the university.
- The higher education institutions can be public, private-public non-profit institutions, and private (profit or non-profit) institutions.

In Macedonia, there are five Public (State) Universities, 17 privately owned and one Public-Private institution HE institution⁶. All of the universities are accredited by the Ministry of education. The studies under the influence of Bologna implemented a model of 3years (BA) + 2 years (MA) segmented. However some study programs operate under a different method that is 4 years (BA) +1year (MA).

The HE cycles are also regulated in the Law of HE in the Article 93:

- The study programs for obtaining education shall be divided into three cycles of higher education:
 - first cycle of university studies,
 - second cycle of university studies, and
 - third cycle, doctoral studies.
- Each cycle of the university studies shall end by obtaining a particular degree.
- Certain study programs may be delivered in an integrated manner throughout the first and second cycle.

⁶The number of Public, Private and Public private Universities is taken from the web-page of the Ministry of education and science of Republic of Macedonia, <http://www.mon.gov.mk/mk/2012-02-17-14-55-53/597>

- Each cycle of studies should be in line with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) according to which, as a rule, 60 ECTS credits are acquired for one academic year of studies.

Macedonia signed the Bologna declaration on the ministry meeting in Berlin in September 2003, when our country officially joined the Bologna process. For the Macedonian educational authorities this was a somewhat of an obligation to implement the key imperatives of the Bologna process.

Autonomy of the University

The concept of autonomy has been regulated by the Law on HE, with the focus on academic freedom, independent reasoning, governance and inviolableness of university space (Art. 11-14).

The situation today regarding these principles is that, although formally granted by law, still on several occasions both the general public and the academic community has reacted due to alleged violations of the principle of autonomy of the University guaranteed by this law. According to the professors these violations included: opening new faculties without consultations with the academic community, restructuring the largest University into smaller university units, employment of additional personnel lowered to minimum, introducing penalties untypical for the nature of the academic work etc.⁷ The reaction was provoked by the adoption of amendments in 2012 on the Law on HE, amendments that weren't preceded with a public discussion and deliberation with the stakeholders. These issue is raised again in 2013, with new amendments being adopted, through summary procedure, while the opposition was boycotting the work of the national assembly.⁸ Some critics say these amendments will increase the state control over the state universities, which at some point clashes with the idea of autonomy.

Financing the HE system

⁷ <http://utrinski.com.mk/?ItemID=613354644FBFB942A896B2C5E2F864E3>

⁸ <http://www.radiomof.mk/zakonot-se-menuva-za-postroga-vladina-kontrola-vrz-univerzitetite/>

The financing in the HE can be observed on three levels, financing on a state level, financing on a university level and financing on a faculty level.

The financing of the HE system is regulated in the law for HE and the Program for HE Activity adopted by the parliament every 4 years. The public universities and the studies of public interest are financed from the Budget of the Republic of Macedonia.

The HE institutions may acquire funds from:

- rendering educational services to domestic and foreign legal entities and natural persons,
- selling scientific and expert services and products to domestic and foreign legal entities and natural persons,-interests,
- revenues on the basis of copyrights in ownership of the HE institution, and
- legates, gifts, testaments, contributions and other sources.

Relevant actors in the financing of the HE system on a university level are: the Senate that adopts the yearly financial plan for the university, the rector who decides on all financial matters not entrusted to the Senate and the Council for HE Development and Funding that propose a decree for measures and criteria for financing the activity of the HE institutions.

Relevant actors in the financing of the HE system on a faculty level are: the Academic-Scientific Council that adopts a four-year program for development and an annual work program, the Dean who manages the property of the faculty and the dean's administration which implements the financial decisions and policies. On a faculty level, the finances are regulated in the faculty statutes and in the four-year program for development.

Higher education system in Bulgaria

After the changes took place in Bulgaria in the 90th, along with the transformation of the entire political and social systems, some serious changes took place within the structure and functioning of the higher education system. First, in the beginning of the transitional period Bulgaria's Parliament adopted the Academic autonomy act in 1990. In 1995, however, Academic autonomy act was replaced by the Higher Education Act, which experienced serious amendment in 1999. The latter two are the most important laws that have affected higher education system in Bulgaria.⁹ By the assessment of some observers, the most important changes are made most particular in regard of the study cycle, the creation of the agency for assessment of the quality and accreditation of the higher schools. Efforts were undertaken to develop and adopt new curricula, especially in the social sciences¹⁰. In the 1999 the free education was abolished and tuition fees were introduced at all public universities.¹¹ In 2010 the new amendment introduced the paid education and the right of each higher school of educational franchise.

The state authorities play a big and an important role in the development and the functioning of the higher education in Bulgaria. According to Bulgaria's legislation, the State shall provide the condition for development of and access to higher education as well as to develop and implement national policy on the field of higher education. To exercise its functions, the Bulgarian state authorities use different tools and measures like for example: monitoring of the quality of education, subsidizing the students during their education, provides some social stimulus and benefits for the students under certain conditions, and introduces student's loan

⁹http://www.emuni.si/Files/Denis/Conferences/EMUNI_HE-R/Proceedings/Papers/46.pdf

¹⁰Nick Clark, "Bulgaria", *World Education News & Reviews*, Vol. 16, Issue 6, November/December 2003, cited by Dr. RumianaMarinova-Christidi. Both articles can be find here:http://www.emuni.si/Files/Denis/Conferences/EMUNI_HE-R/Proceedings/Papers/46.pdfand here: <http://www.wes.org/ewenr/03Nov/Bulgaria.htm>

¹¹ Ibid

system and etc. It is important to mention also that the State provides property and ensures tax concessions to the public higher education institutions.

The functions of the state in the higher education system are exercised by the **National Assembly** and the **Council of Ministers**, the main institutions of the legislature and executive power. The National Assembly takes final decision for establishment, transformation or closing down higher schools and determines the annual subsidy for the public higher education schools on annual bases. Usually the Council of Ministers makes propositions for establish and transformation of higher schools to the National Assembly. The Council of Ministers also has the right to close down or establish new faculties and universities. Also the Council approves the general guidelines and the framework of the national policy in higher education. Its decisions determine the uniform state requirements for obtaining educational degree and the list of regulated professions as well as the state requirements for enrollment of students.

The Minister of Education, Youth and Science is the main central body of the executive power exercising the national policy in the field of the education. Its functions are mainly coordinational, executive and oversight. The Minister is responsible for implementation and development of the national strategies in the education. One of its very important functions is to allocate the state funding among the different higher education institutions in Bulgaria. The Minister also coordinates the management of the state property and took care for the development of the material and technical base for development of the education and science. The Minister of Education also coordinates the work of the different institutions regarding the higher education; makes proposals before the Council of Ministers for the number of the students in higher education schools both private and public after consultations with the management of the schools. Its function is also to make proposals for the tuition fees for each university but here again after consultation with the ruling bodies of the universities.

There is a **department called ‘Higher education’** within the structure of the Ministry of education. This structure coordinate the activities of the higher education institutions in Bulgaria and assists the Minister in his function of overseeing the implementations of the rules of law, of different regulatory norms and etc. It’s worth mentioning that the Department coordinate the implementation of the European law, the implementation of the Bologna process and coordinate the relations between the higher education institutions and job market.

The National Agency for Assessment and Accreditation follows for qualities of the activities and services provided by higher schools. It provides post-accreditation monitoring and control over the capacities of the higher school.

The Higher education act regulates the existence of body on national level to express the common interest of the higher schools in front of the state institutions. That is the Council of rectors of the higher schools. Its main function is to communicate with the state authorities in regard of the state budget and to consult the ministry of education for the tuition fees and other matters that concern them.

Within the higher educational system also functions the National representation of the student's councils. This body should represent and defend the common interest of the students in front of the state authorities. Each of the student councils in the different universities has representatives in the National representation of the students' council.

Higher education schools

There are two forms of higher schools in term of ownership – public, or state-owned, and private. The state provides property and annual subsidy to the public higher schools. In terms of types the higher schools are Universities, Special higher schools and Independent colleges.

The University is higher school that provides training in at least three of the four major areas of science – humanities, natural sciences, social and technical sciences – at Bachelor, Master and Doctoral degree. Specialized higher school conduct trainings and researches in one of the major fields of science. The name of the specialized higher school may reflect the specificities of the training courses. The independent colleges provide more vocational education. The training process is 3-year and the students graduate with “Special bachelor in...” degree. After the graduation the students may continue its education in Master degree.

The structure of the higher schools consists of governing bodies, basic and auxiliary units.

The governing bodies of the higher schools are the General Meeting, the Academic Board and the Chancellor. The basic units are departments, institutes, subsidiaries, colleges and chairs. Auxiliary units are sections, centres, clinics, libraries, laboratories, experimental stations, printing and publishing facilities, production units and other distinct units.

Funding the higher education system in Bulgaria

Two are the main sources of incomes for the higher schools in Bulgaria – from public funding and from university's own revenue. Public higher education institutions received each year subsidies from the state budget, which form its main source of income (65% share in total funding). The amount of the state subsidy for each public university is set by the Council of Ministry and is included in the State Budget Act. The main criterion for allocation of subsidy among the different universities used to be the number of students trained in the higher education institution. However, in 2012 the amendment of the Higher education act made by the Government included second criterion that is rating of the quality of education and its compliance with the needs of the labor market. That rating consisted several indicators each of which has different weight for formation of the final rating. The indicators are grouped in three major groups of indicators – Learning process, Scientific research, Realization and connections with labour market.

The subsidies from the state budget are for support of the scientific and other activities, for social benefits for the students (such as scholarships, student dorms etc.), and for support of the training of the students. The state subsidies cover the expenditure for studying for one student. This subsidy is included when the tuition fees are made. For state quota student tuition fee is a percentage of the per student expenditure norm. The fee student paid is 2/3 from the expenditure norm. The Higher Education Act allows the public universities to provide ‘‘paid education’’, i.e. beyond the state quota students.

Along with that, the state provides also a means-tested merit-based scholarships program for the students. From some years now the authorities introduced a student loans scheme. ‘*In 2011, around 1.7% (4,800 students) of the students enrolled in Bulgarian HEIs drew student loans, and roughly 6% (16,000 students) benefited from state subsidized student scholarships. Since 2009, as part of a four-year EU-funded project implemented by MEYS, the government has made available additional resources for scholarships, whereby around 5% of the students (15,000) receive monthly scholarships and around 4% receive financial awards.*’¹²

¹²[Strengthening Higher Education in Bulgaria](#), World Bank draft report

Cycle system

To enter in Bulgaria's higher education system students have to complete elementary and secondary education. After that they are eligible to enroll in the higher schools after fulfillment of the requirements set by the chosen higher school.

Bulgaria had a tree-cycle system of higher education. It had three types of degree. First degree refers to "Bachelor degree", or Bacalavar. Master's degree is the second degree within this tree-cycle system, and the last, third, degree is "doctor degree".

Bachelor degree is provided by Universities and Specialized Higher schools as well as colleges. The students had to complete 4 years of educational course in the chosen subject and required minimum 240 ECTS credits. At the end of the course the student has to "sit for state examinations or defense of a diploma thesis"¹³ There is also a degree "professional bachelor in...", which takes 3 years of education in college and required minimum 180 ECTS credits. The college can be independent or part from a university.

Master degree can be acquired in three conditions. After acquisition of degree in "Professional bachelor in..." the student has to attend 2-years Master courses. If the student acquired Bachelor degree, that is 4 years of training, can acquire Master degree after 1 year minimum studying in master courses. Besides that, there are some specific areas of knowledge like Medicine, Law, Architecture etc., which take 5-years of training at the end of which the student acquires Master degree. But this is "only in case when the training is not recommended to be provided by separate Bachelor's and Master's courses"¹⁴ The training in master courses ensure profound fundamental training, combined with specialization in concrete specialty, according to the Higher Education Act.

Doctoral degree is the last degree in Bulgaria's tree-cycle higher education system. It took 3-years after the master degree or 4-years when is in part-time form. The Doctorates is based on individual syllabi, which is to be approved by the Department Board. The Department Board

¹³BULGARIA'S HIGHER EDUCATION SYSTEM AND THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BOLOGNA PROCESS, Dr Rumiana Marinova-Christidi

¹⁴http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_BG_EN.pdf

also appoints the supervisor. To be acquired doctoral degree, person should prepare at the end of the study process a defence of a dissertation thesis. Doctoral degree can be acquired in universities as well as in accredited scientific organizations such as Bulgarian Academy of Sciences and The Academy of Agriculture.

The number of students in Higher education institutions

The total number of the students in Bulgaria's higher education, according to the National Statistic Institute, is 285 292 for the year 2011/2012.¹⁵ This number is allocated among different educational qualification degrees, defined by the legislation – ‘professional bachelor’, ‘bachelor’, ‘master’ and ‘doctor’.

There are 16.2 thousands students enrolled for the acquisition of the ‘professional bachelor’ degree. This kind of education is provided by the colleges. There are public colleges as well as private. According to NSI 47.7% of those enrolled in colleges are enrolled in private colleges, in nominal that makes 7.7 thousands students trained in private colleges for the 2011/2012 data period.

In terms of educational subject areas most of the students are training in ‘Economy and administration’ – 34.8%, ‘Sports, tourism and hotels management’ – 19.1%, and ‘Engineering and technical professions’ – 18.6% of all.

The number of the students for acquiring of bachelor and master degree is 261.4 thousands for the year 2011/2012. In public universities are enrolled 219.2 thousands of all enrolled students for acquiring of bachelor and master degree, while in private higher schools 44.9 thousand are enrolled, or 17 % of all students. If we take the data sets from the previews years, there is an increase in the numbers of the students in both the public and private higher schools. For example, during the period of 2010/2011 according to the data provided by National Statistic Institute there were 215.3 thousand students in public universities in comparison with 40.3 thousand students in the private higher education institutions¹⁶. The increase of the number of the students attending higher education is more visible if we look the data from the year 2007/2008. For the 5 year period, the increase in the numbers of the students is by 27.3 thousand more students enrolled in the higher schools in the 2011/2012 period in comparison with the 2007/2008 period, when the number of the students in both the private and public higher schools was 223.9 thousands.

¹⁵<http://www.nsi.bg/otrasal.php?otr=23&a1=782&a2=783&a3=784#cont>

¹⁶[Education in the Republic of Bulgaria 2012](#), National Statistical Institution

There are some shifts in the numbers of the students enrolled in public schools and in private schools. For the year 2011/2012 one can observe incensement in the number of the students enrolled in private universities in comparison with the previews years. For the year 2010/2011 the number of the students enrolled in private higher schools was 40.3 thousands. There is increase in the numbers in past year. This is due to the fact that one of the biggest private colleges transformed into private university last year.¹⁷

In the structure of the educational filed most of the students are training in “Economy and administration” – 23.0%, followed by “Engineering and technical professions” – 13.9%, “Social sciences and human behaviour” – 12.3%. The specialties in the fields like “ Natural sciences” and “Mathematics and statistics” are less preferable by the students. According to the data for the present period (e.g. 2011/2012) only 0.5% of the total number of the students are training in “Natural sciences” and 0.2% - in “Mathematics and statistics”.

The number of the newly enrolled students for “doctor” degree by 2011/2012 period is 4 703. Here again we can see increase in the number of the enrolled by 14.8%, or 608 in nominal manner in comparison with the data for 2010/2011. The number of the students in Doctoral programmes by 2011 is 1.7 thousands.

By fields of training most of the enrolled in doctor degree attend in Engineering and Technology, Social Sciences, Natural Sciences and Healthcare.

However, the main trend is clear. There is an increase in the numbers of people enrolled in the higher schools according to the data from the past 5 years. This may be due to some changes in the legislation regarding admission procedures. For example, after some amendments in the higher education act the universities are allowed to admit students without admission exams on the ground of the results from the state exams after the secondary level of education. Except that, the higher schools can choose their preferable kind of examination. After all, this is part of their autonomy. In the past years, higher education schools tend to simplify the models of admission. Some of the most popular models are participation in preliminary entrance examinations, double entrance examinations dates, more ranking, entry test etc.¹⁸

¹⁷Ibid

¹⁸http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/eurybase/national_summary_sheets/047_BG_EN.pdf

That reflects on the number of the youths aged 19-23 years, who are enrolled in higher education institutions. According to the National Statistical Institute the net rate of the 19-23 years old enrolled in the higher education institutions is 42.6%.

Higher education system in Croatia

Legislation covering the field of tertiary education

Croatian higher education is primarily regulated by the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education which came into force in August 2003 and established a binary system which supports the professional education offered in polytechnics, schools of professional higher education (or colleges) and, exceptionally, universities on the one hand, and academic education which is conducted solely in universities, on the other. The main differences between these two types of higher education institutions are that universities, unlike institutions which provide only professional education, are obliged to engage in research; their teachers must have appropriate ranking in the scientific community and apply their scientific knowledge and research in the educational process; universities are allowed to independently perform initial accreditation of their study programmes (public universities only), and establish constituent units such as faculties and academies, which are legally independent entities. Both types of higher education institutions can organise and conduct professional study programmes and issue first and second cycle degrees (universities – academic and professional, other higher education institutions – only professional), but only universities can implement third cycle education. The Act treats private and public higher education institutions equally.

Types of tertiary education institutions

Croatian higher education used to be concentrated at the major universities, but in the past years new public universities have been established (Dubrovnik, Zadar and Pula). In addition to this, the incentive for polycentric development of higher education has continued in Croatia since 2007, with the Ministry of Science, Education and Sports and the Development and Employment Fund of the Republic of Croatia investing EUR 8 million to support the establishment and development of professional study programmes outside of traditional higher education centres. Public higher education institutions are those established by the

state. Private universities, polytechnics and schools of professional higher education can be established by the founders in the manner prescribed by the law and regulations relating to the establishment of institutions. Counties, towns and municipalities can establish schools of professional higher education by decisions of their representative bodies. All higher education institutions in Croatia are non-profit institutions and perform their duties as a public service. According to the database of the Agency for Science and Higher Education there are 119 recognised higher education institutions in Croatia; 10 are universities, 15 are polytechnics and 27 are schools of professional higher education/ colleges. In addition to this, there are 67 faculties and academies which are parts of universities, but legally recognised as separate and independent legal entities. While most higher education institutions are publicly owned, of the total number of institutions 3 universities, 2 polytechnics and 24 schools of professional higher education are private. Traditional universities (Zagreb, Split, Osijek, Rijeka) are not functionally integrated, but the recently founded ones are (Zadar, Dubrovnik and Pula).

Types of tertiary education programmes and qualifications

The Act on Academic and Professional Titles and Academic Degree was passed in September 2007 and established an overarching system of titles for students graduating from Bologna study programmes, as well as a framework for comparison of pre-Bologna and Bologna titles. Academic degree courses are organised according to the system of transferable ECTS credits and have three cycles: undergraduate, graduate and postgraduate. Professional degree courses also award ECTS credits but are organised in two cycles. According to the database of the Agency for Science and Higher Education, Croatian higher education institutions offered more than 1200 study programmes in 2009/10. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics, in the academic year 2009/10 there were 141 487 students who followed regular courses in Croatia in the first and second cycles, and an additional 30 476 students who have taken all their courses but have not yet passed all their programme examinations. In 2009/10, 22 034 were enrolled in polytechnics, 9 027 in schools of professional higher education, and 114 202 in universities. Of these, 110 835 students are in the two-cycle degree system, while the remainder are those who have started their studies before the introduction of the three cycles (the so-called 'pre-Bologna' or 'old 3 system' students). In 2009, a total of 444 students graduated at the doctoral level, and 965 at the Master level. Of all students graduating at the Master level, 595 were in social sciences, 88 in natural sciences and 86 in technical sciences. The EU/CoE/UNESCO format of the diploma supplement was established in Croatia through

the Ordinance on the Content of Diplomas and Diploma Supplements in January 2005. Amendments to this Ordinance that came into force in April 2007 ensure that all students graduating from the reformed Bologna study programmes at Croatian higher education institutions receive their diploma supplements automatically and free of charge in Croatian and English and in the EU/CoE/UNESCO format.

Distribution of responsibilities

The distribution of responsibilities is regulated by the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education and does not vary with regard to the level, although public universities do have a somewhat wider scope of responsibilities than other higher education institutions regarding research and quality assurance. The Ministry of Science, Education and Sports (MSES) is the administrative body responsible for planning, funding and monitoring the overall education system. MSES performs administrative and other activities relating to: the higher education system, securing financial and material conditions for work, professional education and permanent education of teachers, accommodation, food and other issues relating to student welfare, and legal supervision of higher education institutions. MSES is working closely with other responsible bodies, such as the National Council for Science, the National Council for Higher Education, the Science and Higher Education Funding Council, the Rectors' Conference, the Council of Polytechnics and Schools of Professional Higher Education and the National Committee for Ethics. In addition, MSES closely cooperates with other independent institutions such as the Agency for Science and Higher Education, the Agency for Mobility and EU Programmes and the Agency for Vocational Education, as well as other partners such as the Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, the Ministry of Economy, Labour and Entrepreneurship, the Croatian Chamber of Economy, the Chamber of Crafts, the Croatian Employment Service and the Croatian Association of Employers. The National Council for Science is an expert and advisory body of the Croatian Parliament responsible for development and quality of science in the Republic of Croatia. The Croatian Parliament, at the recommendation of the Government, appoints members of both Councils. Ideally, members are representatives of all areas of science and arts, and, regarding the Council for Science, scientists employed in industry. The National Council for Science also has area councils which are divided according to the fields of study: natural sciences, technical sciences, biomedicine and health, biotechnology, social sciences, humanities and arts. The Science and Higher Education Funding Council is an expert body of the Councils. The

Rectors' Conference currently consists of all public university rectors. A representative of the Council of Polytechnics and Schools of Professional Higher Education participates in the work of the Conference, but has no voting rights. The Rectors' Conference decides on issues of common interest for the development of universities. The Council of Polytechnics and Schools of Professional Higher Education consists of deans of all polytechnics and schools of professional higher education. The Council decides on issues of common interest for the development of polytechnics and schools of professional higher education. The Committee for Ethics in Science and Higher Education promotes ethical principles and values in science and higher education, in business relations, in public relations, in the application of current technologies and in environmental protection. The Agency for Science and Higher Education is an independent national body responsible for assessing scientific research and assuring quality in higher education, and recognizing diplomas and qualifications through the ENIC/NARIC. Furthermore, since 2009, the Agency is also responsible for collecting information on Croatian higher education and scientific developments, for providing support to the implementation of the state matura (national exams for graduates from secondary schools), and for administering the centralised applications and admissions to higher education. The Agency for Mobility and the EU Programmes provides support for ECTS coordinators at higher education institutions.

Governing bodies of the Higher Education Institutions

On the basis of the Act on Scientific Activity and Higher Education and accompanying Rules and Procedures, higher education institutions organise their activities according to their statutes, and a number of acts regulating specific topics (i.e. Study Regulations, Ethical Codex, Regulation of Financial Issues, etc.). They appoint representatives to the Rectors' Conference, propose the criteria for the selection of academic staff, work closely with the Councils for Science and Higher Education and regulate other issues within the scope of responsibility of the academic institutions. The Rector, the Senate and the University Advisory Board govern the university. This is the minimum standard required by law, but universities may create additional management and advisory bodies within the scope of the institutional autonomy. In addition, a university may entrust the management of its business or part of it to a certain body (managing director, managing board or similar actors). The decision-making body is the Senate. It is composed of teaching staff, which make up at least 60 % of the body, student representatives elected by the students (at least 15 % of the

members) and representatives of other employees. The University Board has 6 or 12 members, with half of them appointed by the Senate (at least one is a student), and half of them appointed by the founder, local government bodies and the Chamber of Commerce. The Dean, an expert council (usually the Faculty Council) and other bodies, as stipulated by the university statute or other acts, govern the faculty and the academy of arts. It is expected that in 2010 a new law will be introduced which may change the current organisation of universities and their governing bodies. The Dean, the Professional Council, the Governing Board and other professional and advisory bodies govern the polytechnics and schools of professional higher education. The Dean is elected by the Professional Council and approved by the Governing Board. The Professional Council of polytechnics and schools of professional higher education consists of teachers, associates and students (at least 15 % of its members are elected by students). The Governing Board has five members. The founder appoints three and the Professional Council elects two members. The Director, the Scientific Council, the Governing Board and other bodies, as stipulated by the statute or amendments based on the statute, govern the institutes. The Governing Board is composed of members appointed by the founder and members elected by the Scientific Council of the institute. According to the 2007 Act on Student Council and other Student Organisations, the main body representing students is the Student Council. Student representatives are elected to the governing bodies of all institutions of higher education: university senates, councils of polytechnics, the Agency for Science and Higher Education Accreditation Council, etc. By law, all higher education institutions should have a student ombudsman who is appointed by the student representative body and is given the authority to discuss student complaints with the management of the institution, advise students on their statutory and legal rights and assist them in any disciplinary cases.

Students' contributions and financial support

Every year, the universities autonomously determine the admission quotas. Within these quotas the universities normally assign a certain number of students who are exempt from paying tuition in full or in part. Since 2008, the Ministry has passed a decision to support second cycle students and has signed contracts with universities undertaking to reimburse tuition fees for full time students enrolled in second cycle programmes, therefore making second cycle education free of charge for these students. The same will be implemented for the first year of first-cycle students in 2010/11. According to MSES, until 2010 around 60 %

of the first cycle full-time students paid no tuition fees at public higher education institutions in Croatia. Their costs of study were paid from the state budget through an indirect system of financial support. The remaining 40 % of the students paid tuition fees determined by higher education institutions, which on average amount to around a third of the actual costs of study. The exact percentage of the tuition fee they pay varies among higher education institutions and students, according to their overall success: their ranking on the admission examinations, grades and the number of ECTS credits a student has earned. Part-time students (nontraditional) and postgraduate students always pay tuition fees and do not receive any benefits provided by the national student welfare system. The annual tuition fees are between EUR 700 and 1 400 per year for first and second cycle students, and between EUR 1 400 and 3 000 for postgraduate students. The MSES formed a Committee in 2009 to develop a new legal framework in higher education and to evaluate the current legislative framework that pertains to the funding of costs for studying in Croatia. The Government of the Republic of Croatia passed a decision in March 2010 to provide education in first cycle programmes free of charge. Contracts have been signed with the higher education institutions and the implementation of this decision will start in the academic year 2010/2011. All students at private higher education institutions pay tuition fees, which range between EUR 1 500 – 15 000 annually. Private HEIs might provide tuition fee remission for some of their students, but this is not regulated at national level. All full-time students in Croatia receive a food subsidy (the price of a full meal for students is EUR 0.8 and the rest is covered by the state), health insurance, tax exemption on student employment, subsidy for private accommodation, tax relief on student parents' income. In addition, most full-time students in Croatia have full or substantial subsidies for local transportation costs (funded by the local communities). Students who live in student dormitories pay around EUR 30 per month for their lodging (prices vary in different dormitories and different cities). There is also a system of annual state grants for several categories of students: exceptional students, students of lower economic or social status, and students with disabilities. Since there is no official data on study costs or the access of all social groups to higher education, MSES and other stakeholders have joined the Tempus project Towards Equitable and Transparent Access to HE, which will be implemented by the end of 2012 with the goal of evaluating the current system of student support, providing data and producing guidelines for policy changes. The Republic of Croatia has also joined the EUROSTUDENT IV comparative study of student welfare.

Higher education system in Moldova

Ministry of Education

The Ministry of Education (ME) is the central body of public administration, which promotes the state policy in the sphere of education, elaborates and implements development strategies and quality assurance strategies in education.

The leadership is exercised by the Minister, delegating powers to deputy ministers. In performing its duties, the Minister is assisted by his cabinet, which may consist of counselors, consultants and other relevant personnel.

Regarding the Higher Education, the Ministry of Education has the following main tasks¹⁹:

- a) To propose national policies and strategies for higher education;
- b) To supervise and to verify the organization and the functioning of higher education according to the laws, the researches, the financial management and the quality assurance in higher education;
- c) To organize the recognition and the equivalence of diplomas and certificates according to internal rules and European standards, also the recognition of diplomas and certificates obtained in universities in other countries.
- d) To organize the automatic recognition of university didactic functions and the quality of doctoral supervisor, according to its own methodology;
- e) To develop and to propose the draft budget for higher education as part of the education budget and research budget;
- f) To predict the development of higher education in relation to the labour market;
- g) To publish an annual Activity Report.

National Council for Accreditation and Attestation

The assessment and the accreditation of science and innovation organizations, as well as the attestation of scientific and scientific-pedagogical personnel of higher qualification is

¹⁹Decision on the approval of the Regulation, structure and number of the central apparatus of the Ministry of Education no. 653 of 06.11.2009

conducted by the National Council for Accreditation and Attestation²⁰. Within the National Council operates the Commission on accreditation of scientific and innovation organizations and the Commission on attestation of scientific and scientific-teaching staff. The supreme body of the National Councils is the plenary sitting of both committees that convene at least twice a year.

Modes of funding the Higher Education System

The Ministry of Finances is the main institution empowered to allocate money for the education system.

In the last six years there has been a growing presence of the state in funding education, especially of the higher education. The state guarantees an annual allocation of budgetary funds for education of at least 7% of gross domestic product (GDP). As a result, the percentage of the total spending of budgetary resources for higher education has substantially increased, while the financial resources gained from tuition fees are decreasing.

Universities funded by public money can be divided into three categories²¹:

1. Universities depending mostly on the budgetary resources;
2. Universities depending equally to budgetary resources and to theirs;
3. Universities having mostly their own resources than public money.

Most of them belong to the first category, only the Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova (with 30.69% of budgetary resources and 69.14% of its own) and the State University of Moldova (44.19% - budgetary resources, 55.70% - its own) remain in the category of universities with its own resources exceeding the budgetary means²².

It should be mentioned that the government is opting for a reform, establishing the university autonomy with a tendency to reduce the budget financial allocations. The regulation regarding the functioning of the state higher education institutions in conditions of financial autonomy enters into force on 1 January 2013 and will be implemented in 16 institutions. This mechanism will allow state higher education institutions to manage their own financial resources independently, in parallel with the allocated resources from the state budget. In this

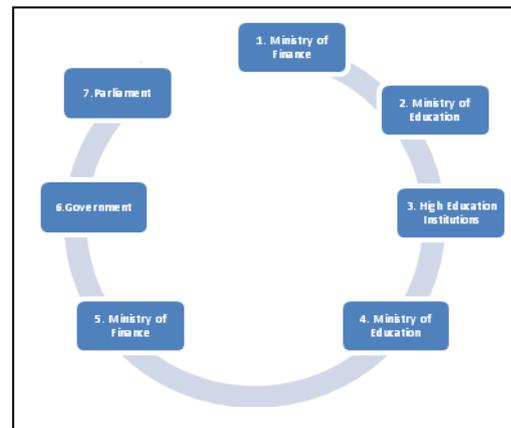
²⁰Code on Science and Innovation of Moldova no. 259-XV of July 15, 2004

²¹Study "The higher education system in Moldova in the context of the Bologna process: 2005-2011", Chişinău, 2012, p.48

²²National budget (consolidated). <http://www.mf.gov.md/ro/BOOST/>

manner, the state higher education institution will be able to plan independently its own expenses²³.

At the moment, the education funding is a form of public investment. Financing planning procedure occurs as follows: the Ministry of Finance sets the spending limit for Institutions of Higher Education for a financial year and gives to ME the methodology of developing the draft budget. Subsequently, ME shares to the subordinated universities the established limit. The educational institutions make proposals for the income from their own resources and present them to the ministries. Afterwards, the public authorities present the budget proposals to the Ministry of Finance, at a fixed date²⁴.



Based on the information received, the Ministry of Finance prepares the draft annual budget law and submits it to the Government and the Parliament for approval. After the approval of the Annual Budget, the Ministry of Finance prepares the monthly allocations.

Public educational institutions can benefit from additional funding sources²⁵:

1. income from paid services, from research contracts, consultancy/expertise and other educational/scientific services, according to the law;
2. revenues from sale items made in the process of study, from lease/rental of premises, equipment, land and other property in public ownership;
3. grants, sponsorships, donations and revenues from collaboration/international cooperation and donations from individuals and businesses;
4. other legal sources.

The tuition fee shall be calculated based on the expected expenditure needed for the studies, except for the payment of scholarships and expenses for the maintenance of dorms. Payments for part-time studies represent 50% of the payments established for the full-time studies. The tuition includes: staff costs and current expenses (maintenance, teaching materials, equipment purchase and assets needed for the training). The state budget covers the following expenses: salaries, scholarships, utilities, maintenance and allowances for orphan students.

The monthly fee for student housing is calculated based on the cost of expenses incurred by each educational institution as follows:

²³"The expansion of university autonomy by implementing financial autonomy for state universities." <http://www.edu.md/>

²⁴State Budget Law for 2012 no.282 of 27.12.2011

²⁵Education Law no.547 from 21.07.1995

1. students studying funded by the state budget and on a contract basis in state institutions of higher education – pay no more than 40 percent of the actual cost calculated;
2. master's and doctoral students studying on a contract basis and other tenants – pay the full cost of expenses.

The structure of the higher education system: Three cycles of studies

Considering the age-related psycho-physiological particularities, the education system is organized into levels and stages. Higher education is the fifth component of the six, in the general education system.

All higher education institutions are public or private institutions. According to the National Bureau of Statistics regarding the activity of higher education institutions in the academic year 2012/2013, the higher education network consists of 34 units, including 19 state institutions and 15 - private.

At the same time, studies are organized as follows:

1. Full-time studies,
2. Part-time education,
3. Distance learning,
4. Individual study.

Of all the students enrolled in higher education studies, 68.6% of them are on full-time studies and the rest are part-time²⁶(see Annex 1, Table 2).

Most of the students enrolled in higher education, namely 72.3%, are on a contract-based study.

The Bologna Process

In 2005, Moldova joined the Bologna process whereby higher education, except the medical and pharmaceutical education, is organized in two cycles: first cycle-undergraduate higher education, second cycle –master's degree. The reforms of the Education Law no. 547 of 21.07.1995 have left untouched the provisions about doctoral studies. Thus, the doctoral studies will be perceived as the third cyclone in the general architecture of higher education in Moldova, since 1 January 2013.

²⁶"The activity of higher education institutions in the academic year 2012/13", <http://www.statistica.md/>, Table 1..

Switching to the two-cycle structure of education in Moldova was made by the transition from the old model 4+1²⁷ to the new models 3+2 and 4+1.5²⁸. However, some faculties have kept the old pattern 4+1. This can be explained by the fact that the reform required the implementation of some radical changes: reduction in hours, reduction or even disappearance of the general subjects from the curricula, compressing the volume of the material, studies generalizing to the detriment of its depth.

The distribution of students on courses for the academic year 2012/2013 was as follows²⁹: 80.8% of the total students are enrolled in graduate degree and 15.1% in master's level studies.

In particular, the situation of the three surveys in educational institutions shows the following distribution:

Nr.	Educational institution	Organization of the faculties in cycle studies 3+2	Organization of the faculties in cycle studies 4+1/ 4+1,5
1	State University of Moldova	92%	8%
2	Academy of Economic Studies of Moldova	83%	17%
3	"A. Russo" State University of Bălți	25%	75%

Organization of the first cycle studies

Admission to the first cycle is organized on a competitive basis according to the obtained marks on the high school graduation exam Baccalaureate – this is the previous stage of higher education. For certain faculties, such as journalism, communication or acting, there are some additional exams, like acting or written tests.

The first cycle university studies ends up with passing a national exam and presenting a final paper – graduation thesis, in order to graduate from the university, to have a bachelor degree.

The license diploma obtained allows the owner to continue the studies in the second cycle and to be employed.

²⁷The 4 +1requires 4 years of study for the first cycle(bachelor) and 1year for the second cycle master

²⁸Cornelius Ciurea, Vyacheslav Berbeca, Sergiu Lipcean, Marin Gurin "The higher education system in Moldovan in the context of the Bologna process: 2005-2011", Chisinau,2012,page 12

²⁹"The activity of higher education institutions in the academic year 2012/13", <http://www.statistica.md/>, Table 2.

Organization of the second cycle studies

The admission to higher education masters is made on a competitive basis. In fact, the contest is only available to those who compete for government scholarships.

Master's degree studies are finalized by master's thesis. Graduates are awarded the title of Master in the studied profile and specialization. Master's degree gives the right to hold didactic posts in higher education institution so scientific research and participate in the competition for admission to PhD.

An important aspect of the Bologna Process was the introduction of the Diploma Supplement for both cycles (Cycle I and Cycle II). It issued for free to all the graduates, in two languages: in Romanian and in foreign language (English, in the case of Moldova). This is a description of knowledge ("know"), skills ("knowing how to do") and attitudes ("know to be").

Organization of the third cycle studies

Third cycle of the Bologna Process is a step in the implementation process. PhD enrolment is made by submitting an application for this purpose. The admissions made on a competitive basis for the holders of Master's diplomas.

The doctorate is achieved by scientific research over 3years in full-time studies and 4 years in part-time courses. The total number of PhD students in the academic year 2011/2012 amounted to 1500 people³⁰ (see Annex 2, Table 4).

The doctoral studies end up with public presenting of a thesis and conferring the scientific title of doctor.

Academic Mobility

The education system ensures the possibility of moving from one institution to another, based on the Regulation regarding the mobility of students and teachers in higher education institutions.

³⁰Doctoral and postdoctoral activity in 2011 <http://www.statistica.md/newsview.php?l=ro&idc=168&id=3742>

Academic mobility programs can be lengthy or short term, in the form of internships, continuous training and research. These programs should be carried out either nationally or internationally.

Academic mobility between universities occurs as: program studies in another university from the same country during a semester/ year of study, program studies in a university abroad, internships and research in educational institutions abroad.

For the doctoral students, the maximum period of on-going mobility program is 9 months of continuous studies.

Legislation allows and encourages also the teacher mobility. Teachers in higher education institutions can participate in mobility programs based on individual contracts with the educational institutions at home and abroad, by supporting the costs on their own.

Student Organizations

Within the educational institutions, networks of student organizations are working as associations, councils, alliances, senates/unions, etc. Student organizations should defend the rights of students and ensure their compliance.

Organizations of a professional nature are supporting from the professional point of view the students, by implementing projects or programs developed mainly by the private sector. Such organizations are in every university in Moldova, but their efficiency varies from one university to another.

Students evaluating the studies

Evaluating the student satisfaction on universities and identifying their requirements is achieved through the procedure "Assessing quality of studies".

The steps of evaluation by students are:

1. To identify the market needs (the requirements on the labour market, the needs of businesses and professionals and their requirements to graduate skills, etc.).
2. To identify legal requirements (laws, government decisions, legal documents and decisions issued by the Ministry of Education);
3. To identify student needs and their satisfaction (the quality of university organization, the training, the teachers skills, the taught courses quality, etc.).

4. To analyse the Faculty/Department capability to meet the requirements and expectations of students;
5. Actions to meet the requirements and expectations of students;
6. Evaluation of results.

The requirements and student satisfaction data are obtained using a questionnaire applied to the students at the end of the academic year. The obtained survey results are processed, analysed and presented to the faculty in an Evaluation report of the students 'requirements and satisfaction.

The analysis results are presented to the faculty council, department head or university management. The administrative staff determines the requirements that they can meet, depending on the available resources, and sets the activities to meet the established requirements. The identified requirements are periodically reviewed by the Faculty Council, appreciating the resource availability and the requirements impact on the quality of university services and taking immediately the decision of requirement satisfaction or rejection.

Annex 1

Table 2. Students in higher education institutions by type of education and forms of ownership, in the academic years 2011/12 - 2012/13, persons

	2011/12			2012/13		
	Total students	which on:		Total students	which on:	
		budget	contract		budget	contract
Total	103.956	29.175	74.781	102.458	28.340	74.118
full-time	73.840	27.224	46.616	70.253	26.459	43.794
part-time	30.116	1.951	28.165	32.205	1.881	30.324
Public institutions	84.946	29.175	55.771	83.008	28.340	54.668
full-time	61.196	27.224	33.972	57.982	33.511	31.523
part-time	23.750	1.951	21.799	25.026	14.128	23.145
Private institutions	19.010	-	19.010	19.450	-	19.450
full-time	12.644	-	12.644	12.271	-	12.271
part-time	6.366	-	6.366	7.179	-	7.179

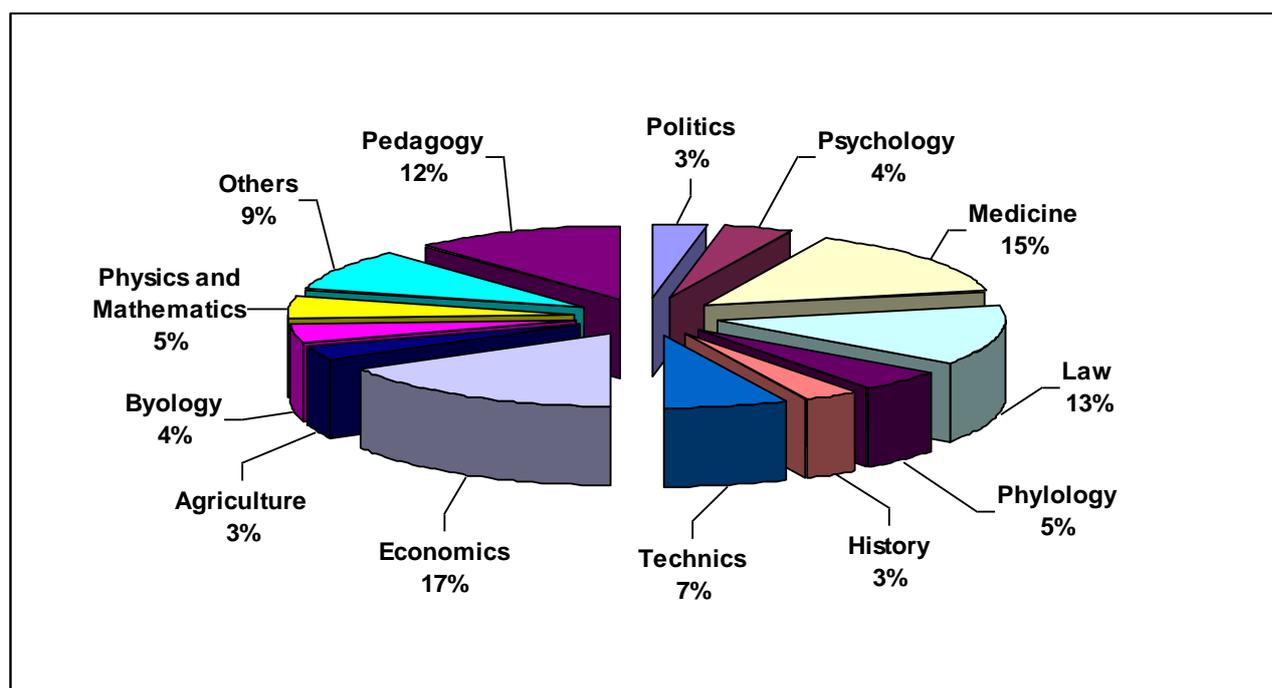
Table 3. Students in higher education institutions by cycles and forms of ownership, in the academic years 2011/12 - 2012/13, persons

	2011/12				2012/13			
	Total students	in institutions:			Total students	in institutions:		
		private	state			private	state	
			total	budget			total	budget
Total	103.956	19.010	84.946	29.175	102.458	19.450	83.008	28.340
Bachelor's degree (1 st cycle)	85.345	16.865	68.480	20.147	82.819	17.160	65.659	18.630
Master's degree (2 nd cycle)	14.438	2.145	12.293	5.845	15.455	2.290	13.165	6.625
Higher education in medicine and pharmacy	4.173	–	4.173	3.183	4.184	–	4.184	3.085

Table 4. Main indicators of doctorate studies, in 2010-2011, persons

	2010			2011		
	Total	studies:		Total	studies:	
		full-time	part-time		full-time	part-time
The total number of doctoral students	1550	560	990	1556	488	1068
- scientific research institutions	359	161	198	389	147	242
- higher education institutions	1191	399	792	1167	341	826
Total enrolled	461	172	289	437	152	285
- scientific research institutions	121	59	62	146	54	92
- higher education institutions	340	113	227	291	98	193
Total graduates	422	113	309	318	157	161
- scientific research institutions	104	51	53	72	47	25
- higher education institutions	318	62	256	246	110	136

Figure 1. Share of doctoral students according to scientific fields, in 2011



Higher education system in Serbia

The existing bodies in the Higher Education System in Serbia are as follows:

- ❖ Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development;
- ❖ National Council for Higher Education;
- ❖ Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance;
- ❖ Conference of the Universities of Serbia;
- ❖ Conference for Vocational Higher Education;
- ❖ Student Conferences (Student Conference of Serbian Universities and Students' Conference of Academies of Vocational Studies).³¹

Ministry of Education, Science and Technological Development carries out both state government duties referring to research, planning and development of higher education and government supervision of higher education, construction, equipment and maintenance of higher education and student standard buildings in the best interest of the Republic of Serbia; organization, work evaluation and supervision of professional development of the employees in the field of education; validation and equalization of public documents acquired abroad; improvement of social care for gifted students; improvement of social care for the students with special needs, as well as providing conditions for the participation and realization of projects within the jurisdiction of the ministry from the EU pre-accession funds, donations and other forms of developmental aid.

The Ministry proposes the higher education policy to the Government and supervises the development of the higher education. At the proposition of the National Council it plans the enrollment policy of state universities and issues work permits for them. Furthermore, it determines the content of diplomas and diploma supplements and takes care of the inclusion of the higher-education institutions in the process of higher-education qualifications acknowledgement in Europe. This Ministry plays an important role in the distribution of financial assets from the National budget. According to the current legislature, only higher-education institutions founded by the Republic of Serbia have the right to be partly financed from the public funds. These are funds for material expenses and current investment maintenance, salaries of employees, library funds, equipment, education of employees,

³¹Web page of the Ministry of education and the Law on Higher Education,
<http://www.mpn.gov.rs/sajt/page.php?page=14>
<http://www.mpn.gov.rs/propisi/propis.php?id=14>

publishing and international cooperation. Higher-education institutions are entitled to their own income: tuition fees from self-financing students, presents and donations, providing commercial services, sponsorships, etc.

National Council for Higher Education is in charge of the development and quality improvement in higher education. It supervises the development of the higher education and its compatibility with European and international standards and proposes the higher-education policy to the Ministry. It also gives opinion on the enrollment policy at higher-education institutions, as well as on the procedure of regulation adoption relevant to the higher education. It proposes to the Government the regulations and work standards of higher-education institutions, as well as material funds for their realization. The Council is obliged to get the opinion about the issue from the Conference of the Universities of Serbia and Conference for Vocational Higher Education beforehand.

The Council determines scientific, artistic, that is, professional areas within natural sciences and mathematics, social studies and humanities, medical, technical and technological sciences and arts. It has prior to take into account the proposition of the Conference of the Universities of Serbia and Conference for Vocational Higher Education. It determines standards for self-evaluation and higher-education institutions quality assessment and issuance of work permits. It also determines standards and procedures for the external quality assessment of higher-education institutions and for the accreditation of higher-education institutions and study programmes. Importantly, this institution has the authority in the second degree decision-making upon complaints in the process of accreditation.

It also has the authority to recommend the promotion of teachers and make the list of vocational, academic and scientific titles with reference to corresponding study levels in corresponding areas and abbreviations of vocational, academic and scientific titles.

Commission for Accreditation and Quality Assurance is formed by the National Council to perform the accreditation proceedings. It proposes to the National Council the standards for the issuance of work permits, standards and procedures for the accreditation of higher-education institutions, as well as accreditation of study programmes.

The Commission also proposes the standards for self-evaluation and quality assessment of higher-education institutions and standards and procedures for the external quality assessment of higher-education institutions. It also helps and cooperates with the higher-education institutions and units within them in providing the improvement of their quality, takes care of the harmonization of the standards and procedures in the field of accreditation, within the

European domain of higher education and gives opinions in the process of work permit issuance.

Conference of the Universities was formed in order to coordinate the work and determine the mutual policy. It also works to serve the common interest by discussing the common interest matters for the improvement of educational and scientific, that is, educational and artistic activity at a university. The Conference coordinates the attitudes and activities of the universities, particularly in the area of the enrollment policy and gives opinions on the standards for the quality assessment of educational, scientific and research, artistic and professional work. It also proposes the list of professional, academic and scientific titles in corresponding areas and abbreviations of those titles, as well as the measures for the improvement of the material position of a university and student standard.

Conference for Vocational Higher Education was founded in order to coordinate the work and determine the mutual policy. It also works in the common interest. It has the same jurisdiction as the Conference of the Universities, but in the area of vocational studies.

The Conference of the Universities of Serbia and Conference for Vocational Higher Education were founded to work in the common interest of students as partners in the process of higher education.

The activity of higher education is performed by the following institutions:

- 1) University;
- 2) Faculty, that is, art academy, within the university;
- 3) Academy of vocational studies;
- 4) College;
- 5) College of vocational studies.

University integrates functions of all institutions and units in its structure, especially of the faculties. A University operates in the following way – it carries out the unified policy which aims to improve the quality of education, improvement of scientific and research work and art. In order to achieve these aims, the University determines uniform work standards for the departments and services and uniform standards for the formation of data bases for all units. It is also responsible for strategic planning, adoption of study programmes, providing quality control, as well as the enrollment policy. The University decides on the promotion of teachers, issuance of diplomas and diploma supplements, international cooperation, plan investments and employment policy.

Republic of Serbia is the founder and partial financier of the following universities:

- ❖ State university of Novi Pazar;
- ❖ University of Defence;
- ❖ University of Belgrade;
- ❖ University of Kragujevac;
- ❖ University of Arts, Belgrade;
- ❖ University of Nis;
- ❖ University of Novi Sad;
- ❖ University of Pristina with temporary headquarters in Kosovska Mitrovica.

A higher-education institution has a governing body, a managing body, professional bodies and the student parliament. The governing body of a higher-education institution is the Council. The managing body of a university is the Rector, and of a faculty - the Dean, of a vocational study academy - the President, of a high school and high school of vocational studies – the Principal. The professional body of a university is the Senate, and the professional body of a faculty, that is, of an art academy is the Teaching-Scientific, that is, Teaching-Artistic Council. The professional body of a higher-education institution decides about the matters of interest for the realization of education, scientific, research and artistic work. Student Parliament is the body of a higher-education institution and higher-education unit which consists of a governing body and enrolled students.

The Council adopts the Statute and financial plan, at the proposition of the professional body, and it also elects and dismisses the managing body. It adopts the report on business activity and annual turnover, as well as the plan of use for the investments, all at the proposition of the professional body. The Council also gives approval for the decisions on the management of the property of the higher-education institution and for the distribution of financial assets. It is authorised to determine the tuition fees amount, at the proposition of the professional body, as well as to adopt the bill on the disciplinary responsibility of students. The Council is obliged to file a report to the founder (in case of state universities, it is the Ministry of Education) on the business activity at least once a year.

The professional body of an independent higher-education institution brings the codex of professional ethics which determines the ethical principles regarding higher education, publishing scientific results, relationship to the intellectual property, relationships between teachers and associates, other employees and students, procedures in the presentation of a

higher-education institution and teachers, associates and students in legal transactions, as well as the relationship to the public and media.

Annex 1

Table 1. Students in higher education institution by forms of ownership and cycle of studies, institutions by forms of ownership and total number of professors in the academic year 2010/2011³²

	Total Students	Budget Financed	Total institutions	Teaching Staff	Class Assistants
Total	228.531	97.790	189	9.467	5.388
Female	127.154	57.815			
Male	101.337	39.927			
First cycle	184.237	78.810			
Second cycle	29.471	14.616	-	-	
Third cycle	5.206	953	-	-	
Public institutions	195.417		-	-	
Private institutions	33.114		-	-	

Number of students in tertiary education increased by 0.7% in 2010/2011 school year. Coverage of generation attending faculties and higher schools is about 41%, showing further tendency of slight increase.

³²http://webrzs.stat.gov.rs/WebSite/repository/documents/00/00/81/84/05_Obrzovanje.pdf

Table 2. Students according to faculty group affiliation³³

Education	16.764
Art	23.803
Social sciences,business and law	86.914
Natural sciences, mathematics and computing	22.599
Engineering, manufacturing and construction	32.528
Agriculture and veterinary	7.522
Health and welfare	20.219
Services	18.182

³³Ibid

RESEARCH

METHODOLOGY

The point of this cross-national research of corruption in high education

It is common knowledge that corruption in public institutions is detrimental to country's social, cultural and economic well-being. However, corruption in high education has both a special impact and a far-reaching occurrence, and that often goes unrecognized in mainstream public debates about corruption³⁴ (Rumyantseva, 2005:82). Besides preparing unqualified young professionals, and therefore damaging the human capital and economic well-being in a very tangible way³⁵, corruption in HE teaches young people distorted values and culture. That has a profound impact on the society as a whole: „If the public does not trust the education system to be fair or effective, more may be sacrificed than economic growth. It might be said that current leaders, whether in commerce, science, or politics, had acquired their positions through privilege rather than achievement. If the school system cannot be trusted, it may detract from a nation's sense of social cohesion, the principal ingredient of all successful modern societies“ (Heyneman, 2004: 638). This undoubtedly calls for increasing effort in detailed research of forms, incidences and causes of corruption in HE, but also in raising public awareness about these issues.

But, why is it justified to research corruption in HE in these 5 countries? Well, for starters, all these countries share more or less similar postsocialist experience. To a more or less similar extent, „collapsing public expenditures have driven all institutions to generate their own resources, for which there is no precedent, and no regulatory structure in place to give them guidance. One thing is abundantly clear: whenever rules and regulations are confusing, one must expect a high level of corruption“ (Heyneman, 2004: 645). Furthermore, the (formal)

³⁴It should be noted that large international organizations that put a large emphasis on facilitating the development of high education (World Bank and OECD) do not list corruption in HE among the relevant subtopics, nor do they conduct regular researches with methodologically established indicators. It seems that „bottom-up“, civil society (students' and experts') initiatives remain central in discussing and tackling this issue for the time being. Of the former, The Boston college Centre for International Higher Education (CIHE) has had significant presence in Southeastern Europe, having featured some local experts from Bulgaria, Croatia, Moldova and Serbia as authors of the research and publications.

³⁵Heyneman et al. (2008), using results from one of ACSN's previous researches among other data (Posliyski and Vatev, 2003), approximated the economic costs of HE corruption in Europe and Central Asia in terms of significant probability of individual income loss due to having a university degree from a known-to-be-corrupt institution. That's often a „signal“ recognized by private and, to a lesser extent some state employers. However, it must be noted that their results suggest that corruption in HEI does not affect individuals' chances for high or low income in our 5 countries (Heyneman et al, 2008: 16, n.25).

There is much more empirical work when the economic cost of corruption in general is concerned. Mutually connected generalized interpersonal trust („trust in strangers“) and perception of corruption are shown to account even for such measurable parameters of a nation's prosperity as the GDP and the manufacturing employment growth rates, at least among the lower-income countries, such as our 5; although, there is empirical evidence suggesting this also stands for high-income countries (Rothstein, 2005; see Uslaner, 2009 for the list of empirical works).

omnipresence of Bologna process as one of the key prerequisites both for siding with the global educational trends and for EU accession in some countries (Croatia, Macedonia, Moldova, Serbia), while in others as a guarantee for further integration with the rest of the EU (Bulgaria) is a fact that justifies the comparison, because it holds the formal (!) institutional dimension of higher education constant. On the other hand, it's precisely the differences in the actual application of the same institutional package what makes comparing the perceptions of HE corruption in these 5 countries interesting.

The research of HE corruption so far in our countries available to our knowledge shows three „gaps“ we hope to fill:

1) The problem of geographical scope: although there has been country - specific researches of this topic in the SEE (Southeast-European) region, there were only a few regional, ones that had comparison as their primary purpose. Existing regional corruption surveys include countries from the large number of states with substantially different geographical, cultural, economic, social and political contexts.

2) This leads us to another key problem we see in this researches from our viewpoint, one of thematic scope and research purposes: although they can serve the purpose of rough comparisons of „core“ general indicators, by no means these large researches that have been conducted so far can help in much needed deeper insight and understanding of the HE corruption issues. One general question about trust in public education workers in these surveys simply isn't enough for an issue with such profound societal reverberations. Therefore, these researches should be more „in depth“ and tackle the questions that stand behind the corruptive behaviour, for example, what are the attitudes towards people involved in it in terms of social contact and desired punishments.

Comparative research done by other expert groups or institutions (for example Boston college Centre for International Higher Education) although very valuable when it comes to specific aspects of corruption in HE, such as the question of nontransparent examination and accreditation systems that taper the quality of education and students' results, were restricted to desk research aimed at the institutional level, with little consideration of the most immediate stakeholders' (i.e. students' and „grassroots“ academic staff) opinion and experience with corruption³⁶. We turn to them in our research.

³⁶ see CIHE's website for the list of HE related research and publications (<http://www.bc.edu/content/bc/research/cihe>); especially interesting is the No. 68 (2012) of the Centre's quarterly

3) Finally, the research so far didn't result in a cross-nationally applicable research design of this topic. After all, it seems that ACSN-SEE itself has made the most topically relevant comparative researches in the region so far and therefore came closest to achieving this. However, these surveys covered specific subtopics, i.e. specific forms of corruption in HE, such as conditioned textbook selling, enrollment malpractices, student cheating, student fees and charges, examination professor changing, private tutoring, enrollment test tutoring, bribery and financial flows. Until now, they never tried to cover corruption in HE as a whole in a single questionnaire, and they asked somewhat different questions in different countries, which is a legitimate strategy of comparative research that takes the complexity of the phenomenon and the incommensurability of country-specific problems into account. We used the opposite strategy in this research, weighing its' setbacks against the advantages, which will be more elaborated in the methodology of the research subsection. For now let it be said that one of the principal reasons in favor of using this strategy is the fact that an established and proved, at least somewhat unified research design for this topic doesn't yet exist, if we talk about multiple - item survey aiming to cover different aspects of HE corruption at once, and all the more so if we talk about cross-nationally applicable survey. Besides gaining deeper insights into this problem area as a secondary objective, the primary objective of the research was to make a comparative analyses of corruption in HE of the five selected countries and therefore this methodology was developed. Furthermore, the developed methodology for cross-national measurement of the perception of corruption in HE can be further assessed and applied, in hope that future research won't have to start from scratch but from a certain cornerstone.

Methodology

The research integrated three tools:

- the quantitative research (survey conducted on students)
- the qualitative research (interviews with the academic staff)
- Public information requests

The largest emphasis and the most extensive resources are put in the first research tool, thus the Findings section is constituted primarily of the survey results. Excerpts from the interviews with the academic staff, that generally tackled the same issues as the surveys, are used to further illustrate quantitative results. Our third tool, requests for public information (we sent requests about various info regarding higher education, corruption included, to universities and other relevant institutions, to which they are legally obliged to answer) stand as a separate measure of institutional transparency and awareness of the corruption problem, although their outcome was compared to students' knowledge about cases of processing corruption at their universities - in this way, by putting students' knowledge of corruption cases against official record of occurrence of corruption at their universities we can see students' awareness of the corruption problem.

Goals, subject and purpose of the research

To summarize and expand on what's stated previously in the section, the goals of our quantitative research are as follows:

- to gain comparative insight into the students' perception of various forms of corruption in higher education
- to assess the prevalence of students' tolerance towards, and experience with corruption in HE
- to develop cross-nationally applicable instruments for measuring corruption in HE

For the sake of this research, the perception of corruption is defines as:

- students' tolerance towards various forms of corruption, expressed as:
 - 1) acceptance of these practices
 - 2) social distance³⁷ from students and academic staff involved in corruption and desired punishment for them
- students' experience with various forms of corruption, expressed as the range of social contact with them
- students' perception of prevalence of various forms of corruption

³⁷ Social distance describes the distance between different society groups, measuring the degree of closeness or acceptance felt toward other groups.

Secondary subtopics of the research, covered by less items than the above aspects of corruption perception, are the following:

- students' predisposition to combat corruption, expressed as willingness to report its' various forms; this also serves as one of the measures of tolerance towards corruption
- opinion on the reasons for students' involvement in corruption
- students' self-assessed knowledge on regulations in higher education
- students' awareness of cases of processing corruption and instances of students reporting it
- students' „recommendations“ of the institutional measures for combating corruption

Based on their common occurrence of corruption forms in 5 Network member countries³⁸, the following forms of corruption were chosen as the most important ones:

- Plagiarism (of student and scientific papers)
- Cheating (cribbing on exams, false personate on for writing homework)
- Embezzlement/fraud (illegally appropriating funds entrusted to a person's care)
- Bribery (conditioned textbook selling, paying for exams, admission in universities and dorms)
- Nepotism/favouritism (using personal contacts getting for higher grades, passing the exams and being admitted in universities and dorms)

To make comparison of different aspects of corruption perception (tolerance, experience, perception of prevalence) meaningful, and also to see how they vary according to different forms of corruption, we tried to associate each aspect of perception with at least one example of each form of corruption.

Since corruption in it's narrower sense always includes two sides in an exchange, for each of these forms at least two items were formulated, one with students, and one with professors/academic staff as initiators of corruption. In this way we tried to account for the level of how severe the corruption is: it can be said that the problem of corruption is more severe when the institutions' „officials“ (academic staff) initiate corruption than when its' „customers“ (students) do so, because the former generally meet with considerably larger

³⁸according to the ACSN previous research conducted in the period 2006/2011.

expectations in terms of responsibility and fairness. Also, in this way we tried to account for difference in students' attitudes when different actors are „in the spotlight“, or to put it differently, to test the hypothesis about student solidarity bias: this goes especially for items with social distance towards students and professors.

Although cheating and plagiarism do not fit into conventional definitions of corruption because they do not include two sides in the exchange, they comply with general characteristics of a corruptive behaviour, according to the broadest definition of corruption: „violation of the legally established barriers that exist between public office and private interests“ (Nye, 1967) they are corruptive behaviour – it's clear that cheaters and plagiarizers gain unfair advantages, circumvent the meritocratic selection mechanism and finally diminish the quality of education by violating publicly set rules, even if they do it alone. For our purpose, it's necessary to see if and how students' tolerance towards cheating and plagiarizing differs from tolerance towards other forms of corruption, more „common - sense“ and more often condemned in public.

Finally, when it comes to directed hypotheses, the two stated here are the only ones in the pre-research elaboration, because the primary purpose of this research is exploratory and descriptive, and this is because we can draw on very little previous research of this kind.

Samples

In every country, the survey was conducted on samples larger than the subsamples that finally entered the regional sample. The data collected on initial samples will serve for forthcoming national reports. For this comparative report, we chose only the largest subsamples of the largest universities in our 5 countries, with the exception of Bulgaria (Sofia university didn't officially approve the research, so Plovdiv university as the second largest university in Bulgaria was taken in the sample), because the initial samples were far from representative on the national level, and therefore inadequate for cross-national comparison. These subsamples were relatively the largest, and therefore most adequate for comparison. Although the universities instead of national subsamples prevent us from far-reaching conclusions in cross-national comparison, they still give some justification for it, because these are the largest and generally the most prestigious universities, in which the public takes by far the most active interest. In the context of centralization problem, pertaining to all of our 5 countries, this is actually an expected feature, and it's one common characteristic of our subsamples that makes them eligible for comparison at least to a certain extent.

Our self-administered questionnaire was applied only on first cycle students (1st, 2nd, 3rd and 4th years), in order to lessen the populations/samples ratio. The subsamples are **stratified proportional**. At the first stage, the faculty structure of the university was selected as the primary stratification criterion, followed by a criterion based on the year of study. Thus, the official information about the number of students by faculty and the number of students according to year of study at each faculty was obtained to determine the required number of questionnaires to be applied in every year of study at every faculty. Then the groups and the respondents were randomly selected, using different strategies. For example, in Moldova they were selected depending on the amount of groups in each grade level (year of study) and the number of students in each group. The number of interviewed students belonging to the same group, i.e. sitting in the same classroom at the same time, was kept as low as possible. Where there are many different studies brought together in the same faculty, random choosing of clusters of respondents (groups or classrooms) wasn't appropriate, so convenience selection with an aim to maximally reduce the bias was used instead: the interviewers stood on some frequent spot at the faculty in different times during the week, such as entrance or cantina, where they chose every third student that passed, starting the count again if the potential interviewee refused to fill the questionnaire.

The subsamples and their sizes (number of respondents in brackets) are as follows: Plovdiv university (475), Zagreb university (615), “A. Russo” State University of Bălți and State University of Moldova (825), UKIM Skopje (721), Belgrade university (827). Total: 3463 respondents.

It should be noted that we chose two subsamples (universities) for Moldova because all three universities included in the national sample were of similar size, and it would significantly increase the size of cross-national sample.

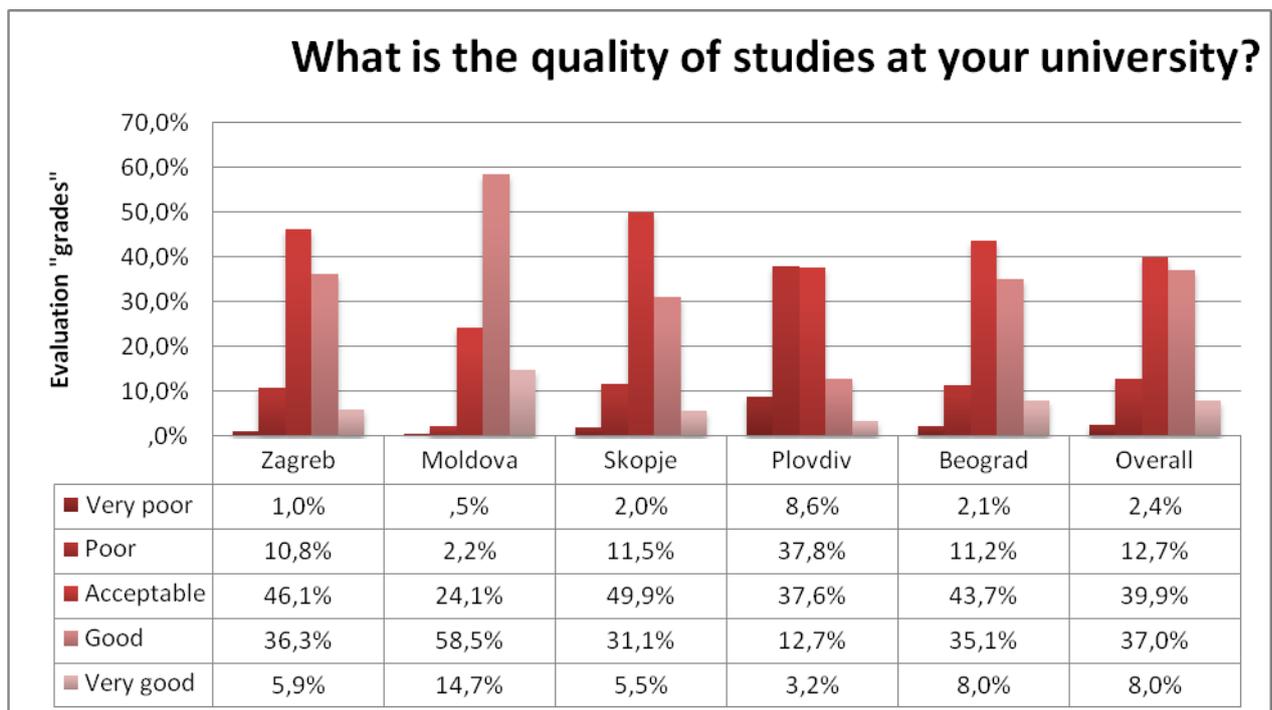
On the other hand, a few serious limitations should be noted when we consider other two goals of the research (comparative insight into students' perception of corruption in HE and the assessment of prevalence of students' tolerance towards and experience with corruption) in the context of our samples, but also in the context of the conceptual design of our questionnaire.

RESEARCH

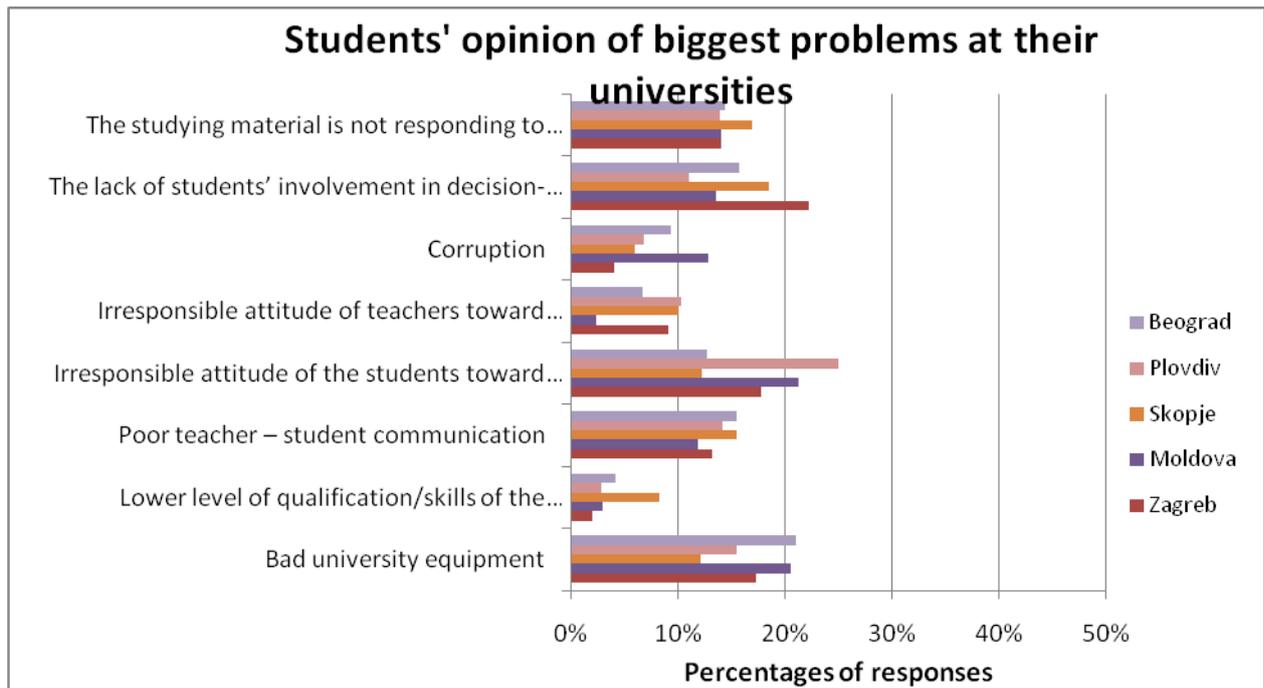
RESULTS

The findings have been divided into several sections, according to their topic in the research: Miscellaneous, Perception of corruption and Attitude towards corruption. The Miscellaneous section consists of broader questions regarding the studies, Perception of corruption section contains also Tolerance, Experience and Prevalence of corruption, and Attitude towards corruption includes Desired punishments for persons involved in corruptive acts and Willingness to report them.

1. Miscellaneous



Overall, students mostly evaluate their studies as „acceptable“ or „good“ . Moldovan students grade their studies significantly higher than the rest, where more than 73 % consider their studies „good“ or „very good“, as opposed to Plovdiv, where only about 16 % gave that grades to their studies. More than 45 % of Plovdiv students consider their studies „poor“ or „very poor“.



Overall, students in these five universities perceive bad university equipment as the biggest problem. Individually there are some differences. Students at Plovdiv university, for example, think that the irresponsible attitude of their colleagues towards educational process is the biggest problem at their university. Moldovan students are also very self - critical identifying irresponsible attitude of students as a problem approximately at the same level as they rate bad equipment. We found the exact same situation at Zagreb University but with lack of students' involvement in decision making process as the biggest problem. Skopje students consider lower level of qualification of their teachers is a problem almost twice as often as do the rest.

2. Perception of corruption: tolerance, experience and perception of prevalence

2.1 Tolerance towards corruption

Tolerance towards corruption was measured by scales of agreement with the seventeen sentences which express acceptance of five corrupt practices (bribery, embezzlement, nepotism/favouritism, plagiarism, cheating) in different contexts (enrolment, examination, student dorms, etc) and with different initiators (students, professors, dorm administrative staff). So, bigger results on these items should indicate respondents' bigger tolerance of corrupt practices.

After further deliberation, the two embezzlement items were omitted - they were formulated positively (opposite to other items) as agreement with the norm that a university or an official

student body should give a full budget report, but bearing in mind that budget reporting regulations differ across countries that lead to difficulties in accessing the data.

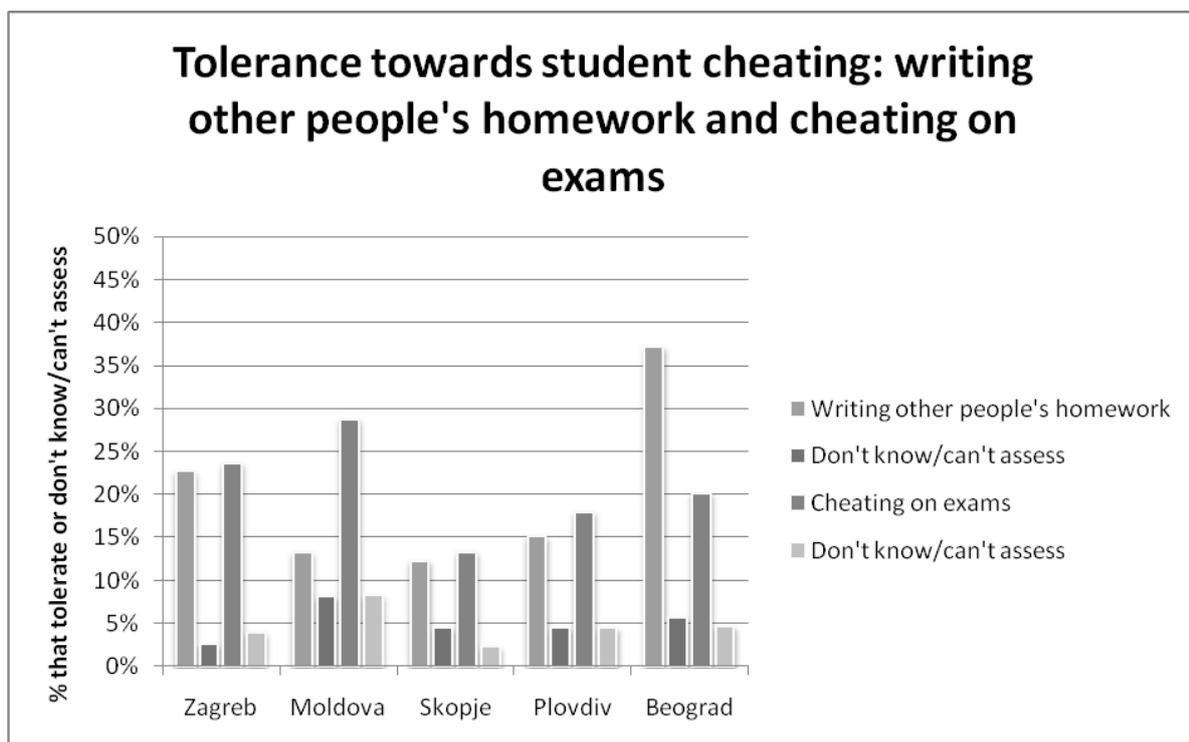
For the research it is important to see how is tolerance towards different forms of corruption interrelated, that is to say, which forms of corruption students tolerate or intolerate similarly. To put it more simply, the question is: if a student tolerates e.g. nepotism, what other form of corruption is he or she also likely to tolerate, which can be shown through factor analysis. We get a meaningful structure which explains that bribery and nepotism, regardless of their context or initiators, are similarly intolerated or tolerated (1st factor). The less correlations in the columns are, this connection less holds. So we can see that tolerance towards bribery at exams in the form of direct payment and nepotism/favouritism in enrolment and examination are somewhat more interrelated than both of them are related to bribery in the form of conditional book selling. All three of these corruption contexts are then more interrelated than any of them is with plagiarism (2nd factor), student cheating and student selling a place in a dormitory (3rd factor). Intuitively, **this structure suggests a key underlying latent „criteria“ which students follow in acceptance or non – acceptance of corrupt practices: „severity“ of corrupt acts, which can be defined by the severity of consequences (unfair treatment) that result from these acts.** When nepotistic enrolment and examination, and bribery at examination in the form of direct payment occurrence, students' rights are straightforwardly and obviously endangered, all the more so because perpetrators are precisely those who should protect them (professors and administrative staff). The fact that a student writes someone else's homework and that a professor plagiarized someone else who also holds a PhD concerns them less, because the resulting unfairness of treatment is less. Almost non – existent difference in tolerance towards professor – and student – initiated nepotism and bribery can in part be accounted for by the fact that one implies the other: if there is a student who pays to pass to pass an exam, there must be a professor that accepts bribes, etc.

Some items are „in-between“, tolerance towards a professor plagiarizing a student, and student cheating on an exam: besides the high correlations with their „natural“ factors, they are also considerably correlated with the first, „severe“ factor. Reason for the first may be that a professor who plagiarizes a student severely abuses his authority as bribed examiner does, although in a different way. As for student cheating on exams' correlation with nepotism and bribery is concerned, the answer may be less straightforward. It perhaps lies in the wording of the item: cheating is a too general term. Although the researchers had in mind a specific students „solo“ cheating, like cribbing or using microphone bugs, the respondents in some

instances may have considered bribery and using connections to get a higher grade or to pass an exam as cheating, because all three ways of gaining unfair advantages and breaking the rules of just evaluation in fact are cheating in broader sense. Although we can't know if and how many respondents understood this item in the described way, it certainly holds that in future research the item about student cheating in narrower sense should be more unambiguously formulated.

For the reliability testing, in the analysis Cronbach Alpha statistic was used. It can range from 0,00 to $\pm 1,00$, the latter indicating a perfect instrument with all variables perfectly correlated. Bearing in mind that rule of thumb is that any value above 0,7 justifies treating a set of item as a reliable instrument. Cronbach Alpha for the 17 – items instrument used in the research is 0,808 which justifies the use of these items in this research.³⁹

2.1.1. Student cheating



Percentages of students who "disagreed", "completely disagreed", or chose „I don't know/can't assess“ in two following statements:

Question 3.1: It is acceptable to write someone else's homework.

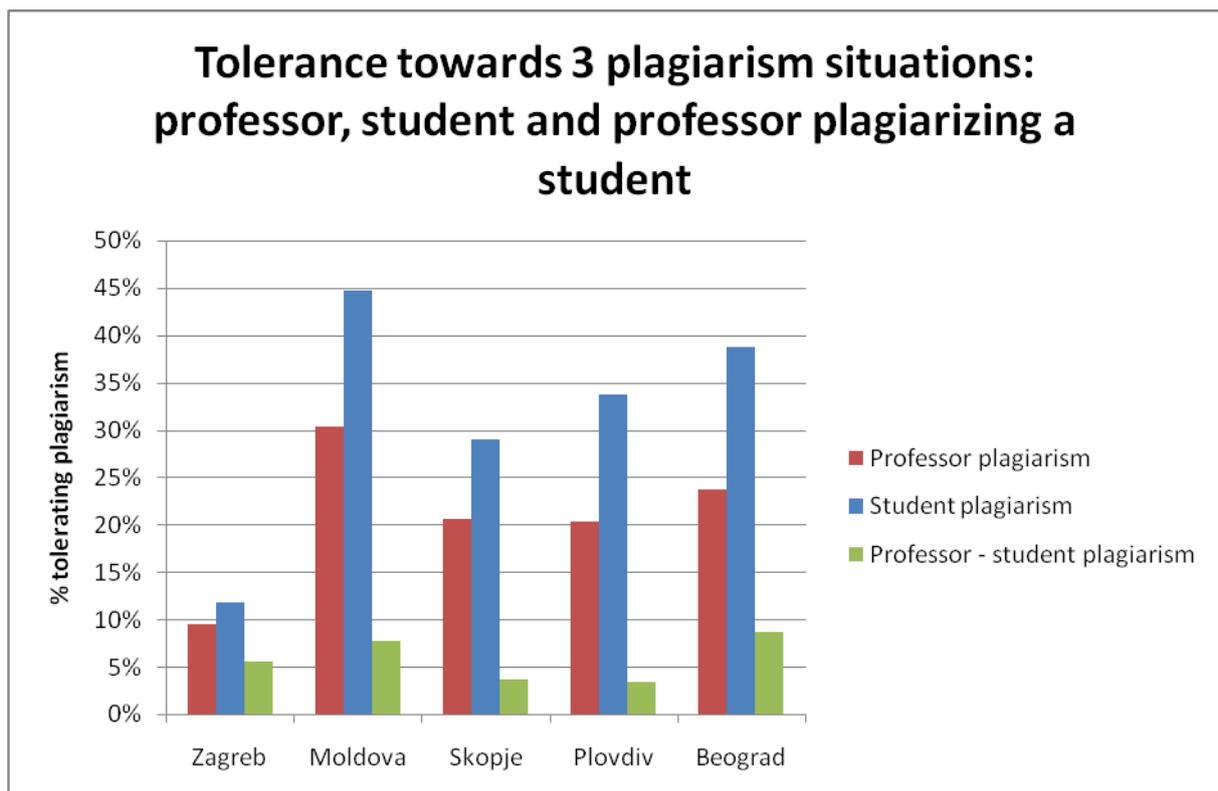
Question 3.5: It is acceptable to cheat during an exam.

The phenomenon of student cheating was depicted dichotomously: the first possibility was writing homework or seminary paper instead of another student, and the second one was exam

³⁹ For more information on Cronbach Alpha, and its exact values for different subsamples, please note the Annex at the end of the report.

cheating, without further explaining in a which way it would occur (either as copying from other students' exam papers, cribbing, or using „bugs“). The results showed a tendency that in Belgrade and Moldova there is a significant difference in tolerance when comparing two ways of cheating and that bigger tolerance is given to writing someone else's paper than direct exam cheating. Furthermore, students in Belgrade have lesser tolerance towards exam cheating compared to writing papers, while it is opposite in Moldova. These differences cannot be explained by saying that their results have different consequences on other students, because writing a homework as a perquisite to sit an exam brings a relatively smaller number of points, thus less damaging the principle of just exam grading. Students in Belgrade have a significantly higher tolerance towards writing someone else's homework compared to the other respondents, but on the other hand, their tolerance towards student cheating on exams is lesser than average in the region.

2.1.2 Tolerance towards plagiarism



Percentages of students who "agreed" or "completely agreed" with 3 following statements:

Question 3.7: It is acceptable for a student to use parts of a text without citing the source.

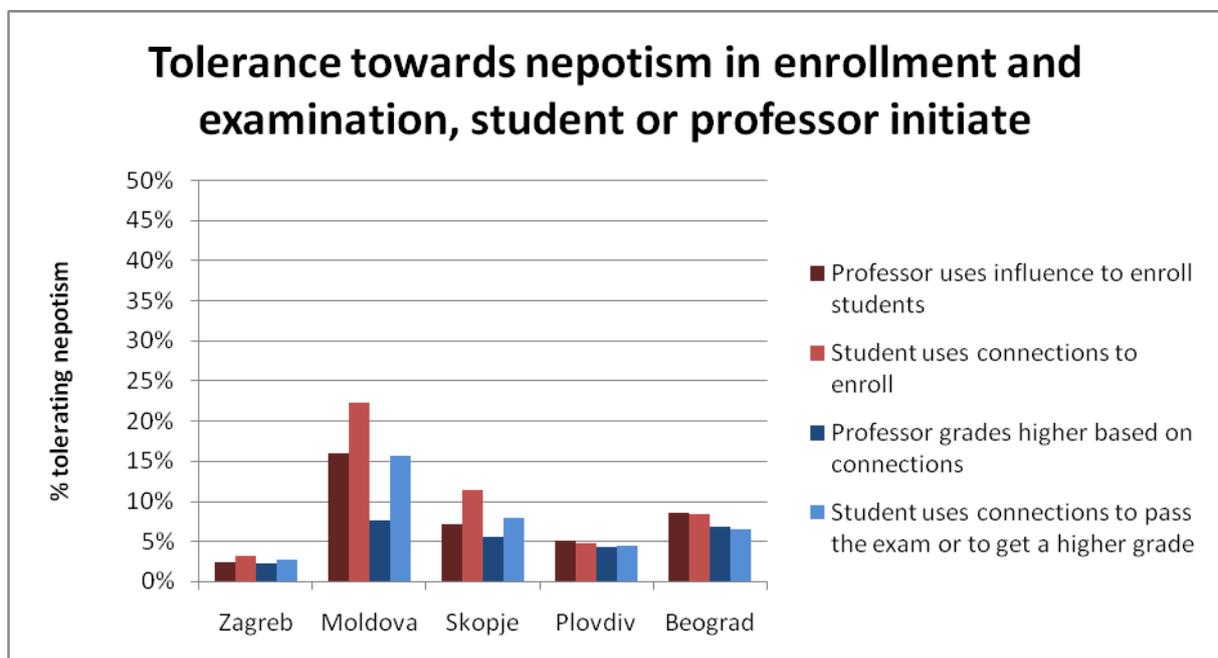
Question 3.9: It is acceptable for a professor to use parts of a text without citing the source.

Question 3.17: It is acceptable for a professor to use student's work without reference.

The conjured data indicate a certain „student solidarity“ among the respondents – there is a significant difference between the number of respondents who tolerate more plagiarism

among the students, compared to the plagiarism among professors, the only exception being the Zagreb University where the difference is quite small. Furthermore, at Zagreb University the students have significantly lesser tolerance towards the plagiarism compared to the rest of the region, where this tolerance is more represented. On the other hand, these data show that students have higher tolerance to the corruptive acts when they think that their interests are not threatened (and the other way around) – therefore, the tolerance towards the practice of of plagiarizing student papers by professors is extremely low. Broadly speaking, with the exception of Zagreb, students show a significant tolerance towards plagiarism.

2.1.3. Tolerance towards nepotism/favoritism



Percentages of students who "agreed" or "completely agreed" with 4 following statements:

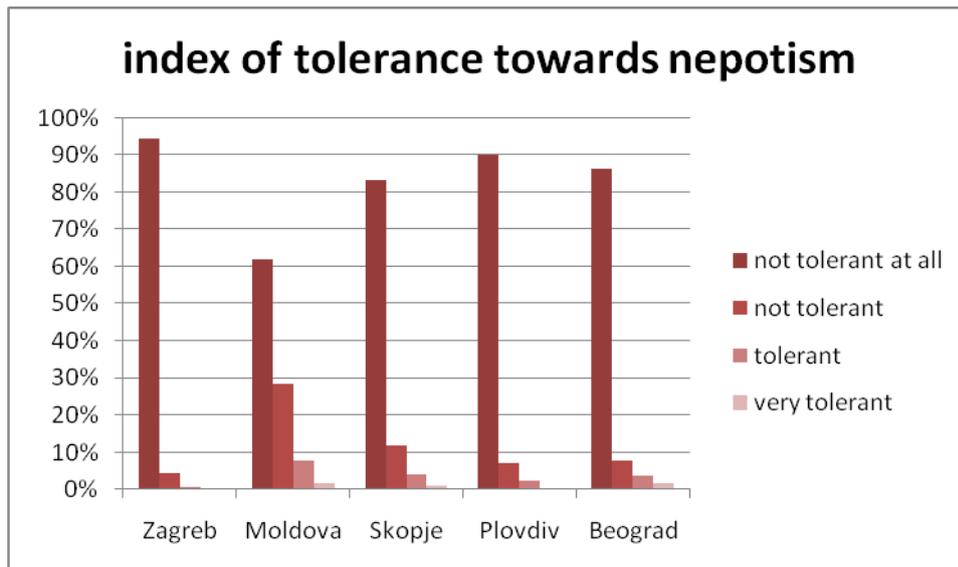
Question 3.4: It is acceptable for a professor to give higher grades based on personal connections.

Question 3.6: It is acceptable for a professor to use influence in order to enroll students in the University.

Question 3.13: It is acceptable for a student to use connections in order to enroll in the University.

Question 3.16: It is acceptable for a student to use connections in order to pass/get a higher grade.

We can see a slight „student solidarity“ bias in Moldova and Skopje, but not in Beograd, Plovdiv and Zagreb.



Index of tolerance towards nepotism calculated as a mean of the following 4 items:

Question 3.4: It is acceptable for a professor to give higher grades based on personal connections.

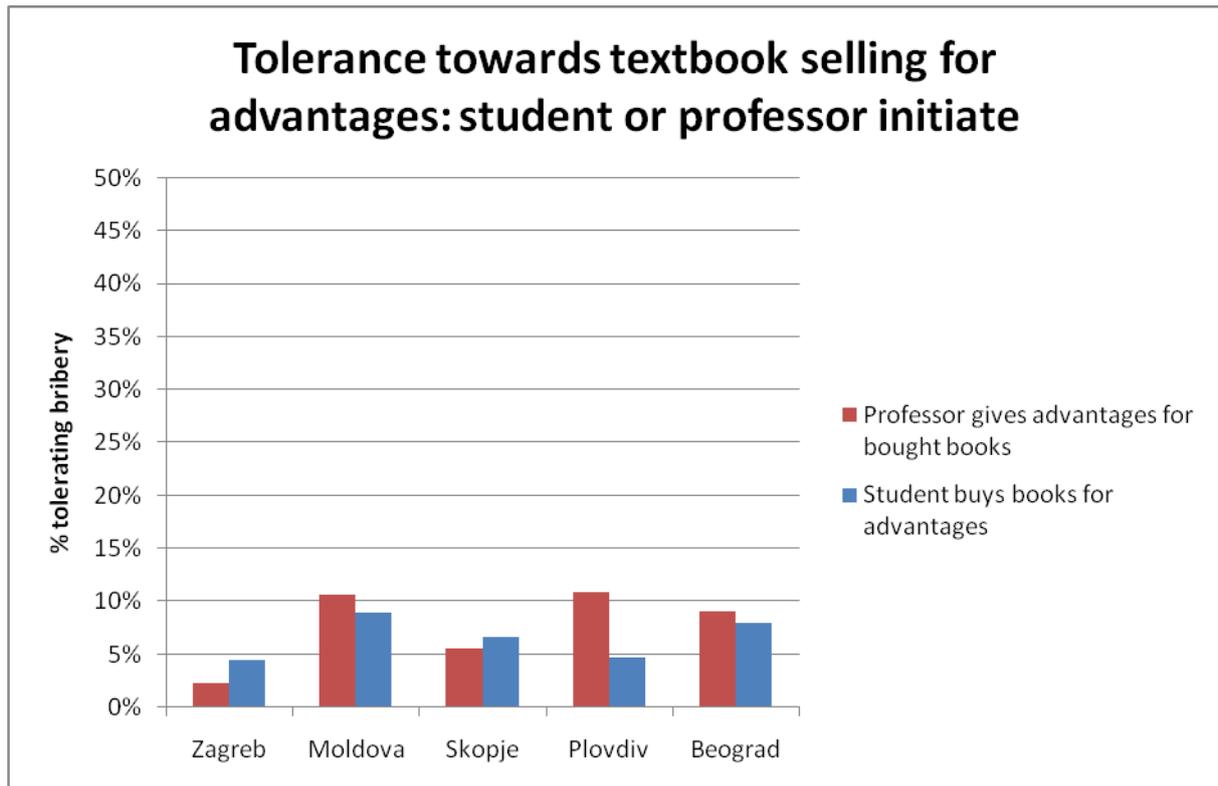
Question 3.6: It is acceptable for a professor to use influence in order to enroll students in the University.

Question 3.13: It is acceptable for a student to use connections in order to enroll in the University.

Question 3.16: It is acceptable for a student to use connections in order to pass/get a higher grade.

Results of the factor analysis in Table 1 provides justification for reliability testing of nepotism and bribery items which saturated the first factor predominantly. Cronbach Alpha for these nine items on the overall level is 0,859. Only throwing out the professor – initiated conditional book selling item (Question 3.2) would slightly increase it. This results provide justification for treating these nine items as a separate instrument for measuring tolerance towards severe forms of corruption.

2.1.4. Tolerance towards corrupt textbook buying/selling



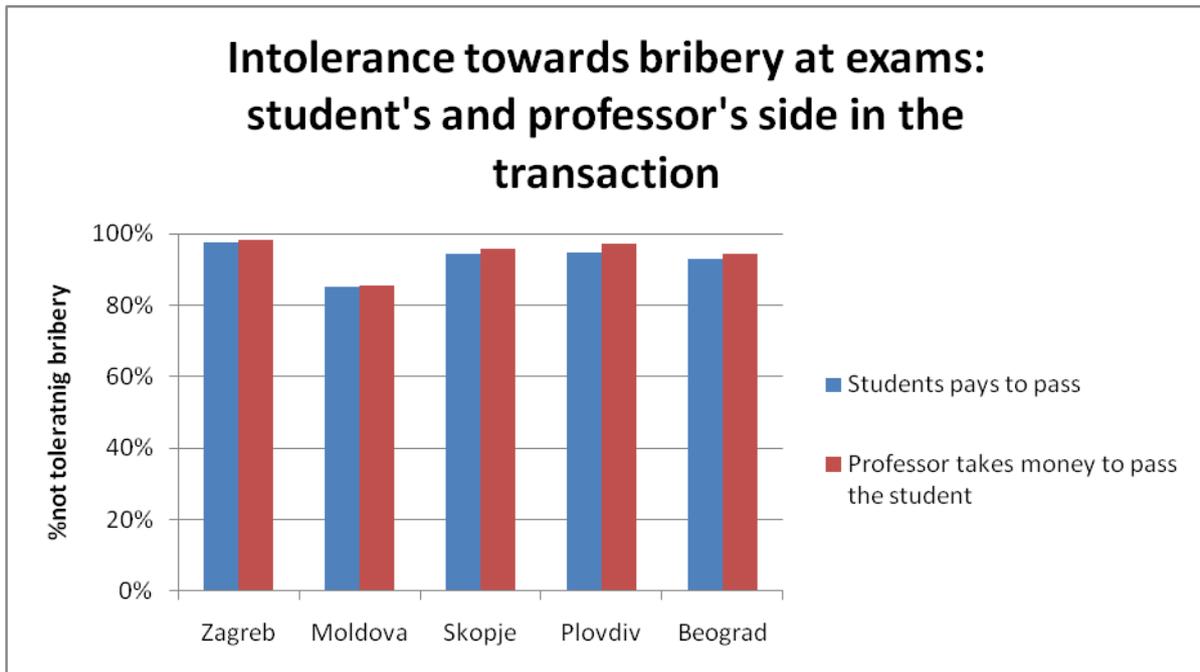
Percentages of students who "agreed" or "completely agreed" with two following statements:

Question 3.2: It is acceptable that professor gives advantages for buying his book.

Question 3.10: It is acceptable for a student to buy a book from the professor, to get a higher grade.

Here we don't have an „ordinary“ example of conditioned textbook selling: passing or a chance to take the exam isn't at stake, „additional“ gains (higher grades) are. Maybe that's the reason why students generally didn't show solidarity with their colleagues, especially in Plovdiv University, where students even tend to tolerate professors' initiated bribery more than that of students.

2.1.5 Intolerance towards bribery at exams



Percentages of students who "disagreed" or "completely disagreed" with two following statements:

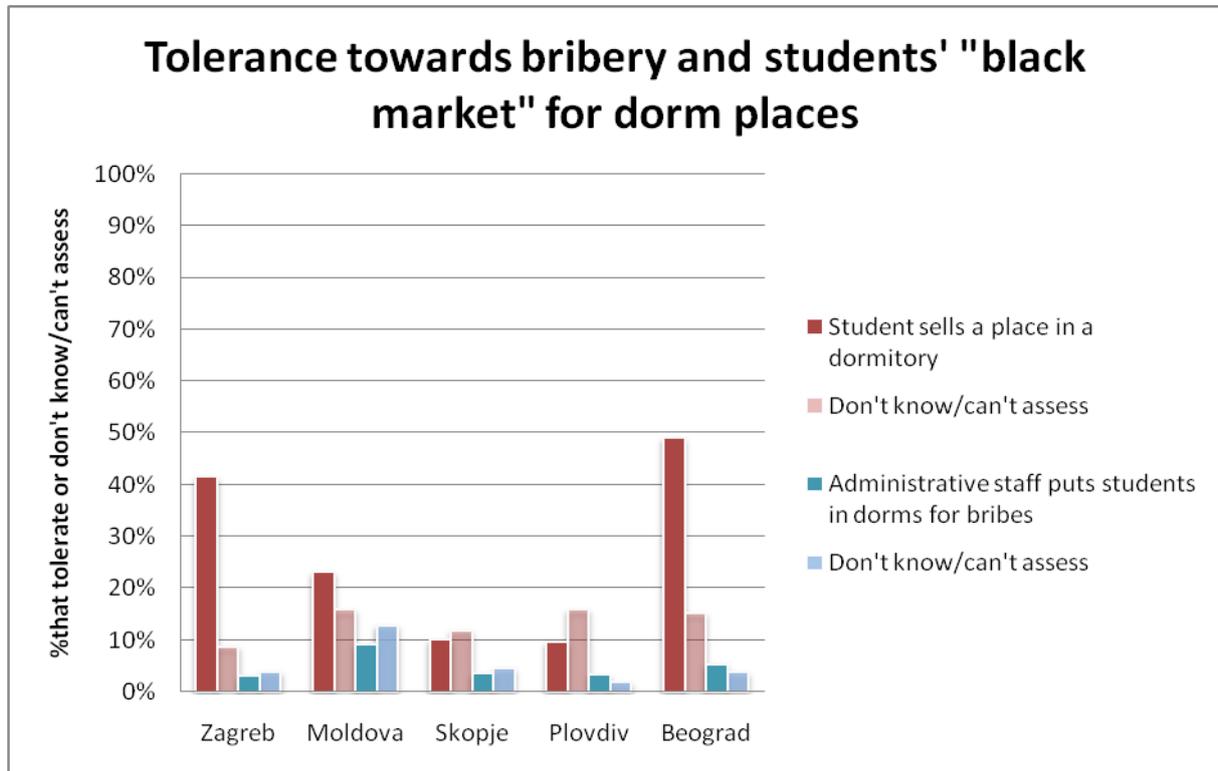
Question 3.8: It is acceptable to give unofficial payments to pass an exam

Question 3.14: It is acceptable for a professor to take money from a student to pass

Regarding this item, the view was changed: intolerance is displayed instead of tolerance. Although the above percentages of students that show tolerance towards conditioned textbook selling and nepotistic enrolment aren't much bigger than these, here the differences between student/professor tolerance and the difference across universities are much smaller.

Students appear to be very intolerant towards bribery at exams. The difference between professor's and student's point of view is virtually nonexistent. Besides social desirability of intolerance towards bribery (a form of corruption that probably immediately comes to mind of most people when corruption is mentioned), maybe this can be accounted for by the fact that the statements don't mention offering or asking for bribe, which represent more active initiation of corruption than paying/taking money. The latter is simply involvement in a (corrupt) transaction, without reference to who of the two parties initially made the proposition.

2.1.6 Tolerance towards corruption in student dorms



Percentages of students who "disagreed", "completely disagreed", or chose „I don't know/can't assess“ in two following statements:

Question 3.12: It is acceptable to sell a place in a dormitory.

Question 3.15: It is acceptable for the administrative staff to accept unofficial payments for placing students in dorms.

Here a strong student bias is seen everywhere, but in Moldova this bias was not so present. However, in Skopje and Plovdiv students are significantly less tolerant to student initiating corruption in student dorms. On the other hand, in Beograd and Zagreb students have shown significantly more tolerance towards their colleagues who participate in students „black market“ of dorm places. **In Belgrade almost every other student finds their colleagues' selling dorm places acceptable. In Zagreb it's just a few percentages less.** Interestingly enough, this results closely resemble the ones about direct experience with corruption in student dorms, where students in Zagreb and Belgrade most often claimed experience with their colleagues who bought a dorm place. Is social practice common because it is acceptable, or the other way around, is some social practice acceptable because it is common, is not clear and this question is too general in scope for this paper, therefore we simply want to emphasize

the importance of this issues to the future research, which can be very important in deeper understanding of various social phenomena, corruption being among them.

Experience with corruption and perception of its prevalence

Experience with corruption was conceptualised as the range of social contact with its various forms, same as those in the question with tolerance. A five degree scale was made, with following degrees of social contact range:

- „Never heard of it“; (1)
- „I've heard it talked about“; (2)
- „Some of my friends/acquaintances have been in such a situation“; (3)
- „I've witnessed such a situation, but it didn't concern me“; (4)
- „I have personally been in such a situation“; (5)

Although some categories of the scale overlap (2 and 3 respectively), they can be binned together in the following way: „none experience“ (1), „indirect experience“ (2, 3) and „direct experience“ (4, 5). The fourth and fifth degree obviously differ, but not completely. The fifth intends to measure involvement in corruption, but it doesn't explicitly state whether a respondent was the initiator or a victim. It's first because of social desirability bias – few would confess they offered or took bribes, even if the interviewer guarantees them anonymity⁴⁰. Second, it's the fact that the status of a victim is very subjective. If someone gets a better grade than someone else because he's „well-connected“, the other person might feel either that someone's done *him* wrong or not, but that entirely depends on *his* perception. In the objectively same situation, someone would choose 4, someone other 5 on our scale. That's also a good reason to bin these two categories. Since we can't hope to get realistic measures of perpetrating corruption and suffering from it, with these two categories binned we hope to measure closeness of experience, mere occurrence of corruption before the eyes of a student, regardless of his or her role.

Reliability analysis of the whole instrument for measuring experience with corruption in HE yields a high Cronbach Alpha (**0,876**), after two items referring to embezzlement plus the

⁴⁰This phenomenon is obvious in research of another type of socially undesirable behavior, which can be claimed to be significantly less condemned than corruption: drinking. Survey data about drinking habits never add up even close to alcohol sales statistics, nowhere.

item about bribed dormitory staff (Question 6.15) are excluded because their content violates the validity of the instrument.⁴¹ Although there are many items and a wide 5 – degree scale range, both of which increase reliability by definition, this result is still encouraging because this instrument covers very different subtopics, i.e. forms of corruption, and there were certain pre – research doubts about the possibility to treat the scale of social contact closeness as ordinal, yet the instrument still shows consistency.

Considerably **large inter – item correlations (which fall under 0,1 in just two instances) actually mean that students who had close social contact with some forms of corruption also tend to have a close contact with multiple other, and vice versa.** Although every item is more than satisfactorily correlated with others, items about student cheating, plagiarism and dorm bribery generally have a little less variance in common with other items. This has to do with the underlying latent structure of students' experience with corruption.

Factor analysis⁴² was used in determining what sorts of corruption “attract” the same students and it showed that **students who had a close contact with paying for exams also tend to have a close contact with nepotism in enrolment and examination. Vice versa, for a distant or non – existent contact also holds.** Same goes for three forms of plagiarism (2nd factor), two contexts of conditioned textbook selling (3rd factor), and two forms of student cheating plus student's buying of a place in a dormitory (4th factor). Only two items predominantly „fill“ (correlate with) more than one factor: writing other people's homework correlates with conditioned textbook selling besides its „natural“ factor to which the other student cheating item (exams) belongs. One more significant „additional“ correlation, that of student plagiarism with the „cheating factor“, besides the „plagiarism factor“ is not surprising: plagiarism can be deemed as cheating.

It seems that the key to this structure of students' experience with corruption is very similar to the one of tolerance: „severity“ of corrupt acts (nepotism and bribery as „severe“ vs plagiarism and cheating as „light“) rather than the actors initiating them, although in plagiarism there's a noticeable „student bias“ in both tolerance and experience. An interesting exception to this tendency are both tolerance towards and experience with students who buy or sell dorm places. The latter is obviously both more tolerated and experienced more often.

Another interesting thing is that occurrence of bribery in the form of direct payment tends not to coincide with conditioned textbook selling, which can be considered as a special case of

⁴¹ for more information, please note the Annex section at the end of the report

⁴² for further information, please the Annex section at the end of the report

bribery. When it comes to tolerance towards these two forms of bribery, it seems that students generally agree with this.

Although we found very little experience with „severe“ forms of corruption, it's still worth to examine their relation between one another and with other, „light“ forms of corruption.

More simply put: **in the overall sample, more than half (54 %) of those students who directly encountered a professor taking a bribe to let a student pass the exam also directly encountered a student enrolling in university through connections. It's more than third (38 %) of those who encountered nepotistic enrolment that also encountered bribe in examination.** Those are large percentages given that in the overall sample we have 10 % of those who encountered bribery in exams and 15 % of those who encountered student - initiated nepotistic enrolment. Roughly it means that **students who experienced bribery in exams have encountered nepotistic enrolment 3,6 times⁴³ more often than a random student. Also, students even experienced bribery in exams *and* nepotistic enrolment 8 % more often than they experienced just bribery⁴⁴.**

Analogous to above, **those who encountered nepotistic enrolment have been 3,8 times⁴⁵ more prone to encounter bribery in exams than a random student.** Of course, there was still considerably more of those who encountered just nepotistic enrolment and not bribery in exams (62 %), but the fact that students claimed experience with both practices relatively rarely makes this results significant.

Furthermore, **55 % of students who witnessed a professor taking bribe to pass a student also directly encountered a student using connections to pass an exam or to get a higher grade. Vice versa, 35 % of those who encountered nepotism in examination also encountered bribery in the same context.** Overall, there is 16 % of those who directly encountered student – initiated nepotistic examination, so the relations here are very similar to those above, between experience with bribed professors and colleagues enrolled through connections.

So, experiences with bribery in examination and with nepotism in enrolment and examination are intertwined, in very similar patterns indeed. At least in the case of exams, this co – occurrence could actually happen „in the field“: maybe often it isn't even possible for a student to offer bribe if he or she isn't connected to the professor. It certainly makes sense

⁴³ $54/15 = 3,6$; **Beograd: 61% (of those who met bribery met nepotistic enrolment)/15% (met nepotistic enrolment in Beograd) = those who met bribery met nepotistic enrollment 4 times more often than a random student (5% of Beograd subsample met both);**

⁴⁴ $54\% - 46\% = 8\%$; **Beograd: 61% - 39% = 22% more often a Beograd student experienced both a bribed professor and a nepotistically enrolled colleague than just a bribed professor.**

⁴⁵ Analogous to n.3 above: $38/10 = 3,8$; **Beograd: 35/8 = 4,4 times more often**

from the point of discretion: somebody „unrecommended“ might talk about corrupt transaction in front of wrong people and get the person involved in corruptive acts into trouble, deliberately or not. All this while connections often suffice for gaining unfair advantages, without the need for bribes, as these results suggest. The data from the interviews with the faculty staff and focus groups with students and student representatives tend to back up this hypothesis: many of them emphasized the role of an intermediary, a person who is in charge of selling exams in a way that a student and corrupt professor do not communicate on the subject, but the entire transaction is organized and performed by the third party.⁴⁶

This hypothesized co – occurrence of nepotistic/favouritism examination and bribery at exams in the form of direct payment could also account for considerably small correlations of the conditioned textbook selling items with the nepotism – and – bribery (1st) factor in Table 2. It is also appropriate to remind that tolerance towards professor – initiated conditional book selling also had the least correlations with the 1st factor in Table 1. Maybe most importantly, it had the least variance in common with all the other items by far (only about 7 %, second worst having 14 %).

Conditioned textbook selling can be considered as bribery, but when it occurs, its conditions generally refer to all involved students (obliged to forego examination by the professor that conditionally sells books), and not just to the privileged circle of those who are connected to the professor through personal network ties. The results suggest that conditional book selling is experienced more often than direct bribery (Moldova is the only exception), and that goes in line with this suggested difference between two forms of corrupt exchanging money for favours. The reason behind this may be that conditional book selling generally isn't specifically recognized as bribery by university regulations and the press when it talks about HE corruption in rare instances. Therefore, for those involved it includes less risk which arises from non – discretion. This makes conditional book selling fundamentally different from bribery in the form of direct payment. However, this is a question for another, more detailed research. Maybe a review of documented corruption cases or a special survey question would both be applicable.

To get back to the interconnectedness of bribery and nepotism, the above assumption about co – occurrence of nepotism and bribery in examination wouldn't explain the connection between the nepotistenrollment and bribery in examination, because those two can't happen at the same

⁴⁶ among the 87 people charged with corruption in Index affair at the University of Kragujevac in Serbia, 33 were students, 33 were professors and 21 were intermediaries, of which, oddly enough, one was a car mechanic not in connected to the university in any official way.

time. **There is a possibility that there are students of who participate in multiple kinds of misbehaviour, and that can't escape the eyes of some of their colleagues who are aware of their misdeeds** (note: it is impossible to discern initiators, victims and witnesses of corruption out of those who have direct experience with it, as elaborated in the first paragraph of this subsection). The following consideration goes in line with this assumption, although limitedly.

It is then interesting to see how nepotism and bribery are connected to „lighter“ forms of corrupt or non – ethical behaviour. **Students who encountered nepotism and bribery actually tend to have direct contact with other, „lighter“ forms of corrupt behaviour as well, although this tendency is considerably less than the inter-connectedness of nepotism and bribery described above. For example, 46 % of those who encountered bribed professors also encountered student plagiarism, while 27,5 % students in general have met student plagiarism first – hand.** On the other hand, „only“ 18 % of those who encountered student plagiarism also encountered bribed professors (10 % encounter them in general).

Futher more, 48 % of those who encountered a student enrolled through connections also encountered student plagiarism, but vice versa it's „only“ 26 %. To state it once more for comparison, 15 % students in general directly encountered nepotistically enrolled colleagues. **35 % of those who have seen bribed examiners also saw plagiators with Phds, while in general „only“ 15 % students have first - hand experience with professors who plagiated.**

Finally, it makes sense to examine the cheating in this context, which is a much more tolerated and widespread misbehaviour than nepotism, bribery and plagiarism. Again, **those who saw as severe a corrupt act as bribery in examination also more than other students tend to be present in situations where their colleagues cheat in exams or to themselves cheat (77 % of them),** which is the most widespread corruptive practice: **in general, 55 % students cheated or witnessed cheating.**

As with nepotism and bribery above, there are of course variations between universities when it comes to relation between bribery and „lighter“ forms of corruption, but everywhere more or less the same tendency is shown.

This indicates an important thing: those who encounter bribery and nepotism (less tolerated, more „severe“ forms of corruption) also tend to encounter „light“ misbehaviour, even though this other tendency is less. Maybe a profile of students more susceptible to experience a wide array of corrupt or non – ethical behaviour could be established, with a clause that they

constitute a very small minority. Causes behind it are a research venture of its own. Tolerance could be the key to their „bias“: for example, it would be reasonable to assume that students more intolerant to corrupt or non-ethical behaviour would sooner call something corruption, and remember the experience afterwards.

Factor analysis was used again, this time to check if the correlation of experience with tolerance holds. This was checked in short just for nepotism and bribery in exams because we have noticed stronger relation within experience with and tolerance towards these two severe forms of misbehavior than between any of them with any other we checked in addition here (plagiarism and cheating). Therefore, if there is a systematic relation of experience with and tolerance towards corruption, it should show itself here primarily.⁴⁷

In short, factor analysis shows that this hypothesis can be dismissed, because of **rather small correlations of experience items with the tolerance factor and vice versa**. So, **if there is a perceptual bias towards experience with corruption, it's unlikely that this bias comes down to tolerance**. Therefore, at least in this regard our data about experience operationalized as the closeness of social contact with corruption can be considered to express real occurrences of corruption, instead of the difference in perception among students. Due to the methodology limitations (regarding the samples, possibility of socially desirable answers and wording problem) the issues of correlation of tolerance to experience with corruption should be further and in more details investigated in future research.

But the above – mentioned interconnection of direct experience with corruption, especially of the experience with its severe forms, still holds, whether we talk about student or professor initiated misbehaviour.

Other assumptions may be more successful in explaining this fact. For example it would be reasonable to assume that those students who were nepotistically enrolled don't have sufficient capabilities or motivation to further advance through college on their own, so they relatively frequently turn to corrupt practices instead. Precisely the relative frequency of their misbehaviour may make them „visible“ to their colleagues, so they could therefore pay attention to multiple kinds of their colleagues' misdeeds and show tendency towards direct experience with corruption in our questionnaire.

Partial correlations of the rest of the student – initiated nepotism, bribery, plagiarism and cheating items with controlling for influence of this item about student – initiated nepotist enrolment can provide some empirical justification for this hypothesis. For example, when

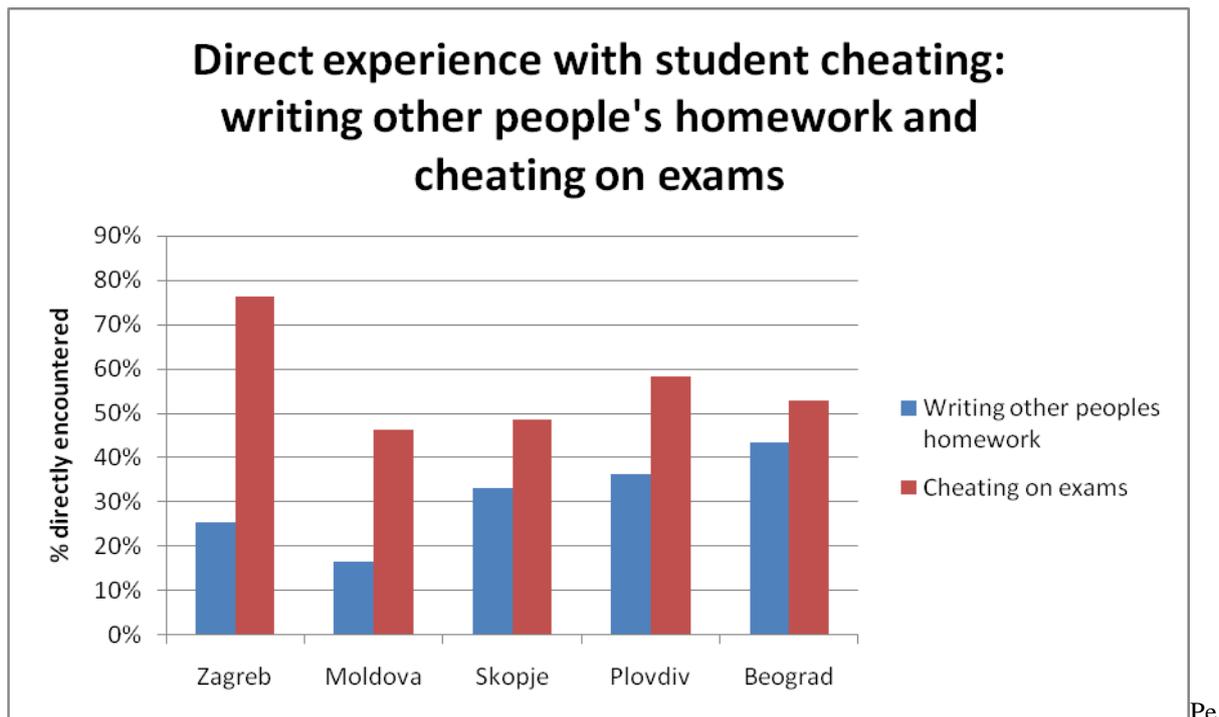
⁴⁷ for further information, please note the Annex section at the end of the research report.

controlling for nepotist enrolment, we get partial correlations of student – initiated bribery in the form of direct payment with other student – initiated misdeeds of considerably smaller values (from 0,20 to 0,40 instead of original 0,45 to 0,65). That could mean that nepotist enrolment behaves as an important moderator variable, enhancing the correlations between bribery and other items by its relatively high correlations with most of these items (Baron, Kenny, 1986). Analogous to this one, other assumptions which involve other variables as key explanatory moments could be formulated and checked. For example, when professor – initiated corruption is concerned, it also seems reasonable to assume that often the same people (a relatively small minority) engage in multiple forms of corruption, and that could explain high correlations between a variety of directly experienced professors' misdeeds, including even plagiarism (Table 2, 1st and 2nd factors). Exact mechanism may be more subtle: from the professors' perspective, once someone breaks the high formal and informal ethical standards of university teaching so severely (by engaging in bribery), he is more prone to take part in other corruptive acts. Once someone crosses the line, „nothing is sacred any more“. For example, if someone takes bribes, it doesn't make a big difference if that person also plagiarizes.

High correlations between same forms of corruption that in turn involve both students and professors may also occur „in the field“: if it is known that a student paid for passing the exam, it's obvious that the professor takes money, etc.

Be that as it may, the empirical test of these assumptions exceeds the space and (mainly exploratory) purpose of this report. Also, we don't have entirely adequate data for that (e.g. special survey items devoted to these research questions). Listing assumptions for future, more detailed research is satisfying enough.

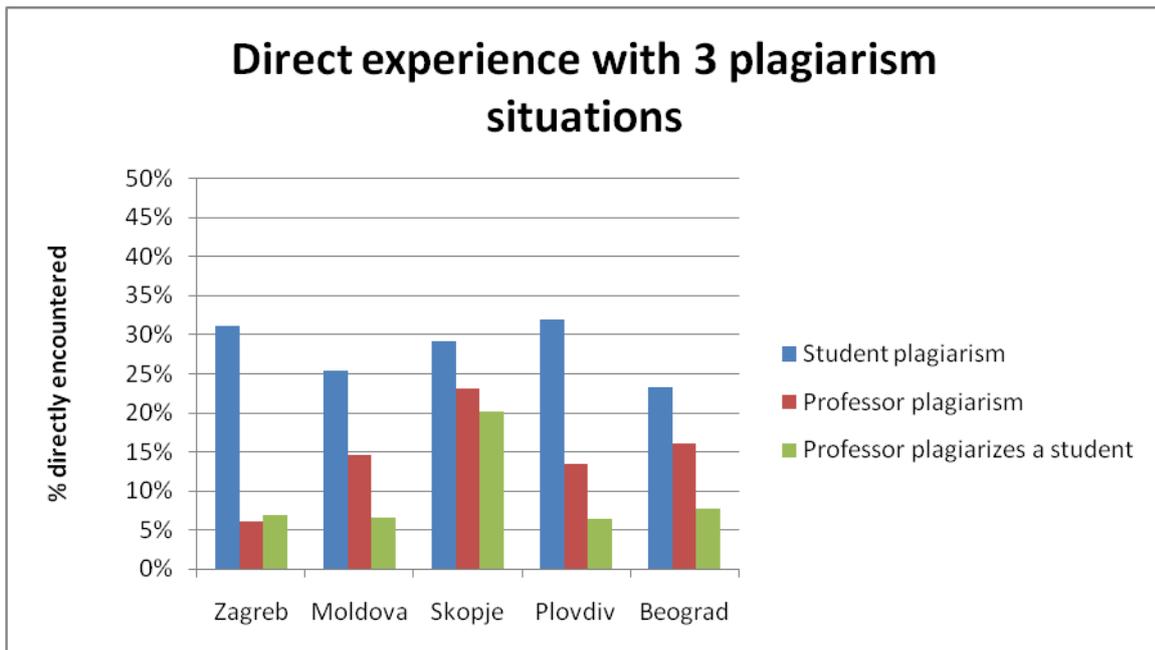
2.2.1. Experience with student cheating



percentages of students who chose "I've witnessed such a situation, but it didn't concern me" or „I have personally been in such a situation"

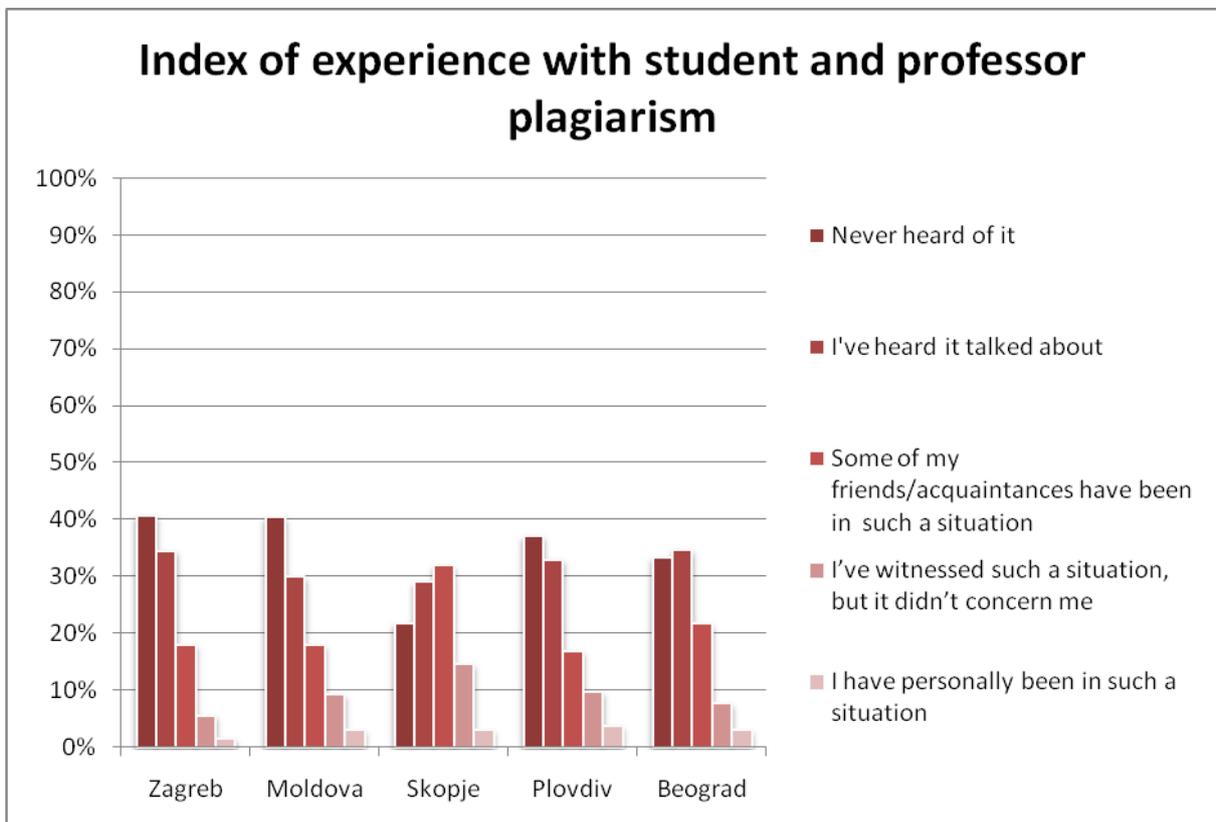
The interesting thing here is a situation opposite to almost all other findings: in Moldova, the least students had direct experience with cheating in the form of writing other people's homework.

2.2.2 Experience with plagiarism



Percentages of students who chose "I've witnessed such a situation, but it didn't concern me" or "I have personally been in such a situation"

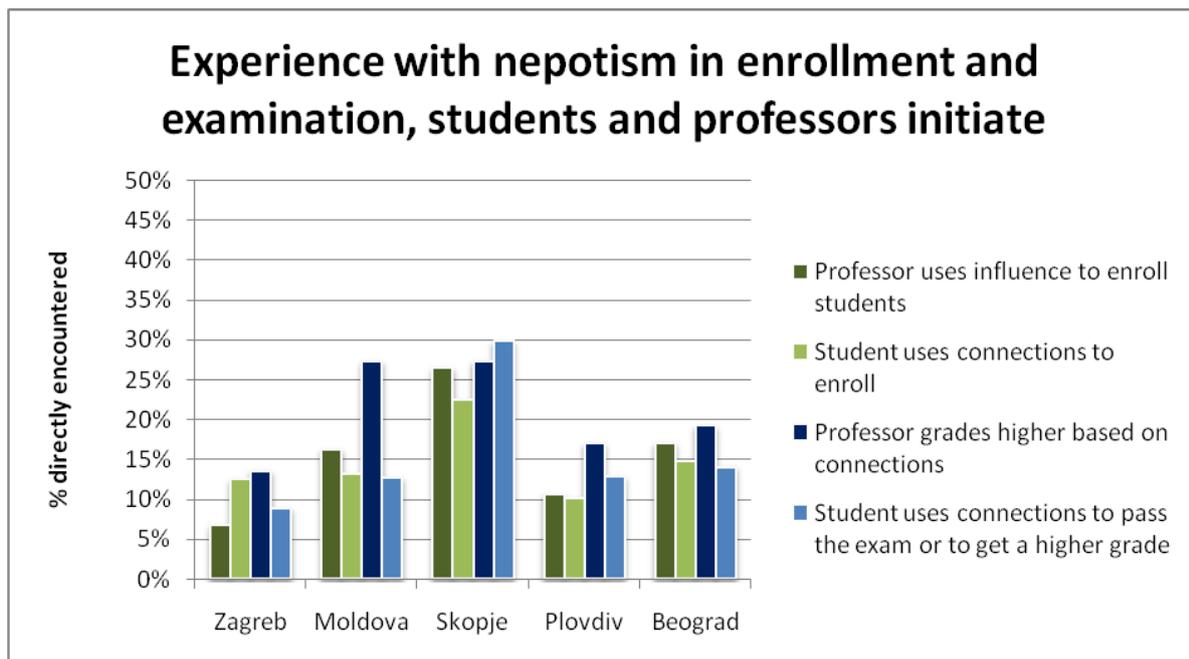
Skopje stands out in direct experience with professor and professor - student plagiarism, and especially worrying is the fact that almost every fifth student there directly encountered the worse form of plagiarism in terms of professors' authority abuse: the situation where professors plagiarize students' work.



The index of experience with plagiarism of student and professors is calculated as an average mean of respective experiences with two different types of plagiarism (the one induced by professors and by students).

This graph shows that on experience with plagiarism scale there is a very small percentage of respondents who stated that they were personally involved in such situations. The existing differences among the students' experience in the region are not significant.

2.2.3 Experience with nepotism



Percentages of students who chose "I've witnessed such a situation, but it didn't concern me" or „I have personally been in such a situation".

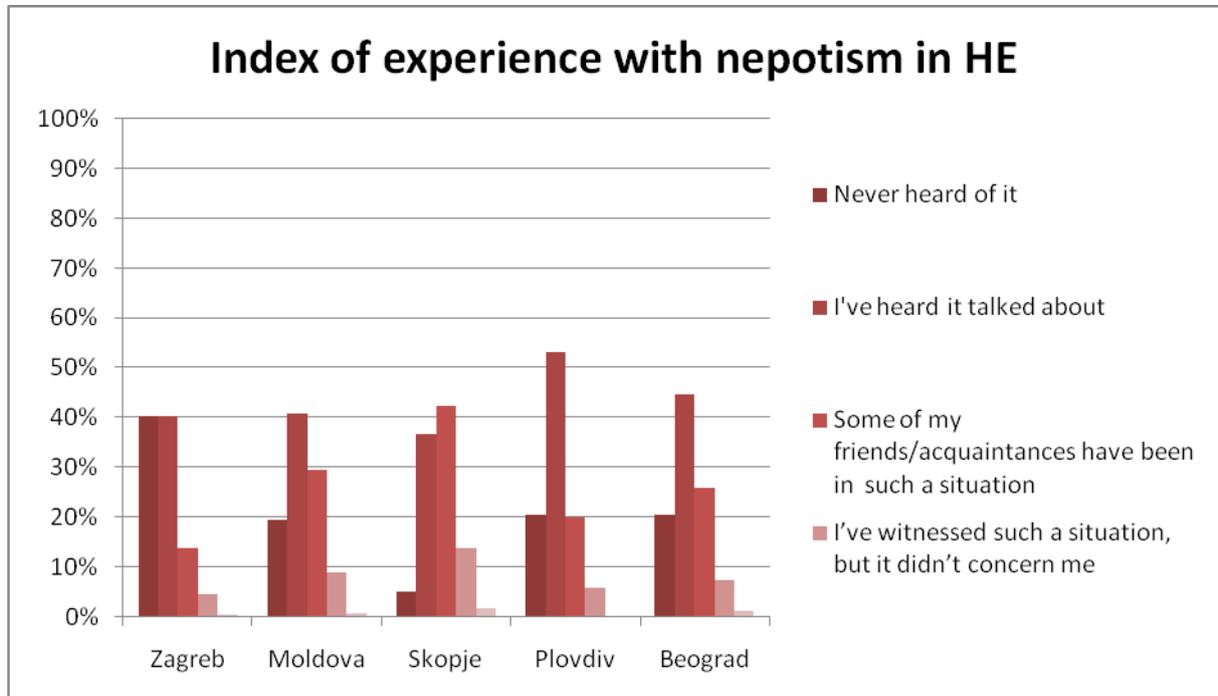
Obviously, Skopje stands out in direct experience with all forms of nepotism. From 22 % to almost 30 % percent of students there had a direct experience with all four forms of nepotism.

Only Moldova follows in the number of students who directly encountered nepotism, mostly in the situation of professor – initiated nepotist examination (27 % claimed direct experience), where professors seem to initiate it considerably more often than students themselves. Interestingly, in Moldova students seem to be the least tolerant towards the practice they seem to experience the most often, although the correlation between the tolerance and experience item for this practice isn't even statistically significant, which in general means that those students least tolerant towards this practice didn't have direct experience with it.

Cronbach Alpha for the four items is 0,814. As expected, Cronbach for these four items plus the two items about paying for exams is even higher (0,866) – as illustrated in 1st factors

above in the tables for factor analysis. This 6 – item index we named 'index of experience with severe forms of corruption in higher education'.

Analogous to the index of tolerance towards nepotism in HE, index of experience with it is calculated, to get a picture of variation through five degrees of closeness.



Index of experience with nepotism in higher education, calculated out of mean values of four items for each respondent:

Question 3.4: It is acceptable for a professor to give higher grades based on personal connections.

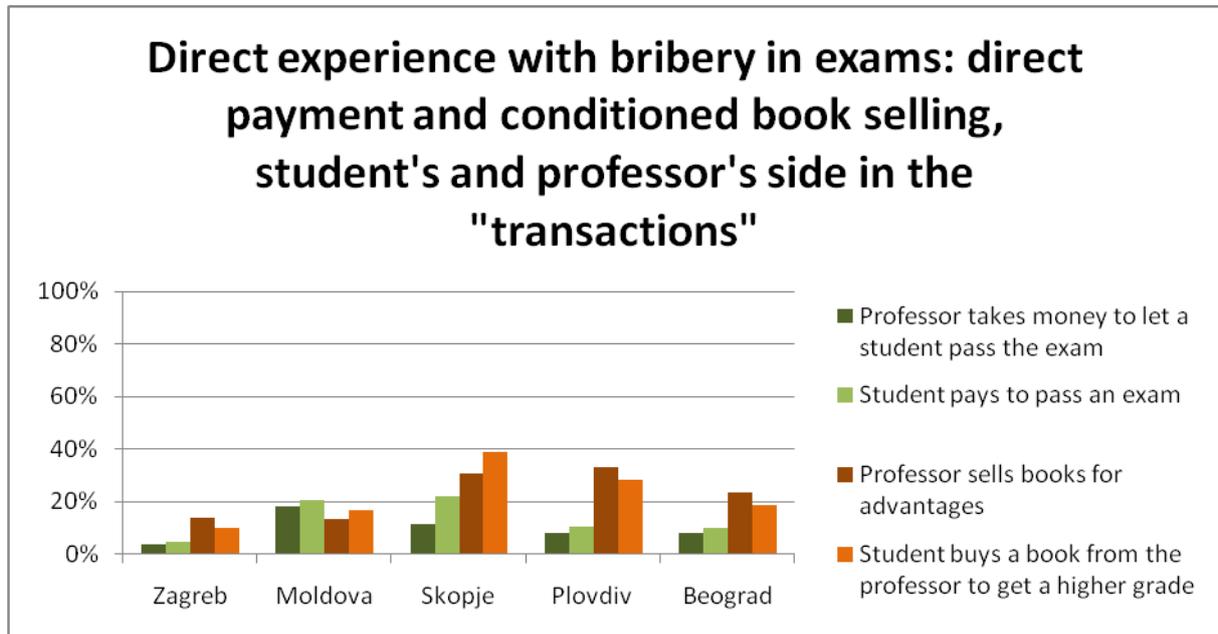
Question 3.6: It is acceptable for a professor to use influence in order to enroll students in the University.

Question 3.13: It is acceptable for a student to use connections in order to enroll in the University.

Question 3.16: It is acceptable for a student to use connections in order to pass/get a higher grade.

The index of experience with corruption shows that social contact closeness as it was conceptualized in the questionnaire varies among students from different universities. Where most students had direct experience with nepotism, fewer students “never heard of it”, and also there most students have friends and acquaintances that directly encountered nepotism relative to other subsamples. Therefore, we have another insight into presence of nepotism in Skopje and Moldova: 41 and 29 percent of students there respectively have friends and acquaintances that directly encountered nepotism.

Experience with bribery in exams: direct payment and conditioned textbook selling

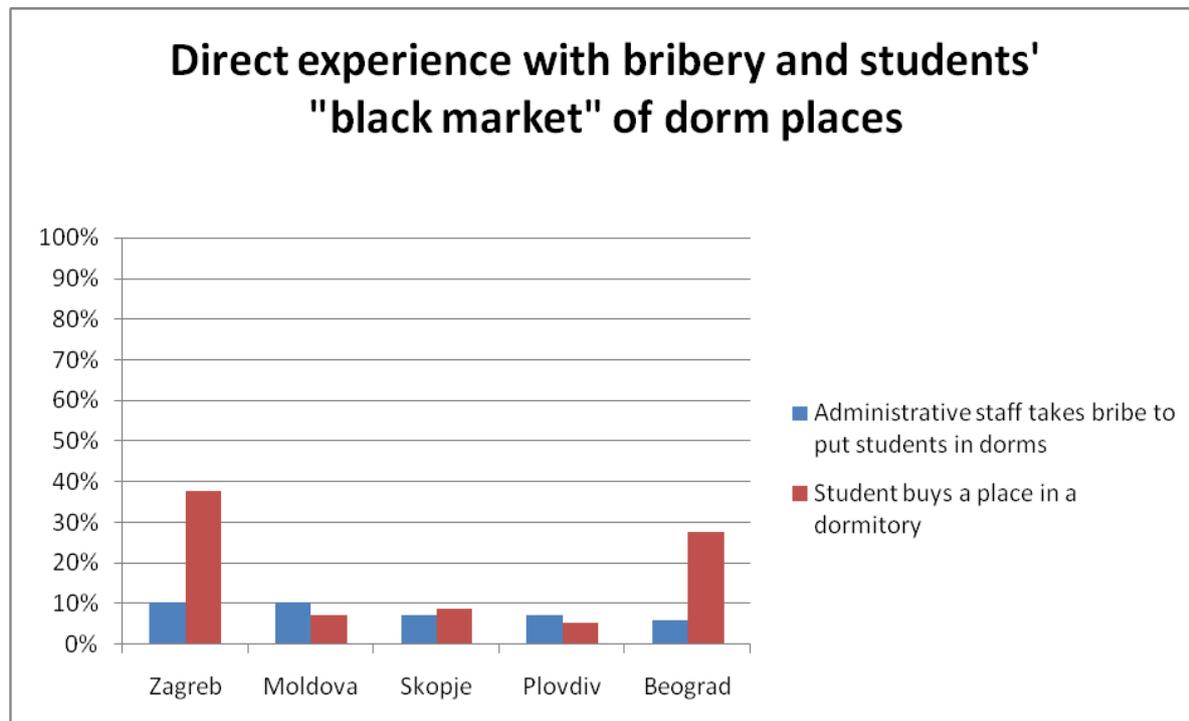


Percentages of students who chose "I've witnessed such a situation, but it didn't concern me" or „I have personally been in such a situation".

In direct experience with direct bribe taking and giving Skopje stands out again, closely followed by Plovdiv. Four out of every ten students in Skopje claimed direct experience with students buying a book from the professor to get a higher grade, while in Plovdiv every third student encountered professors selling books for advantages.

As opposed to all other subsamples, in Moldova students had slightly more experience with bribery in the form of direct payment than with conditional book selling. When tolerance was concerned, conditional textbook selling was also slightly more tolerated than bribery in the form of direct payment

Experience with corruption in student dorms



Percentages of students who chose "I've witnessed such a situation, but it didn't concern me" or „I have personally been in such a situation".

Zagreb stands out in direct experience with students buying a place in a dormitory: almost four out of ten students there had the experience. Belgrade follows: almost three out of ten students directly encountered students buying a place in a dormitory. But, interestingly enough, in Beograd least students encountered bribed dormitory administrative staff. In Zagreb the difference between the experiences with two sides initiating the transactions is also considerable. This may mean that students more often trade their dorm places between themselves, than with the administrative staff. If it is so, then it wouldn't be so surprising that tolerance towards student - initiated bribery in dorms is also considerably higher in Belgrade and Zagreb than in the rest of the subsamples. Namely, if the access to dorm places isn't prevalently determined and cut - off by those in power (the administrative staff and management), but by a broad base of students and their "black", but assumedly free market where supply and demand almost exclusively determine the outcomes, students don't have so big a reason to be aggravated by this practice in comparison to, for example, nepotistic examination.

In future research, it would be interesting to see nepotism in the context of corruption in student dorms and its relation with bribery. Judging from common-sense, it's also bound to be a relatively widespread form of corruption there, and then remains the question if it is related

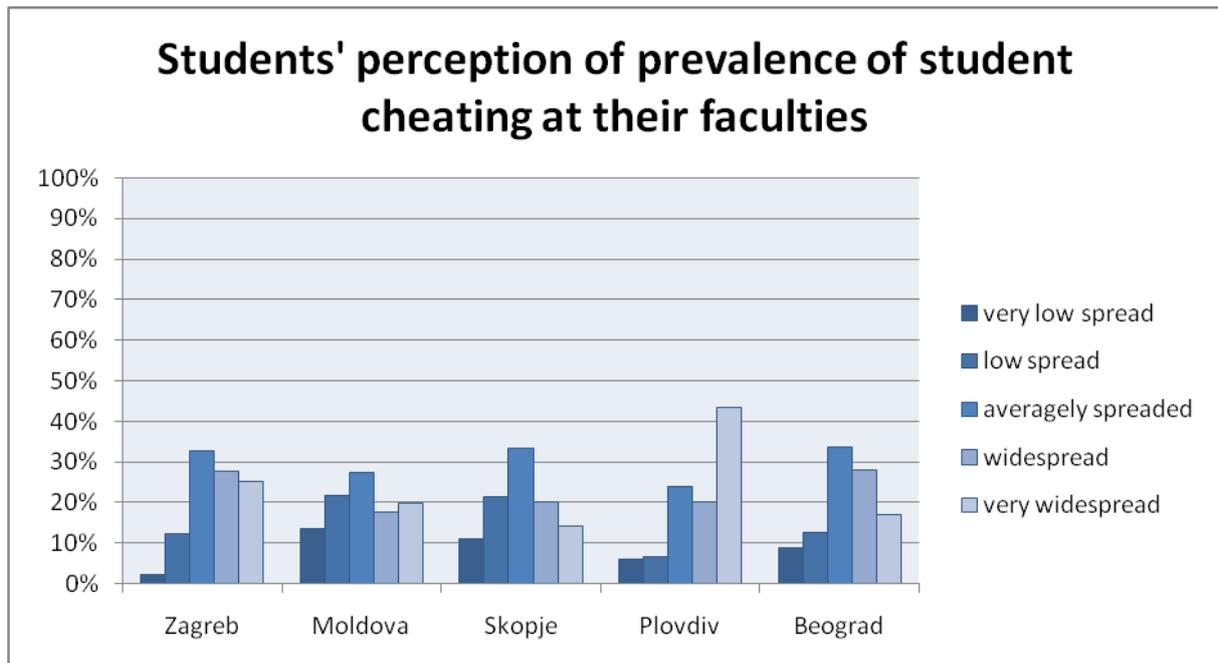
to bribery in student dorms as it is in the case of examination and enrollment to university, which is one of our key findings.

Students' perception of prevalence of corruption forms

Respondents were asked to assess the prevalence of student cheating, plagiarism, nepotism/favouritism, bribery and embezzlement at their faculty, and not generally in their country's higher education. In this way, the size of the facility they assess is reduced compared to almost standard "public trust" questions in the surveys about corruption (such as Transparency International's), where people are asked to assess the prevalence of corruption in public institutions in general. In this narrower conceptualization, reducing the environment in which respondents assess the prevalence of corruption is thought to make the perception "more realistic" in the sense that respondents in the research have more experience with their own home institution than with the whole range of them existing in the higher education system. These data of corruption perception will be then compared to those of corruption experience that treat the same forms of corruption, although the incommensurability of the scales has to be taken into consideration. Only to a certain extent it makes sense to compare last two unspecified degrees of the prevalence measure and responses which indicate direct experience, among other things because indirect experience through friends and acquaintances (3rd degree in our social contact closeness scale) also can be thought of as the indicator of the "factual" prevalence of corruption, maybe with even more real occurrences of corruption behind it than the number of its occurrences personal experience indicates, since a person can have more than one friend or acquaintance who personally experienced corruption. Be as it is, the relation between proportions of students who had direct experience with 4 forms of corruption and proportions of those who perceive them as widespread or very widespread is almost ubiquitous, as will be shown below.

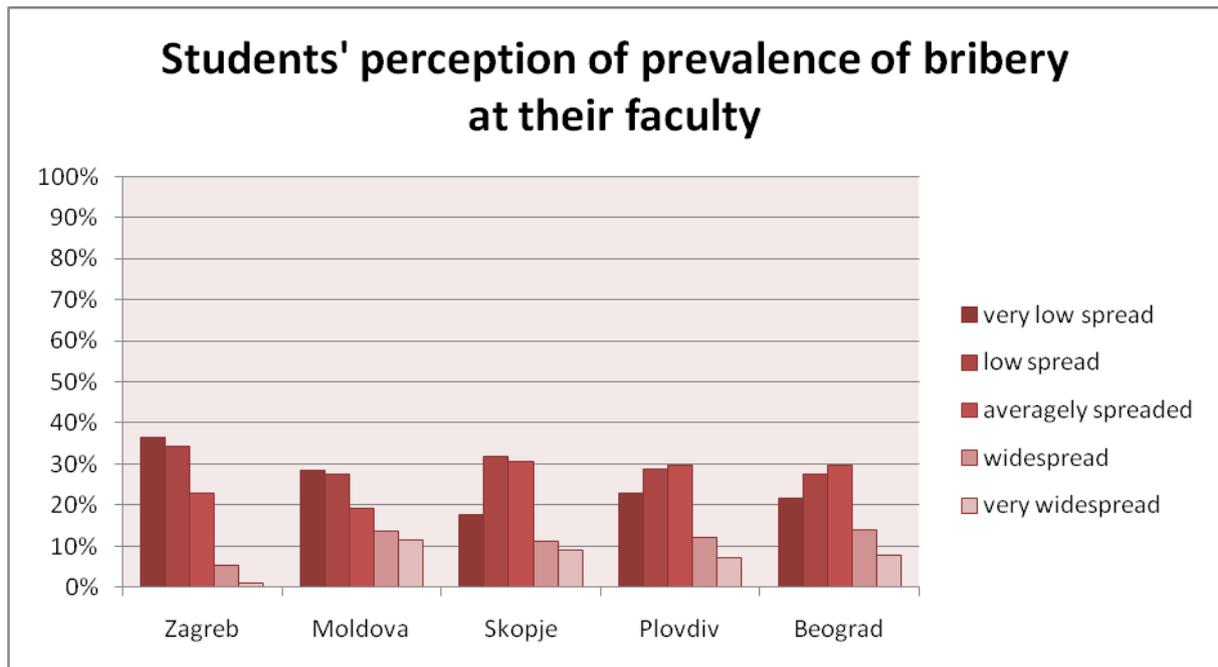
To access the answers a one to five scale with unspecified degrees was used – the respondents were asked to estimate the prevalence of certain behavior at their respective faculties (very widespread, widespread, averagely spread, low widespread and very low widespread). Distributions vary logically, in multiple instances being close to normal, which justifies our treatment of these items as ordinal measures.

2.3.1 Student cheating



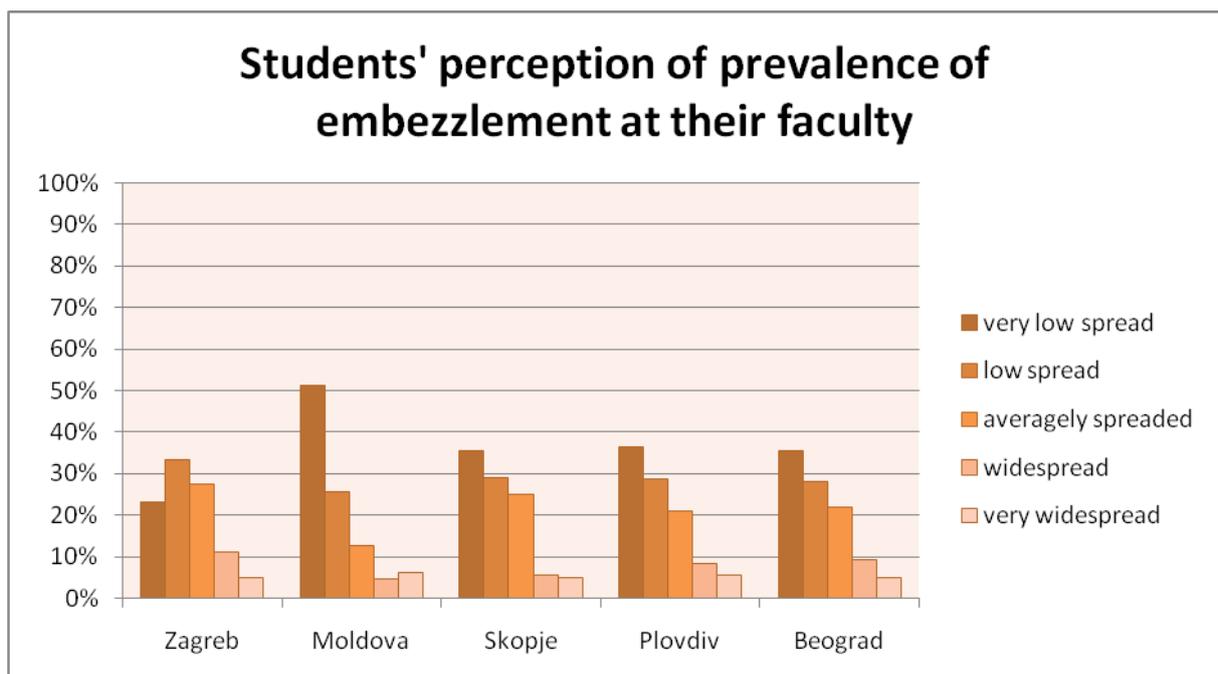
In Belgrade, Plovdiv and Zagreb, students perceived cheating to be more spread than they colleagues in Moldova and Skopje did, and that is similar to data about direct experience with student cheating on exams. Relative majority within Plovdiv students and compared to other universities perceive student cheating as “very widespread”, which can be related to the fact that in Plovdiv students in general gave the problem of irresponsible attitude of students towards the educational process the largest importance. In that they were followed by Belgrade and Zagreb.

2.3.2 Bribery



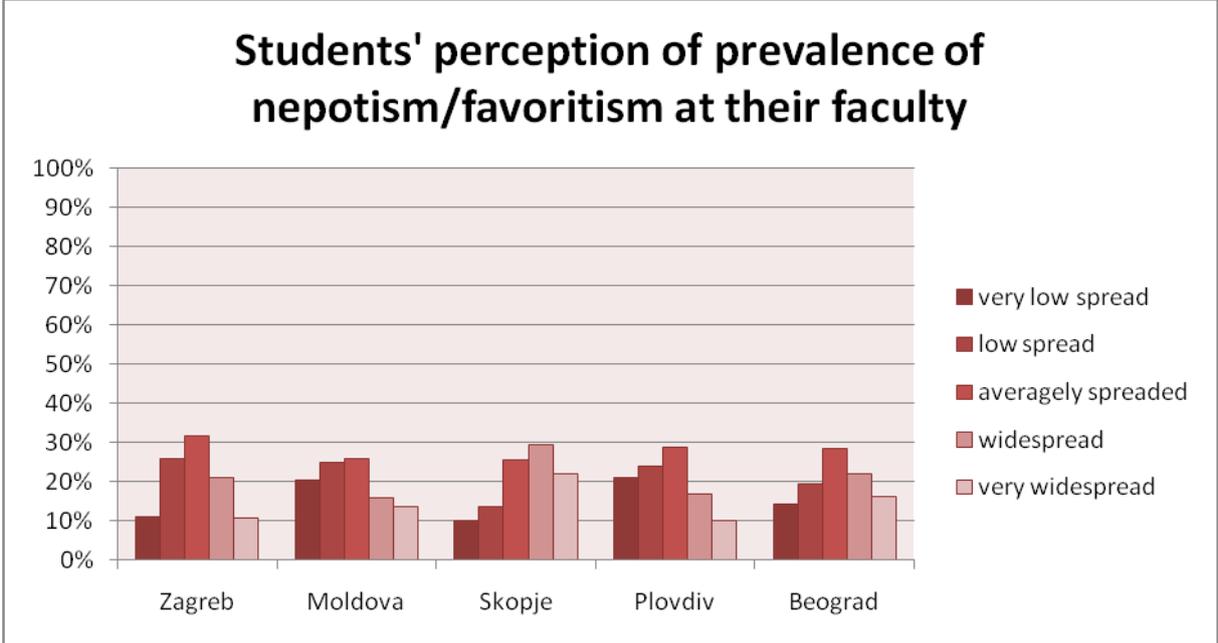
While in Belgrade, Plovdiv, Skopje and Moldova students similarly assessed prevalence of bribery at their faculties - around 20% of them perceived bribery as widespread or very widespread - in Zagreb a considerably less proportion of students chose these two options. The same difference was shown in direct experience with bribery in the form of direct payment.

2.3.3 Embezzlement



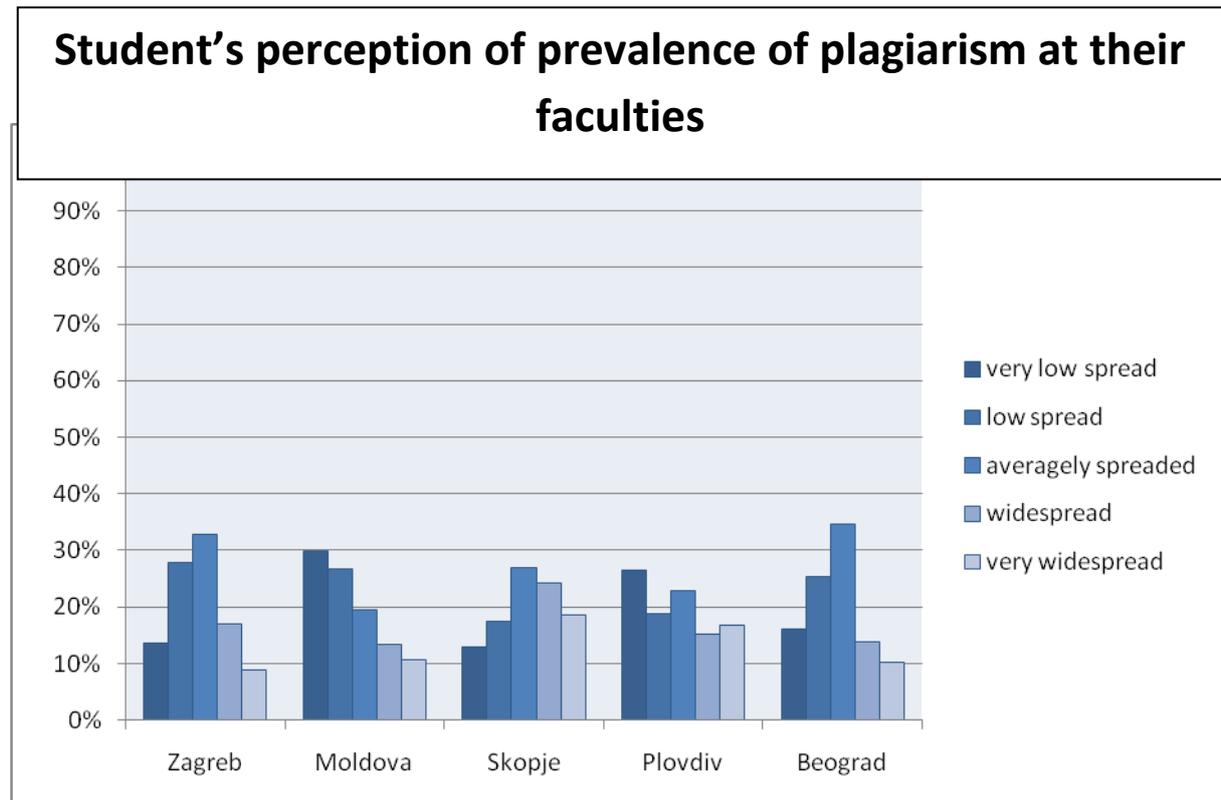
While it wasn't justified to put students' experience with embezzlement „in the same basket“ as their experience with other forms of corruption which can be encountered more often, measuring their perception of embezzlement's prevalence at their faculties makes sense because it represents trust in the soundness of their faculties' financial flows. Here the results in Belgrade, Skopje and Plovdiv are very similar. Zagreb students slightly more often tended to perceive embezzlement as averagely spread (midpoint of the scale) or widespread (fourth degree), while on the other hand every other student in Moldova perceived it as very low spread (first degree).

2.3.4 Nepotism/favoritism



Every other student in Skopje considers nepotism/favouritism as widespread or very widespread at their faculty. Almost 4 out of 10 students in Belgrade has the same opinion of their faculties. The same two universities have the „lead“ in direct experience with nepotist/favoritist enrollment as already explained.

2.3.5 Plagiarism



In Skopje most students perceive plagiarism as widespread or very widespread, which is in line with our data about direct experience with it, while in Moldova it was perceived as least widespread in the whole region.

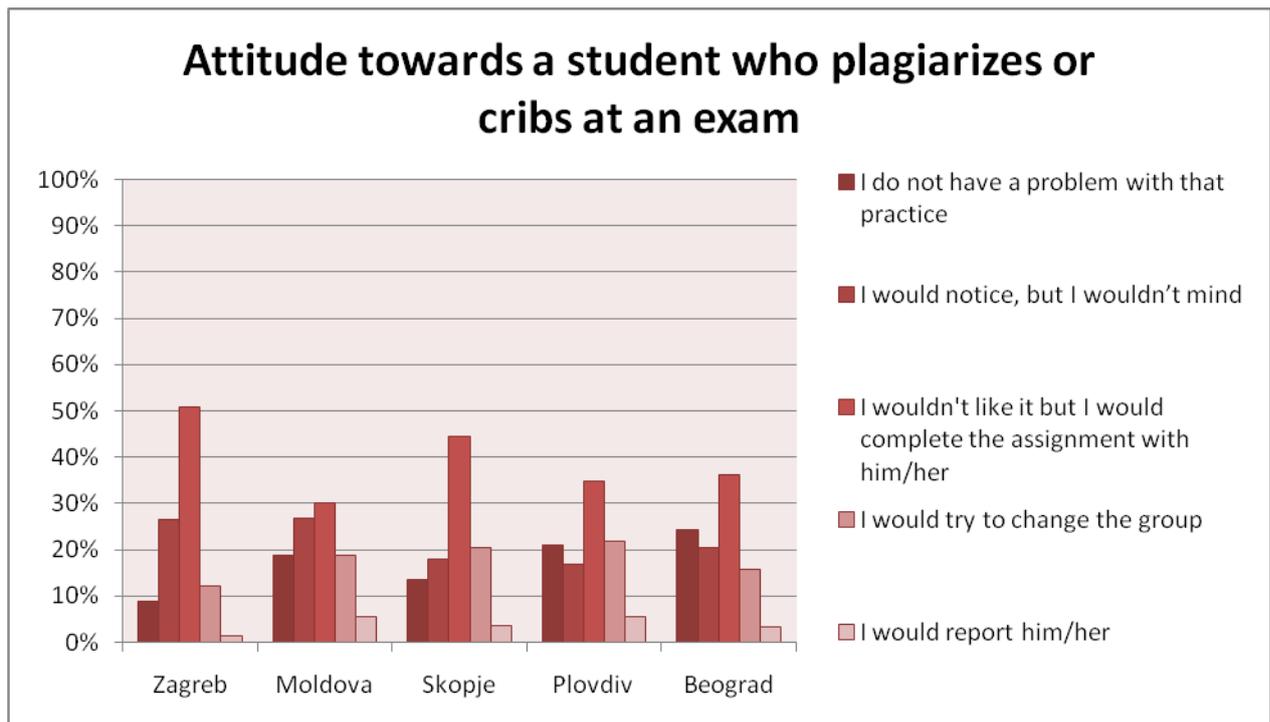
5. Attitudes towards persons involved in corruption

The following questions also partly refer to tolerance towards corruption as those in the 3. set, but in a different context: while the latter items operationalized tolerance as the degree of agreement with general statements, here we presented probable hypothetical situations to the respondent, asking him to indicate his intended behaviour or expected stance he or she would take towards a colleague or a professor involved in corrupt behaviour. Five offered options (possible behaviours) should stand for five degrees of social distance towards students and professors involved in corrupt behaviour. Therefore, here we don't intend to measure tolerance towards corruption, but the degree of social condemnation of those involved in it. It was important to measure this, because it can be argued that the incentives for a certain social practice are bound to be diminished or extinct only when the informal social norms alongside formal regulations and general (often socially desirable) rational opinions stand against it „operationally“ - that is, when the social norms cause feelings together with people's rational

cognitions, or cause people's actions even if they don't have direct gains from it, expressing social values in such a way.

To make the questionnaire more intelligible, only a few corrupt behaviours out of those in the 3. set of questions were chosen.

5.1 Attitudes towards students

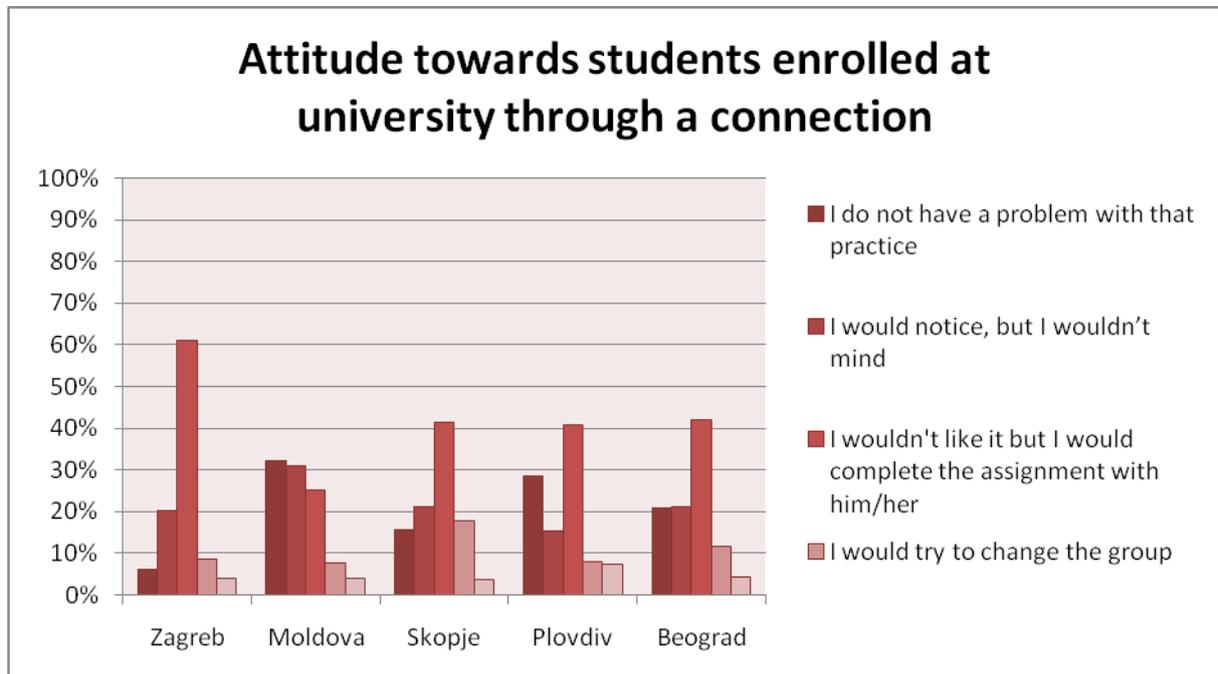


Responses to a following hypothetical question: The professor gives you a group assignment (e. g. a seminar presentation) and divides the course into groups. You are assigned to a group with a student who does/did one of the following: plagiarizes/cribs.

Students in Plovdiv have averagely chosen least tolerant intended behavior towards a colleague who plagiarized or cribbed in an exam, although only slightly more often than in Skopje, Moldova and Belgrade. In Belgrade almost every fourth student “doesn’t have a problem” with these practices. In Zagreb students show the biggest tendency towards the middle of the scale when compared to other four universities: the relative minority of them “doesn’t have a problem” with these practices and also the relative minority would either try to change the group if put together with a plagiarizing or cheating colleague or report such a student.

Those two behaviors were conflated in a single item because they were assumed to represent “light” forms of corruption as opposed to nepotistic enrolment and bribery in exams below.

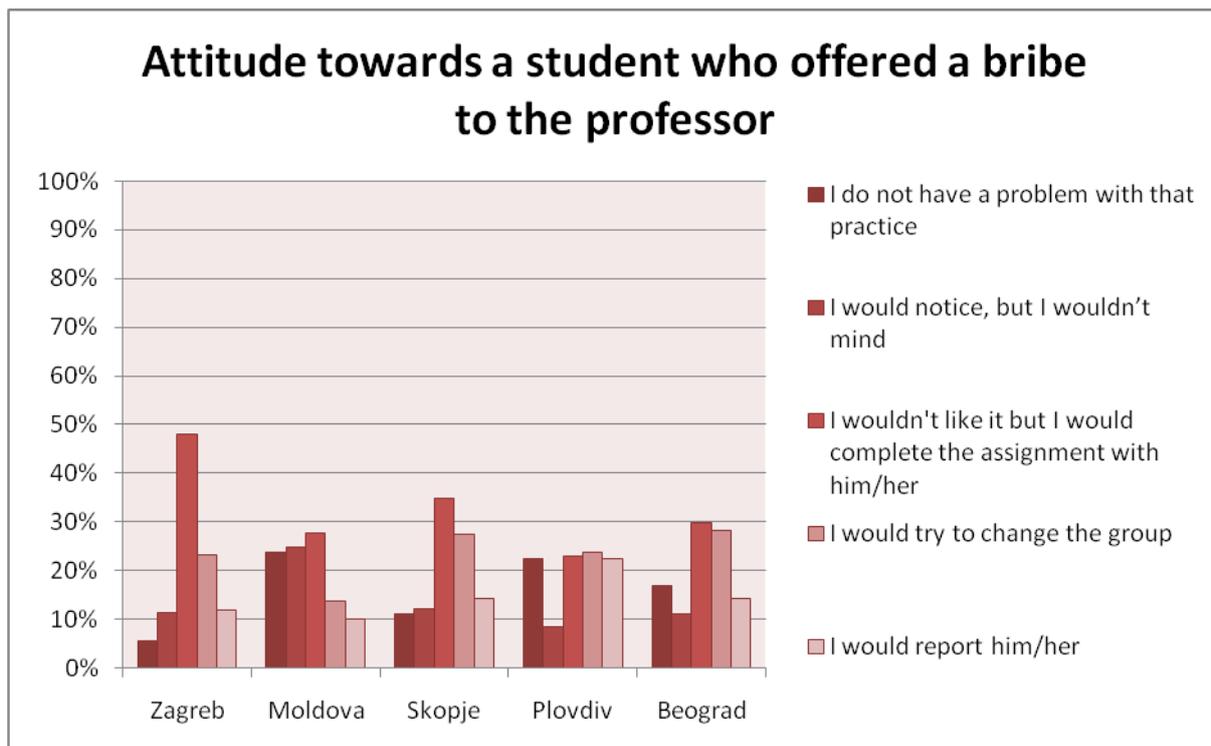
While this conflation shortened the questionnaire, it unfortunately impaired the comparison with the tolerance and experience items that have treated these behaviors separately.



Responses to a following hypothetical question: The professor gives you a group assignment (e. g. a seminar presentation) and divides the course into groups. You are assigned to a group with a student who does/did one of the following: was enrolled into college through a connection.

Moldovan and Plovdiv students have shown least readiness to socially condemn nepotistic enrolment (around every third student in these two universities chose „I don't have a problem with that practice“). However, in the other hand in Plovdiv most students often chose the biggest social distance when compared to other universities – 8 % of them claimed they would try to change the group in a group assignment if they were put together with a nepotistic colleague. Although, here the difference is slight, coming down to a few percentages. This could be the reason why Plovdiv students didn't show most tolerance towards student - initiated nepotistic enrolment when asked in general.

Interestingly, the second most intolerant social stance (trying to change the group) here was generally chosen considerably less often than when a colleague who plagiarizes or cribs is in question, Skopje notwithstanding. It maybe can be accounted for by the fact that the interest of the respondent is directly endangered if he or she is to complete an assignment with a colleague who is known to have stolen other people's work in the past.

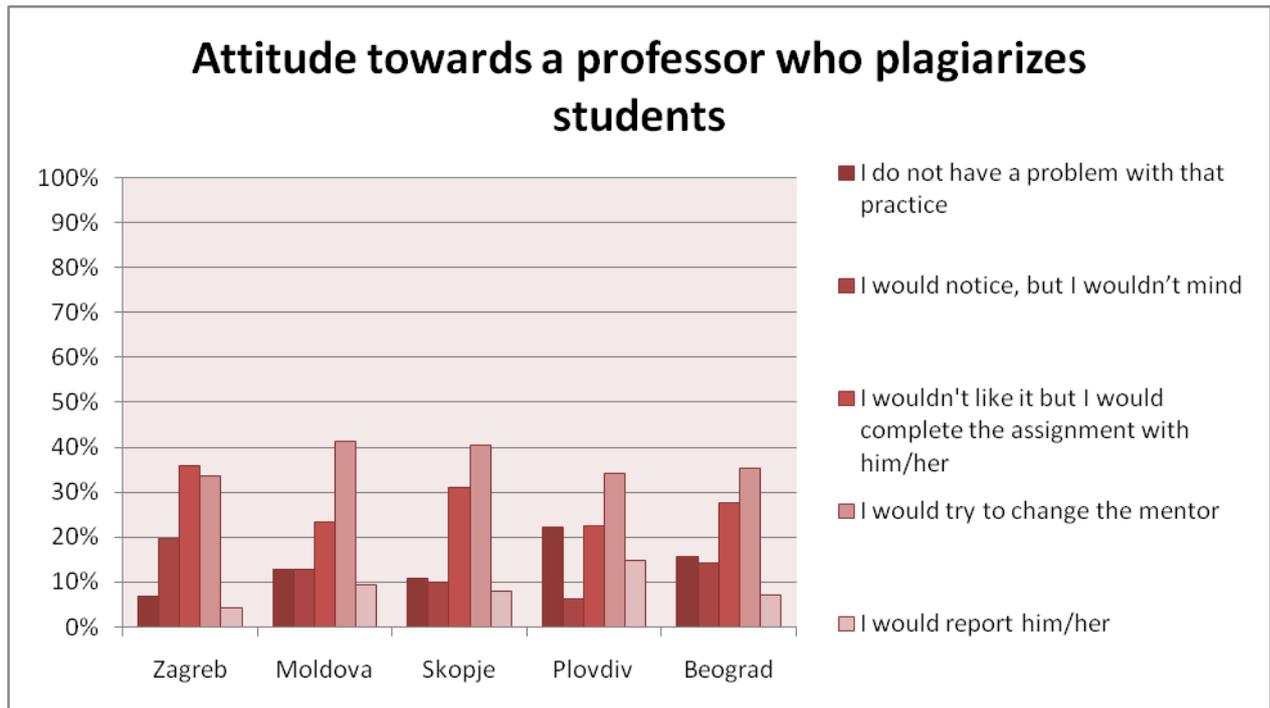


Responses to a following hypothetical question: The professor gives you a group assignment (e. g. a seminar presentation) and divides the course into groups. You are assigned to a group with a student who does/did one of the following: offered a bribe to a professor.

Students from Moldova again showed the least social distance on average when confronted with a student who offered a bribe to the professor. But in general, students in all five universities showed the biggest social distance towards a colleague who offered bribe when compared to plagiarizing, cribbing and nepotistic enrolment. This is in line with the results about tolerance only in case of bribery. While the nepotistic enrolment was generally tolerated in the similar percentages as bribery, students expressed considerably less social distance towards nepotistic enrolled colleagues than towards the ones who offered bribe.

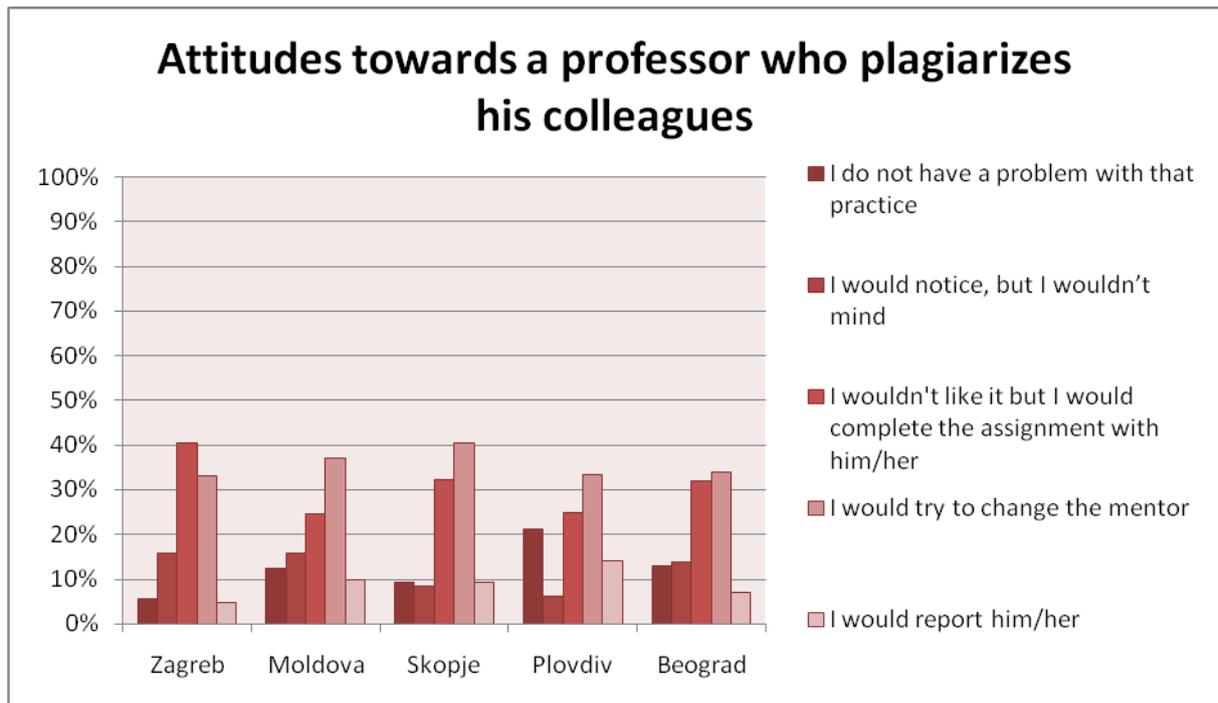
In Plovdiv every fifth student claimed he or she would change the group if put together with a student who offered bribe. Also, every fifth student there claimed he or she would report such a student. But again, the distribution in Plovdiv is obviously bimodal, as above: in the other hand, every fifth student there „doesn't have a problem with that practice“.

5.2 Attitudes towards professors



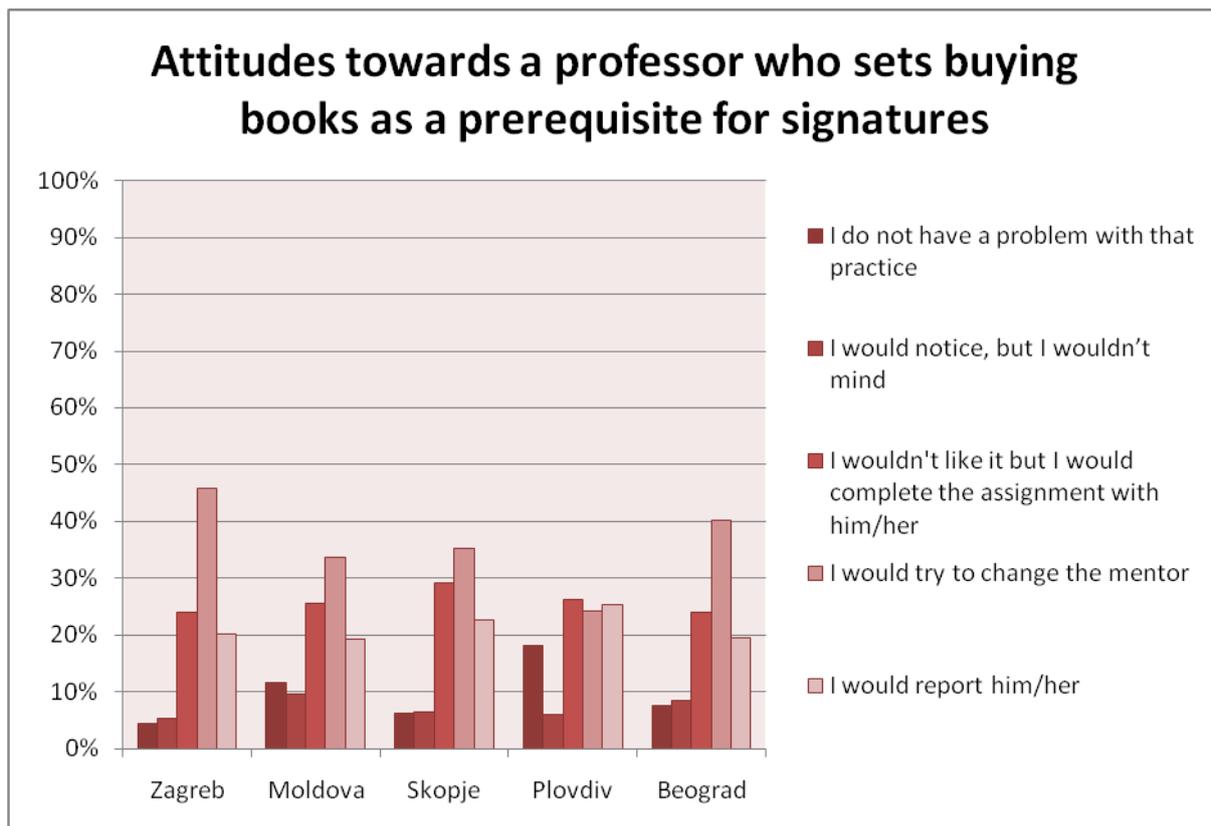
Responses to a following hypothetical question: You are writing your graduation thesis and the topic which interests you, it belongs to the area of professor who: plagiarizes students' work.

Again, the same pattern is shown in Plovdiv when social distance towards a professor who plagiarizes students is concerned: relative to other universities, most students there “doesn't have a problem with that practice”, but also most of them claim they would report the mentor of their graduation thesis if he or she is known to have stolen students' work. In general, the respondents opted more for trying to change the mentor than for reporting him. Also, there was a considerable number of students who opted that they mind the practice but wouldn't do anything about it.



Responses to a following hypothetical question: You are writing your graduation thesis and the topic which interests you, it belongs to the area of professor who: plagiarizes his colleagues.

And again the same pattern in Plovdiv is shown when social distance towards a professor who plagiarize their colleagues is concerned. By now, we have considerable evidence that **in Plovdiv there is a relatively deep divide between those students who don't condemn corrupt colleagues or professors and those who even claim they are ready to take action that expresses condemnation (whether to avoid contact with corrupt professors and students or to report them).**



Responses to a following hypothetical question: You are writing your graduation thesis and the topic which interests you, it belongs to the area of professor who: sets buying books as a prerequisite for signatures.

The results about social distance towards professors involved in bribery in the form of conditioning the signatures⁴⁸ with buying books reflect the previously spotted difference between tolerance and social distance towards bribery and other, „lighter“ forms of corruption: everywhere around every fifth student claimed he or she would report a professor involved in such a practice.

The same division between very condemning and non – condemning students is again shown in Plovdiv, this time in favor of the first.

The interconnectedness of attitudes towards corrupt students and professors is considerable. Even though the structure matrix (Oblimin rotation) divides the two into separate factors, they are reasonably well correlated (0,488) and the proportion of common variance is considerably high (72 %). Though, when bribery is concerned, there seems to be some student bias: proportions of those who claim they would report a professor who conditionally sells books are on average almost double of the proportions of those who would report a student who

⁴⁸The practice in most faculties regarding the exam sitting is that each student should have his student booklet signed by the professor, who with that gesture stated that the student fulfilled the necessary pre exam tasks, such as essay writing

offered bribe. Only in Plovdiv there is no student bias, since the proportions of those allegedly ready to report bribery being relatively high.

As already stated, correlations between attitudes towards corrupt professors and students are reasonably high. The correlation between the attitude towards a professor that plagiarizes students and towards a professor that plagiarizes his colleagues is especially high (0,802). These results could be in line with the before mentioned assumption that often the very same professors engage in multiple misdeeds once they „cross the line“ of unethical behaviour, depending on how far that line is set. Maybe the respondents imagined specific students and professors they know to be corrupt when they indicated their social distance. If you plagiarized a student once, you'll find it easier to plagiarize a colleague next time, and in less often instances, to set buying of the book as a prerequisite for signatures (we obtained less correlations between plagiarism - „lighter“ corruption - and bribery items here, as above in tolerance section). In further research, whether often the same persons are involved in a vast array of mischief could be checked with specific questions, either in qualitative or quantitative form.

While we peeked into distributions of tolerance items when comparing them to attitude items here, it would certainly be better if they have had the scales with the same number of degrees, because correlational and factor analysis could more precisely inform us about the interconnectedness tolerance towards corruption and attitude (social distance) towards people involved in corruption. Furthermore, if the comparison of these different aspects of corruption perception is the goal of analysis, the items measuring them should have more similar content: for example, the tolerance item about the conditional book selling mentioned „advantages“, while the attitude item mentioned „prerequisites for signatures“, which is a fundamentally different situation for a poor student who approaches examination.

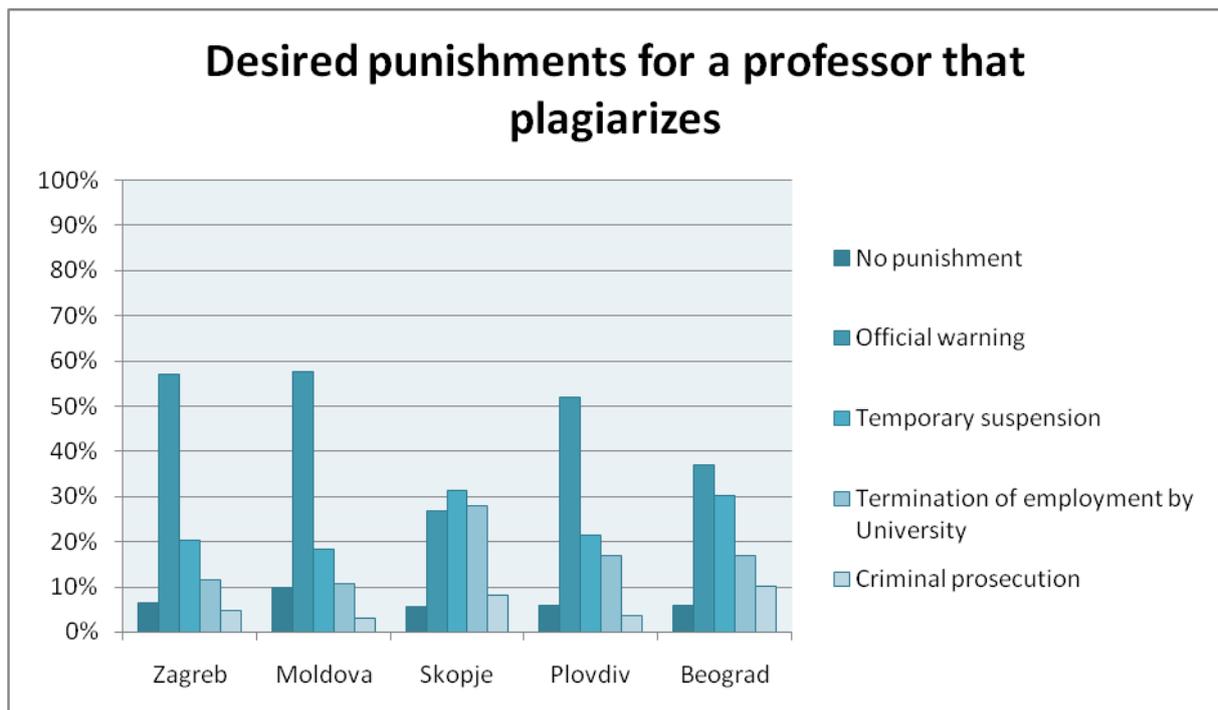
Factor analysis of experience and attitude items was more in place because they both had five degree scales (even though their content isn't paralleled in a few instances). Oblimin rotation showed that there were no correlations between factors worthy of mentioning: in two out of three instances they even fall below statistical significance. This suggests that **experience with corruption generally does not affect the students' propensity to socially condemn it or not**. If we have in mind that the correlations between tolerance and experience items were also relatively low, we can propose a conclusion that **attitude and tolerance towards corruption represent value - beliefs more than they arise from and refer to experience with corruption**. This could be important from policy - making perspective, because it could indicate that there is a solid base of students with an attitudinal predisposition to combat

corruption. Unfortunately, the opposite also seems true, as can be seen from the graphs presented in this section.

However, this claims about willingness to report corrupt colleagues and professors shouldn't be taken for granted, of course. This is shown and discussed in short in the section below.

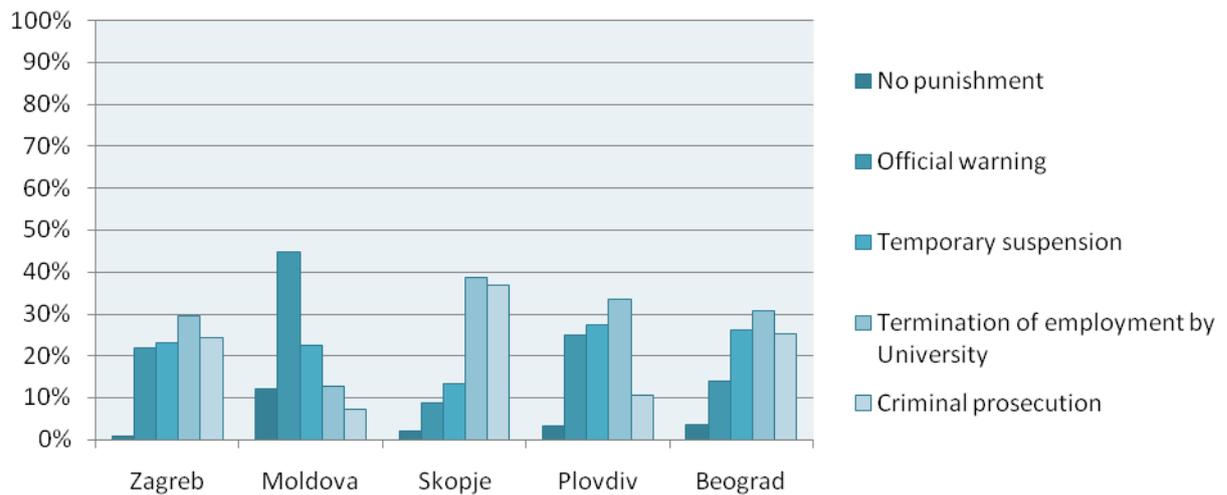
6. Desired punishments for persons involved in corruption

6.1 Desired punishments for professors



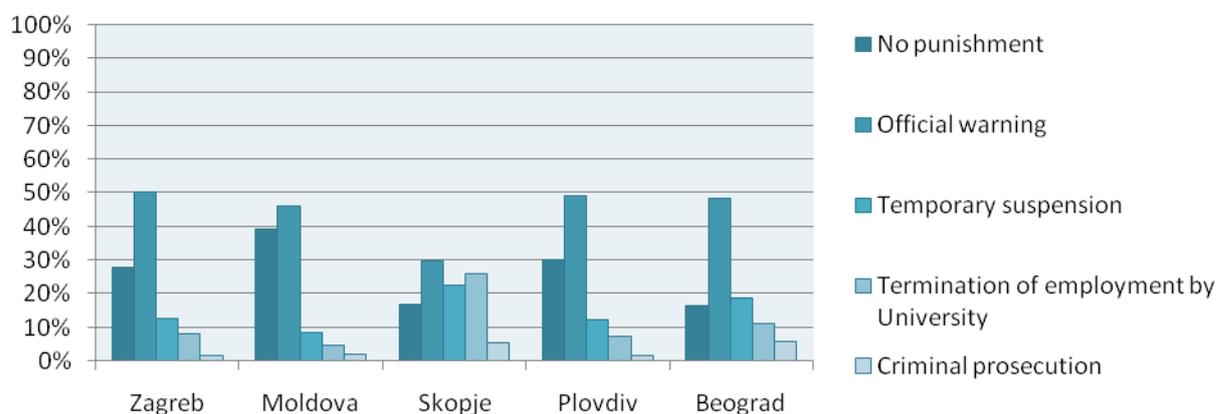
The graph shows that professor plagiarism tended not to „deserve“ severe punishments in general. However, in Skopje and Belgrade this holds considerably less. Almost every third student in Skopje would fire a professor plagiarist. Curiously enough, 10 % of Belgrade students would even criminally prosecute professors involved in this malpractice.

Desired punishment for a professor that sets buying books as a prerequisite for signatures

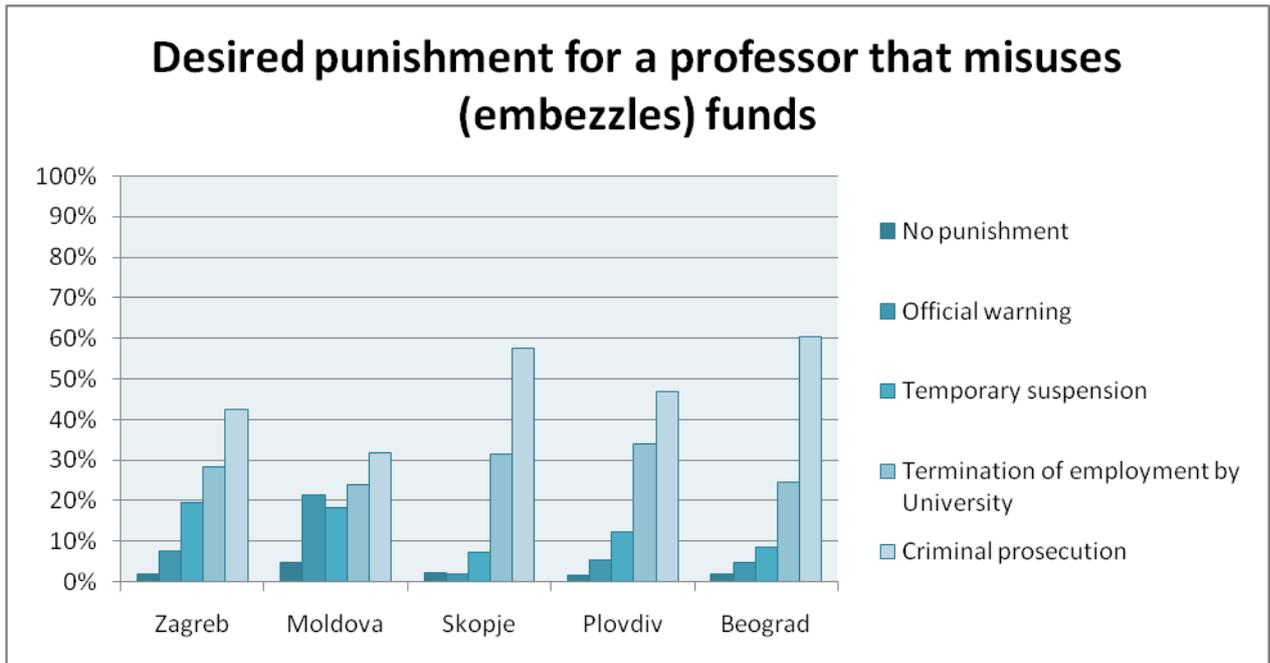


Students assessed bribery in the form of conditional book selling as a considerably heavier misdeed, except in Moldova. More than 10 % of students there wouldn't punish that practice at all. Skopje again takes the lead in severity of desired punishments, followed by Belgrade. Students in general viewed allowing students to cheat as a minor issue, except in Skopje.

Desired punishments for a professor that allows students to cheat

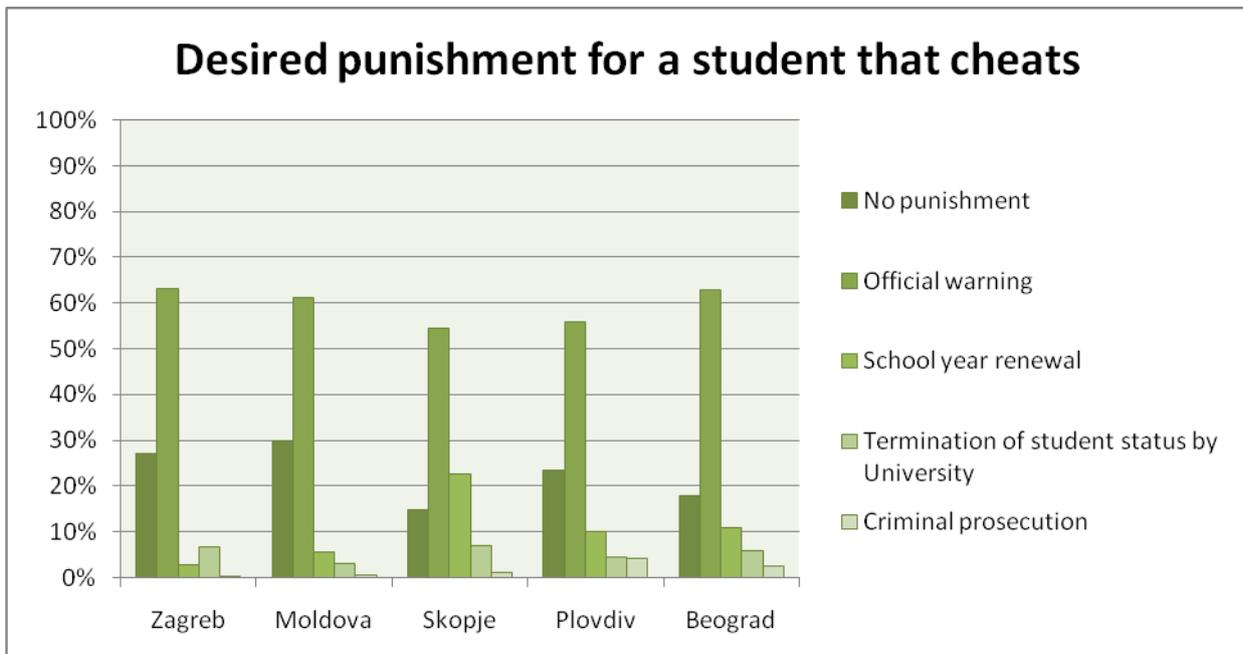


More than one quarter of Skopje students would fire a professor that allows students to cheat. Skopje students have also shown least tolerance towards two forms of student cheating, as abovementioned.



Embezzlement was generally „awarded“ with the most severe punishments of all the forms of misbehavior mentioned here. Though, Moldova and to a lesser extent Zagreb viewed embezzlement a little milder. Every fifth Moldovan student would punish embezzlement with no more than an official warning.

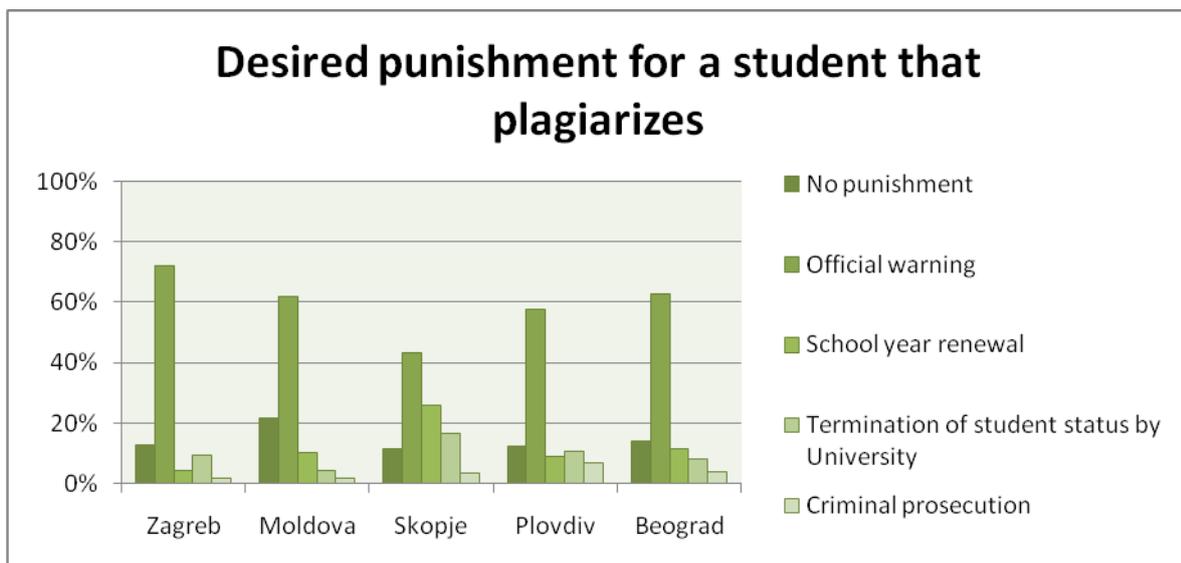
6.2 Desired punishments for students



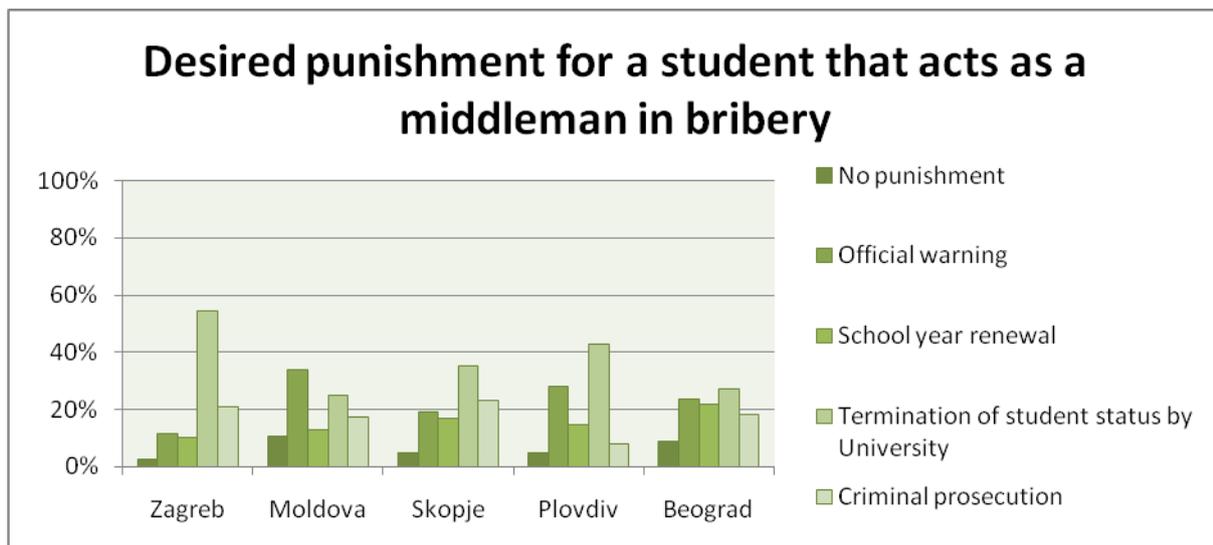
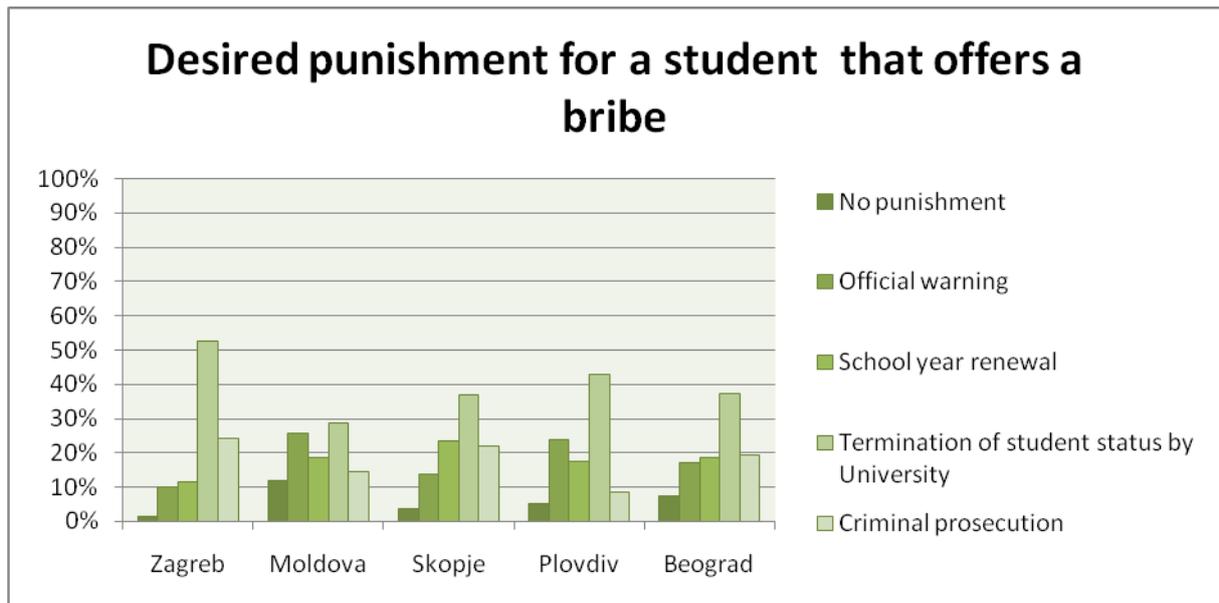
Since criminal prosecution of student cheating is neither realistic nor a desirable scenario even in the minds of most people who are for harsh sanctions for people involved in corrupt

activities, attention should be given to the first four degrees of the scale. Also, the university regulations differences should be kept in mind: just for illustration, in Zagreb school year renewal doesn't exist as a specific measure in almost all university and faculty statutes.

Given these limitations, once again we find the most „harsh“ students in Skopje: almost one quarter of them would punish the perpetrator with academic year renewal. We can see almost the same pattern in desired punishments for student plagiarism, which by its nature can be considered as a special case of cheating.

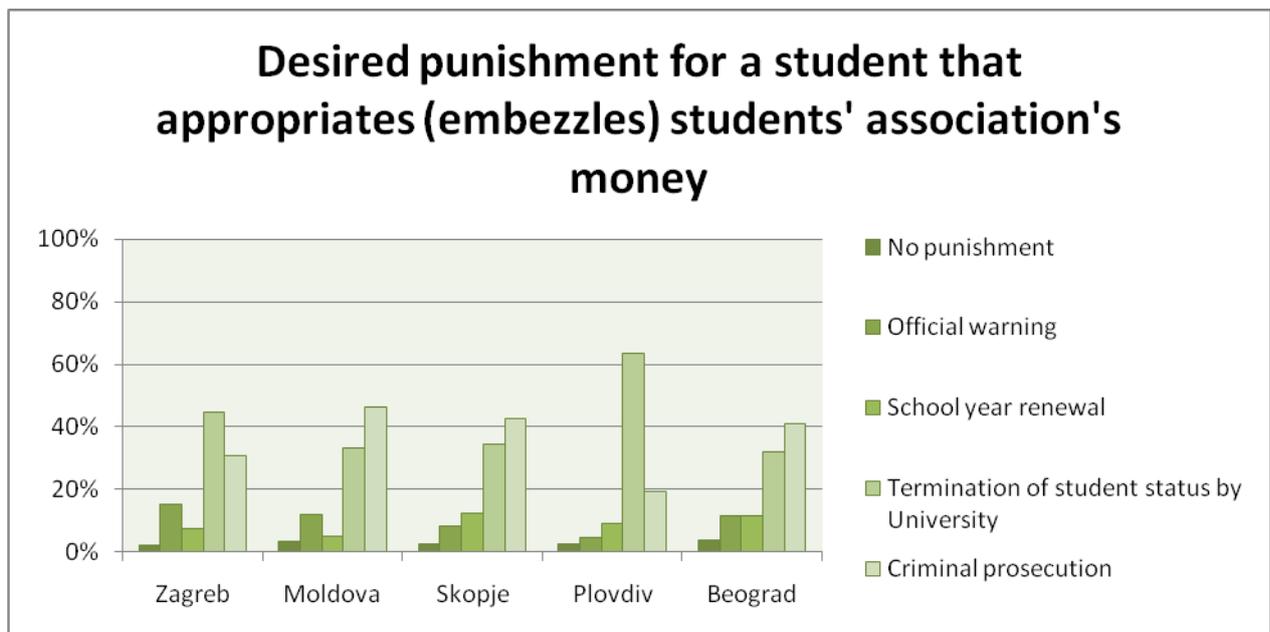


The respondents proved to be less strict for student plagiarizing: most students in all universities opted for official warning regarding this corruptive behaviour. Much smaller percentages chose harsher punishments, such as school year renewal or student status termination. Although there are no significant differences among universities in the region – students in Skopje tend to be a bit more strict than their counterpart.



As expected, an opposite pattern is shown when desired punishments for a student that offers a bribe are concerned. More or less in every university the most severe punishments are reserved for students engaged in bribery. In Zagreb students are only slightly more harsh than students elsewhere: over half of Zagreb students would expel a student who offers bribe from the university. Interestingly, very similar results are found in „punishing“ students that act as middlemen in bribery: it seems that when bribery is concerned, the question of who broke in through the window, and who was just holding the ladder is of no relevance to students' judgement. The analogy with the burglary is very illustrative because it shows that middleman must also have an active role in connecting the two sides in transaction i.e. without him the bribe wouldn't have occurred. The data from the interviews support this

because the majority of faculty staff respondents support this statement. Regarding the severity of punishment, in Zagreb every fifth student would criminally prosecute it, and well over half of Zagreb students would expel the middle man from the university. Only in Moldova there is a slight inclination towards milder punishments. All this is in line with the beforementioned tolerance results.

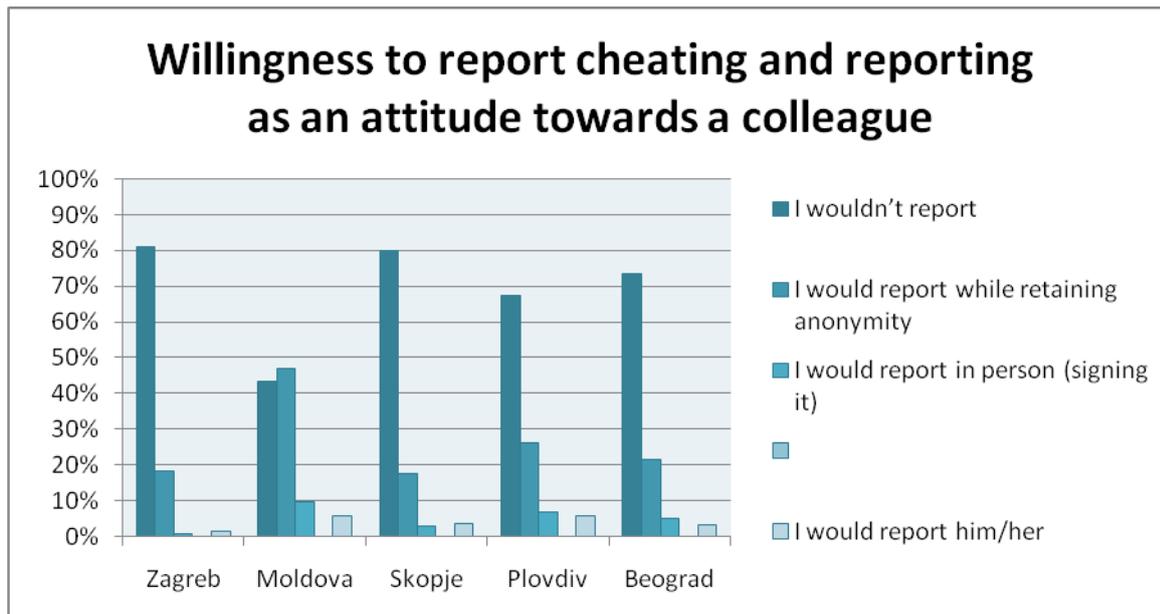


When embezzlement of students' association's money is in question, more or less the same eagerness for severe punishments is shown everywhere: more than three quarters of students in all 5 universities would punish it with either expelment or criminal prosecution.

7. Willingness to report corruption

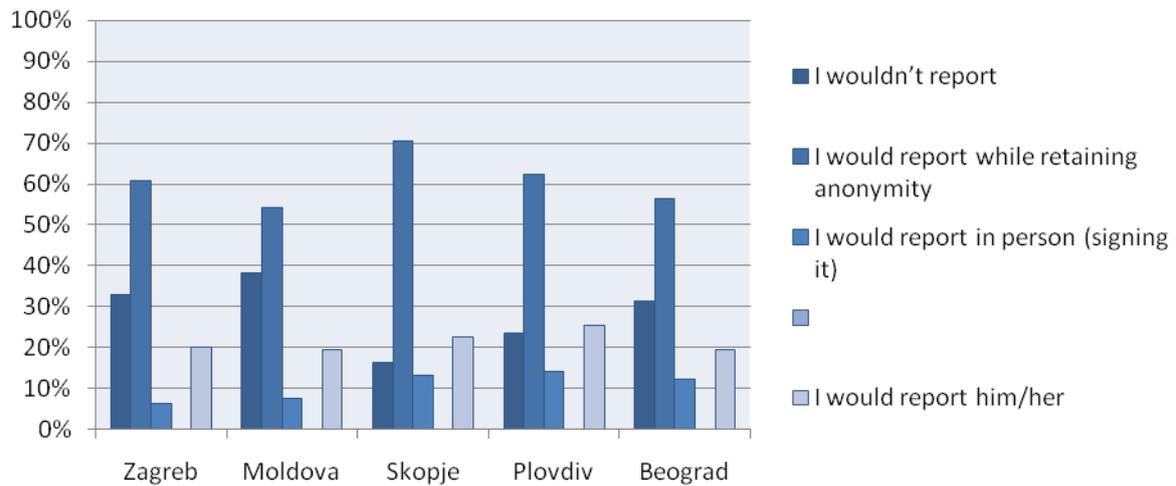
The students were asked whether they would report 8 corruption situations, 6 student - initiated and 2 professor - initiated. There were three possible options: not reporting, reporting anonymously and reporting in person. Three student items referred to cheating: cheating on exams, getting someone to write your paper, and writing someone else's paper.

The results obtained with these 3 items that refer to cheating, computed into a mean index (their intercorrelations ranged from 0,543 to 0, 718) are represented below. We juxtaposed them to the percentages of students who expressed the most indignant stance towards a hypothetical colleague that cheats (plagiarizes or cribs) in the question belonging to 5. section, i.e. they chose 5th degree which states „I would report him/her“.



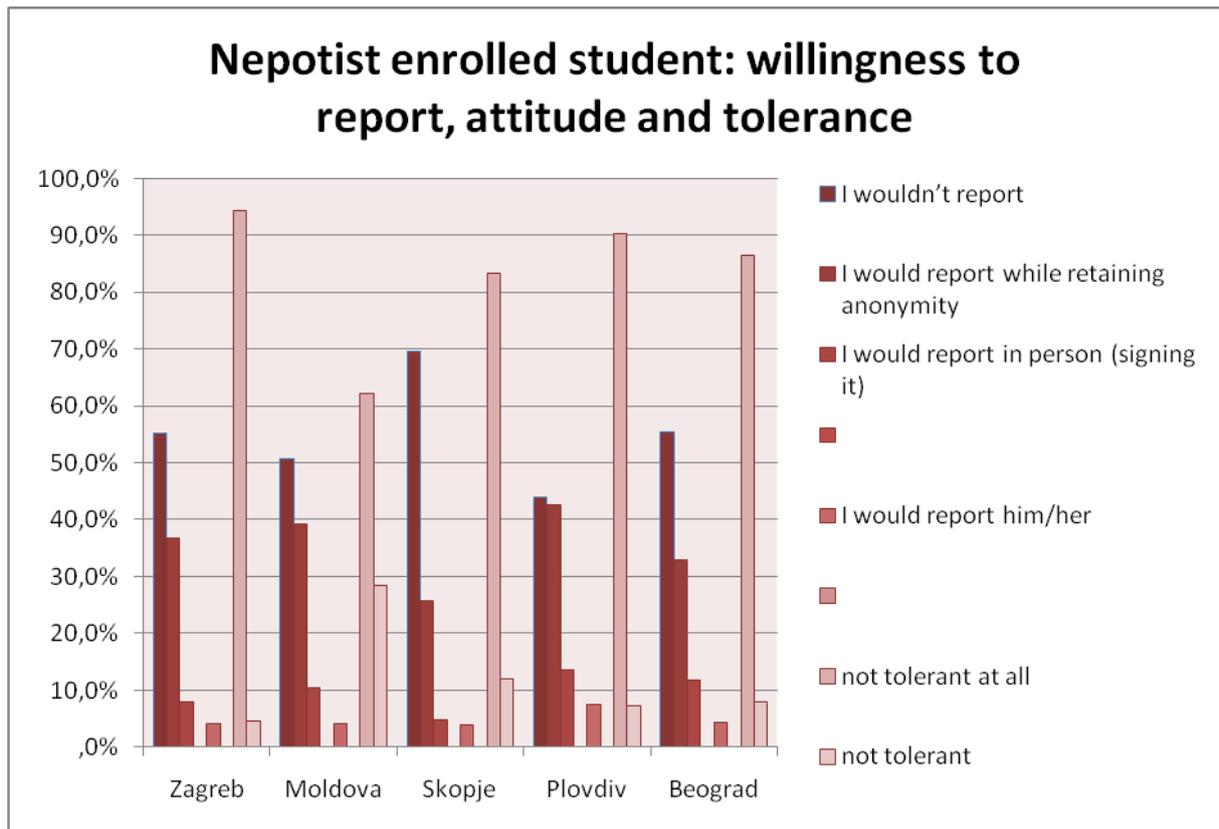
The point of this comparison is to see how volatile are the students' judgements about their readiness to report cheating. Of course, when you present a scale to the respondent, he usually views its degrees in context of the scale range, not *per se*, but he is still capable of discerning the meaning of not reporting from reporting corruption. Apart from the presented scales, this volatility could also arise from the social context two judgements are made in: it's a different thing if you report a random student (responding to an impersonal question) or the one who attends the same seminars as you (concrete hypothetical situation of being put on the same group assignment with a student who cheats).

Willingness to report conditional book selling and reporting as an attitude towards a professor who does it



A similar thing was done for conditional book selling; only there was no need for computing an index since only one item covered willingness to report conditional book selling.

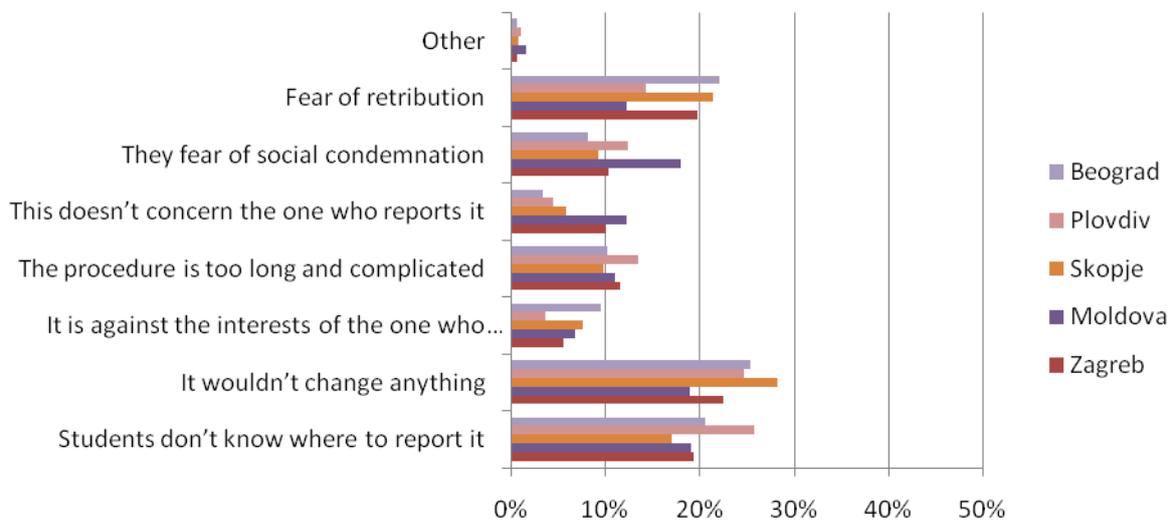
To further demonstrate the expected inconsistency of attitude, three aspects of perception of nepotistic enrolled students are represented below: willingness to report the practice, reporting as an attitude towards a person and tolerance. Of course, one can by no means say that intolerant stance towards a corrupt practice automatically exerts reporting it in order for this stance to be consistent, but the gap between the numbers of those who do not tolerate this practice at all and those who would report is considerable. The case of nepotistic enrolled students is in this respect generally representative for other forms of corruption.



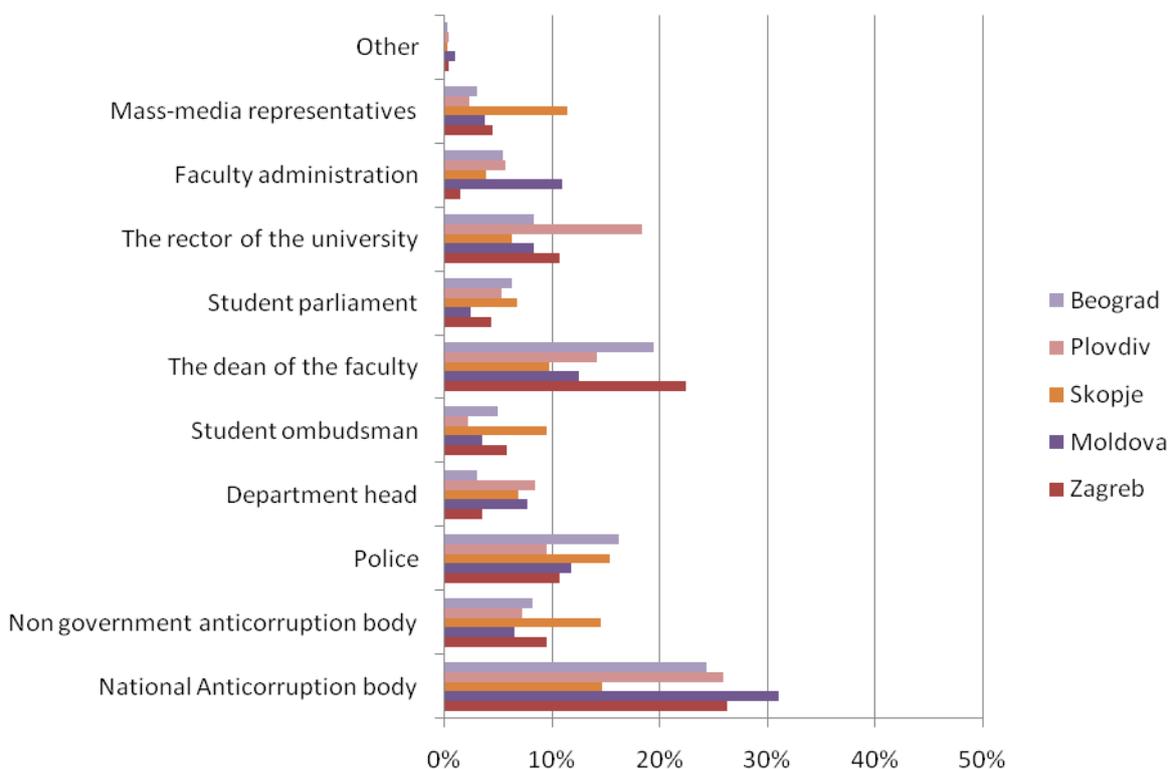
8. Multiple responses set

When it comes to reporting corruption, it takes a very determined person in a country in transition to report corruptive acts, bearing in mind the low level of trust in institutions and that people don't know where exactly they should report it. This is quite visible from the table. From around 20 to 30 % of students responses are that reporting wouldn't change anything while 17-26 % of them state that students don't know where to report. Also, another big obstacle is fear. Nearly 20 % of students responses are emphasizing fear of retribution or social condemnation.

Students' assessments of general reasons why students do not report corruption

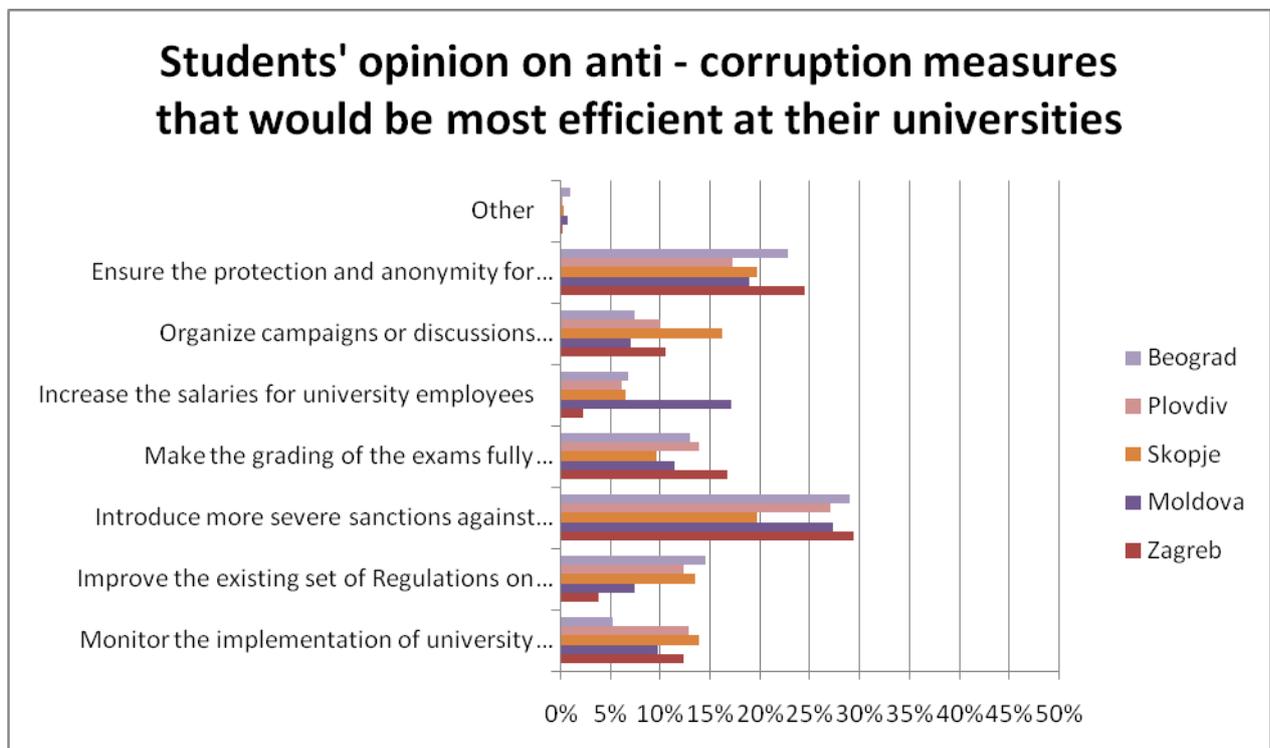


Students' opinion on who should be responsible for combating corruption



Combating corruption is a battle to be fought at all levels of society, but specific differences in institutions and/or persons which students perceive as primarily responsible are very interesting. While in most cases all countries follow a certain pattern, which emphasizes the

role of the National Anticorruption body, police and faculty dean, there are local specifics that need to be explained further. Due to the fact that it would require a lot of resources and that it was not among the goals of the research, they will here be simple pointed out. It is interesting that in all countries, except Macedonia, students think that national anticorruption body should be, by far, the most responsible for combating corruption, also Macedonian students value the mass media representatives high above their colleagues when it comes to combating corruption. It can also be noted that students at Zagreb and Beograd, in greater percentages than the rest, think that deans should be combating corruption. Plovdiv stands out in perceiving the rector as the person most responsible for combating corruption.



Two anti – corruption measures sprung out on our list: introducing more severe sanctions and ensuring the protection and the anonymity of those who report corruption, the latter strongly emphasizing the social stigmatization of the people who report corruption. As illustrated above, fear of social condemnation by peers or fear of possible retribution of the people reported is a great contributor to not reporting. The students identified this problem as an important issue and therefore find it necessary to give security to the people that decide to report corruptive acts. Some country specifics can, again, be noted. Such as Moldova's high above average opinion that increasing salaries of university employees is a good way to

combat corruption or Skopje students' opinion that campaigns or discussions regarding corruption in HEI should be organized.

Interview analyses

An interview is a specialized type of communication, usually verbal, between two or more people and it is carried out for a specific purpose. Interviews are used in qualitative research and they can provide in-depth information around the topic. Interviews may be useful as a follow-up to questionnaires, in order to further investigate the given responses.

Network conducted 23 interviews with faculty staff - teaching (professors, research assistants, etc...) and administrative. The same questions were used for all interviews, but a certain amount of flexibility was given to the interviewers, in order to deeply explore the respondents' knowledge, attitudes and experience with different problems in higher education in respective countries

When it comes to problems regarding higher education, some respondents pointed out low salary of teaching staff as one of the problems. Also, sometimes, student attitude towards education appears as a problem. Some of them mentioned existence of nepotism (before they were asked about any misdeeds on their Faculty).

Concerning experience with corruption and knowledge about its existence, respondents (teaching staff) from Croatia and Bulgaria said that they didn't witness "heavier" forms of corruption, such as bribery and nepotism, nor did they ever hear for an occurrence of such practice at their institution. Although, in Bulgaria one of the professors during the conversation stated that some students asked him to write academic paper for them in for money. Interviewees from Serbia pointed out that 'the system is such that it encourages corruptive situations' and that there is more 'nepotism than bribery' around. Also, they said that that there is a great difference between corruption in HE before and after 2000, that corruption is present today but that it is not as systematical as it was. They mentioned existence of 'corruption on Ministry scientific research projects'. When it comes to their faculty, they said that corruption doesn't exist. On the other hand, in Moldova and Macedonia, respondents stated that corruption exists, but that is mostly hear-say, and it usually concerns cheating, plagiarism or such "lighter" forms of malpractices. Experience with these forms had also their colleagues from Croatia. In Moldova, one professor said that while he worked as a manager, he was asked to give to someone a place in the dorm.

When asked about reasons for appearing of corruptive deeds, there were different opinions, such as 'disability of students to meet some requires and to accomplish given tasks', that 'professors are lazy to do their job', 'low earnings' of professors, good marks and place in dorm as an incentive for students, etc...

In Bulgaria and Serbia, respondents pointed out that corruption is a part of 'our culture – we always try to circumvent the rules, to find the shorter way.'

Almost all respondents claimed that students and their parents are usually initiators of such mischief, but professors hold more responsibility, since they have the authority, the status.

Consequences of corruption in Higher Education are that 'everyone finishes their Faculties and the employers have no signal about who is a good student' and students that received their grade using legitimate ways are put in an unfair position, compared to students that used different methods to receive their grade. At the end, there is a big number of highly educated workforces that are actually undereducated. Corruption in higher education affects mostly the students according to some of the interviewees, because they do not get quality knowledge and education and can reflect on their professional realization. They will have to continue to corrupt further in their lives and when they are asked for some tangible products, they won't be able to deliver them. In order not to be excluded, they will continue to struggle and find connections for employment etc.

When asked about their feelings in hypothetical situation where they catch someone in cheating, most of the interviewees stated that they would feel unease and frustrated. They said that they do not approve, but that they understand students, that it is normal for them 'to get by', but also that they do not know how students cheat, that they 'cannot see it'. Some professors also say that their exams are designed in such a way that 'students cannot cheat'. In case of catching student cheating, their reactions differ. In Bulgaria, respondents said that they don't do anything, or they put lower grade or not let the student pass the exam. Similar situation is present in Croatia. In Macedonia, one of the professors asserted that there is traditional culture on non-punishment or using small punishments, which in other words means conscious tolerating.

When it comes to other hypothetical situation – in which they would be offered bribe, almost all of respondents said they would feel offended, they would prefer to redirect the subject of the conversation or will stop communicate with that person. Some of them would report that person to the dean of the Faculty.

Plagiarism was also one of the subjects of the interviews and professors recognized it as a problem. They said that it became more and more widespread in the past few years. Interesting to mention is that in Bulgaria, according to the administrator that was interviewed, by cheating and plagiarizing the student enters in the theory of the subject, and therefore it can be something good, because the student sees how the things should be done. Respondents from Serbia agreed on the fact that students “don’t have the writing skills and don’t know how to quote”, marking this as one of the main reasons for plagiarism. In Croatia, plagiarism is also present but, moreover, forms of unethical behavior which is not directly prohibited by any regulations: favoritist review of academic papers, i.e. situation when a professor's friends and acquaintances write favorable reviews of his papers, contributing to their higher categorization, which then has direct positive reverberations on his academic advancement. Part of this problem emerges from wholly structural factors: in some scientific areas, there are simply too few practitioners in the field so that it's very hard to do the reviews anonymously.

Concerning sanctions for perpetrators, most of them claimed that there should be administrative sanction – in case of bribed professors, they should get fired. They said that appropriate bodies should take measures. As for students, respectively, they should be expelled from the University. Respondents from Macedonia and Serbia asserted that everyone involved should bare a sanction proportional to their role in the act. If the professor misused his position, than the student is a victim, even though he accepted to take part in the misconduct, he is still a victim. If students initiate it, however, which de facto they do, than the victim is the professor.

Responding to the question about their opinion on the existing institutions that deal with corruption, examinees in Serbia said that “the system works in that way that it is not up to institutions, but to individuals”, adding that “there is a lack of harsh penalties at all levels”, which was also pointed out by the examinees from Bulgaria. One examinee in Serbia responded that she isn’t familiar with those institutions, while the other said that she “never cooperated with anyone from those institutions”. In Moldova they said that Commission of Ethics exists, and if there are cases when the ethics norms are infringed, these cases will be discussed there. One professor from Macedonia said that they have disciplinary commission at the faculty, and in his/her experience, it depends on the professor that finds out, or the assistants, and if they will process the act. There are many cases where it’s not even reported. Other respondent said that he/she don’t know how engaged those institutions are, and they probably react if someone reports a case. But coming to do a research he/she doesn’t think they show enough engagement.

Regarding development of additional regulations/documents in field of preventing corruptive acts, most of them claimed that some additional measures should be done. There is a need of more detailed regulations covering all of the practices. Also, there is a need to define what actually corruption is, i.e. is it bribes or other misconducts and other gains apart from pecuniary ones should be included. On the other hand, in Serbia most of examinees find that additional regulation is not needed and that the existing regulation should be carried out, that is that the question is “to what extent the professors do their jobs”.

Public information access requests

The Law on Free Access to Information of Public Character allows both people and legal entities (in countries where the Law has been passed, and it is passed in all the member countries of the ACSN) to request any information considered to be of public importance from the institution holding those information.

Public information is defined as: information held by a public authority, created during work or related to the work of the public authority, contained in a document and related to the public authority (may vary dependant on the wording of the Law).

The institution holding the information is legally bound to provide the information to the ones requesting it in a certain time period. If the institution does not provide the requested information, additional legal mechanisms are activated enabling its acquisition.

Bearing in mind that the universities, faculties, the Ministry of Education, inspection commissions, etc. are considered to be holders of public information, this tool is of great importance when researching corruption in the HE (higher education) process. Unlike the other tools used in the measuring of corruption, the request for public information provides factual instead of perceptual data. All of the information asked by the Network members are those who are supposed to be important for different stakeholders in higher education (such as students, their parents, student organization activists and wider public) and not confidential or that could be in any way described as ones with restricted access. Therefore, all of them should be easily accessible on the faculty websites but unfortunately that is not the case.

The Network members have sent 52 requests with 109 different questions in total. Network organization members had different experience when it comes to responses in legal frame. In Serbia, none of the faculties responded in due time, while in Zagreb 5 responded out of 31 sent in total, and in Moldova 2 out of 4 responded in legal frame. In Bulgaria, request sent to the Ministry of education received responses in the legal time frame, unlikely those sent to University of Plovdiv. In Macedonia, only one faculty out of 7 didn't answer in legal time frame.

This indicates the low level of transparency of faculties in the region. They don't have proactive stance towards making public interest information available, and it seems that they break the regulations regarding this issue, without any consequences. In this atmosphere, where there is low level of institutional transparency, one can find a good start for disrespect of the existing rules and also for emerging of corruption – this data doesn't show that for

certain there is a corruption on this faculties, but on the other hand, it sure does raise suspicion.

Network member organizations used questions regarding multiple set of corruptive misdeeds, like bribery, nepotism, cheating, plagiarism and similar.

Network member organizations asked for similar information, but there were some differences. Some of the questions were regarding the financial flows – like financial plan, annual and financial reports, outlines and criteria for creating the prices of different taxes that students pay (including tuition fee), and also documents concerning the pecuniary supplements given to the Student Parliament. Further, there were questions about ethics in higher education – about disciplinary commission and its reports (number of corruption cases, penalties and similar), about complaints for corruption that have been submitted from students at Deanships/Rector, also documents specifying the corrupt/ non academic students and staff behavior, and the penalties for such behavior, Code of Conduct copy etc. Regarding the evaluation, requests had questions about evaluation and self – evaluation of the Faculty, and also the ones about evaluation of teaching staff done by students (copy of evaluation questionnaire, results and if they can be found public, actions as a results of the evaluations etc). Another set of questions was regarding plagiarism on faculties, especially about regulations and sanctions regarding plagiarism, about cases of plagiarism at the faculty in the last 5 years, and how were they resolved, and if there were some consequences for the offenders. At the end, some of the documents which Network members asked are also the one with the information of students passing rate during the exam timetables, the one regulating the professors' right for private tutoring the students with pecuniary fee, and the one regarding the book sale by teachers in the institution. These are just some of the information asked, but each organization also asked for other information, bearing in mind specificities of its country's higher education.

Instead of a conclusion

Since it was established in the year 2003, Anti – Corruption Student Network in South East Europe has been dealing with the problems which high education system encounters, by raising awareness regarding those problems and by advocating reforms in this area. ACSN has recognized corruption as one of the major problems which exists in high education and has by far the strongest impact not only on the quality of graduated students, but also on the entire development of the society. ACSN has managed to bring corruption as a topic of discussions in public discourse in Network members countries, and that can be consider as a great success. However, even though this problem was pointed out, there was no sufficient attention between main stakeholders to tackle the issue, except the declarative one.

The goal of this research was to point out the fact that corruption in high education exists among the Network member states, and that that phenomena has very similar characteristics in the entire region. The perception of corruption was not emphasized, being the topic which is represented the most in similar researches, but rather other also very important subjects which illustrate not only how often, but also how and why corruptive acts happen. The conclusion that can be pointed out is that system is not functioning properly and that urgent and comprehensive reforms are needed in order to change the current malpractice. The research itself had no intention of giving any kind of recommendations i.e. which reforms would be appropriate – firstly, because Network member states have different systems solutions (as it is illustrated in introductory part of this publication), and secondly, because that task would be beyond limited resources of the Network. For the beginning, the already existing institutions must be strengthened and the established regulations have to be implemented properly, primarily the ones related to Bologna process.

It is very important to conduct monitoring researches of corruption in high education system on regular basis, and use it as a tool to verify if the reform solutions have any effect. This research is just an attempt to point to that path.

Anti – Corruption Student Network in South East Europe Team, March 2013.

Annex

Tolerance towards corruption in higher education - factor analysis of 15 items			
	Factors (components)		
	1	2	3
Nepotism/favouritism - Student uses connections for higher grades	,775	,094	,119
Bribery - Professor takes money to let a student pass an exam	,768	,100	,062
Bribery - Student pays to pass an exam	,719	,156	,060
Nepotism/favouritism - Student enrolls in University through connections	,712	,142	,166
Nepotism/favouritism - Professor uses influence to enrol students.	,693	,170	,145
Bribery - Student buys books from the professor for advantages	,684	,086	,123
Bribery - Administrative staff takes bribe to put students in dorms	,632	,081	,080
Nepotism/favouritism - Professor grades higher based on connections	,622	,090	,111
Bribery - Professor gives advantages for bought books	,500	,090	,057
Plagiarism – Professor	,106	,879	,024
Plagiarism – Student	,104	,830	,175
Plagiarism - Professor plagiarizes a student	,328	,503	,043
Student cheating - Writing other people's homework	,045	,116	,773
Bribery - Student sells a place in a dormitory	,091	,009	,688
Student cheating - on exams	,292	,101	,646

Table 1: tolerance towards corruption **on the overall sample:** Varimax rotated component matrix without 2 original embezzlement items. This table is not so hard to read even for people who know very little about statistics. Based on their intercorrelations, Varimax rotation tries to separate out (classify) the items that belong together as exclusive as possible. Saturations (correlations) of items on factors range from non-existent 0,00 to complete $\pm 1,00$. This matrix „explains“ (includes) cca 53 % variance of all items (patterns and profiles of their variability, their „essence“, so to speak), which is a measure of how much these items have in common. This structure can be further „cleansed“ and common variance can be increased by excluding those items that don't have much in common with the rest.

For the reliability testing, in the analysis Cronbach Alpha statistic was used, which is calculated out of mean interitem correlations. It ranges from 0,00 to $\pm 1,00$, the latter indicating a perfect instrument with all variables perfectly correlated. Of course, that's unobtainable in practice, so the rule of thumb is that any value above 0,7 justifies treating a set of items like they make up an reliable instrument, that is, they measure more or less interrelated perceptions belonging to the same theoretical construct (George, Mallery, 2003; Kline, 1999), which in our case is tolerance towards corruption in higher education. CronbachAlpha for the 17 – items instrument is 0,808. Cronbach Alpha for the 15 – items instrument for measuring tolerance towards corruption slightly increases to 0,820. Yet

excluding one more item (student selling a place in a dormitory) would increase it even further.

Because of unequal sizes of subsamples which, consequentially, unequally account for interitem correlations, reliability must be checked at the subsamples level. The following Cronbach Alpha for 15 – item scales were obtained: 0,803 (Belgrade); 0,821 (Moldova); 0,813 (Plovdiv); 0,821 (Skopje); 0,815 (Zagreb). In Belgrade, Moldova and Zagreb subsamples, the omittance of student dorm bribe item would also slightly increase the Cronbach Alpha as on the overall level. That means that this item is slightly more in line with other items in Skopje and Plovdiv, which would yield a rotated component matrix somewhat different than the one in Table 1 (this item would probably „fit in“ a little better).

However, it is generally known that the more, even relatively poorly, correlated items you have in the instrument, the bigger Cronbach Alpha can „artificially“ become, because of increasing variance out of which it is calculated (De Coster, 2000). Therefore, the reliability of our considerably smaller scale of tolerance towards nepotism was also checked.

Reliability analysis of the whole instrument for measuring experience with corruption in HE (15 5-degree scale) yields a Cronbach Alpha (**0,876**), after two items referring to embezzlement plus the item about bribed dormitory staff (Question 6.15) are excluded. First two were omitted because of their content that violates the validity of the instrument, which was only noticed on the researchers' second consideration: universities' and student bodies' budget reports are distant to the experience of the majority of students, so the fact that most students never heard for these institutions either giving or not giving budget report doesn't tell us anything about students' experience with corruption. The bribed dorm staff item was omitted because it diminishes the reliability, its correlation with other items being noticeably weaker.

Again, because of unequal subsample sizes, the subsamples levels were checked: Belgrade (0,883); Moldova (0,901); Plovdiv (0,868); Skopje (0,853); Zagreb (0,854). Only in Belgrade and Moldova excluding one item (the one about student cheating in the form of writing other people's homework) would only slightly increase the Cronbach Alpha.

Factor analysis was used in determining what sorts of corruption “attract” the same students : out of inter – item correlations (common variance), sets of items (so – called factors) are extracted which indicates what forms of corruption belong together according to students' responses. After excluding the two embezzlement items and the one about the bribed

administrative staff in student dorms (Question 6.15), the following meaningful structure of students' experience with corruption which almost mirrors the structure of their tolerance towards corruption (Table 2) was obtained.

Experience (range of social contact) with:	Components (Factors)			
	1	2	3	4
Bribery - Professor takes money to let a student pass an exam	,771	,144	,197	
Nepotism/favouritism - Student enrolls in University through connections	,757			,270
Bribery - Student pays to pass an exam	,735	,246	,204	
Nepotism/favouritism - enrolment through connections	,726	,232		,157
Nepotism/favouritism - Student uses connections for higher grades	,703	,267	,223	,113
Nepotism/favouritism - Professor grades higher based on connections	,646		,316	,186
Plagiarism – Professor	,232	,783	,227	
Plagiarism - Professor plagiarizes a student	,291	,758		
Plagiarism – Student	,166	,562	,140	,399
Bribery - Professor gives advantages for bought books	,269	,126	,821	,114
Bribery - Student buys a book for a higher grade	,380	,267	,714	
Student cheating - on exams	,229		,238	,724
Bribery - Student buys a place in a dormitory		,248	-,185	,697
Student cheating - Writing other people's homework		,186	,455	,556

Table 2: Experience (range of social contact) with corruption **on the overall sample:** Varimax rotated component matrix without 3 original items: 2 embezzlement and 1 student dorms item (about the bribed administrative staff). This table is not so hard to read even for people who know very little about statistics. Based on their intercorrelations, Varimax rotation tries to separate out (classify) the items that belong together as exclusive as possible. Saturations (correlations) of items on factors range from non-existent 0,00 to complete $\pm 1,00$. This matrix „explains“ (includes) cca 64 % variance of all items (patterns and profiles of their variability, their „essence“, so to speak), which is a relatively good result, telling us that these items have much in common.

	Component	
	1	2
Experience: Student uses connections for higher grades	,802	,101
Experience: Professor takes money to let a student pass an exam	,801	,129
Experience: Student pays to pass an exam	,791	,142
Experience: Professor uses influence to enrol students	,779	,144
Experience: Student enrolls in University through connections	,753	
Experience: Professor grades higher based on connections	,734	,108
Tolerance: Student uses connections for higher grades	,160	,800
Tolerance: Student enrolls in University through connections	,149	,769
Tolerance: Professor takes money to let a student pass an exam		,767
Tolerance: Enrolment through connections	,131	,756
Tolerance: Student pays to pass an exam	,102	,737
Tolerance: Professor grades higher based on connections		,659

Table 3. Factor Analysis, Structure Matrix of tolerance towards and experience with 4 forms of nepotism and 2 forms of bribery in exams (student and professor). Opposite to Varimax in Table 2, Oblimin transformation here tries to bind the items with similar patterns of variation as much as possible, in line with our above hypothesis that tolerance and experience are correlated.