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Abstract: A growing empirical literature examines the causes and consequences of public corruption in the United States; however, most of these studies measure corruption using data on federal convictions that is of dubious quality and provenance. We document these concerns and describe an alternative data source that provides more reliable and detailed information on corruption prosecutions and convictions by type of state official and even by lead charge. We employ these data to construct a taxonomy of public corruption that dispels some popular and academic misconceptions. Our findings call into question the lessons from previous empirical research; earlier studies of the causes and consequences of corruption in the states should be re-examined with more appropriate measures of corruption convictions.

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I've got this thing and it's f****** golden. And ... I'm just not giving it up for f****** nothing...
If I get nothing back from Obama, then I'm going in another direction. You know what I'm saying?

--- Illinois Governor Rod Blagojevich

1. Introduction

For many Americans, the phrase “public corruption” likely conjures up lurid examples from recent federal sting operations. Whether it is a wiretap recording of Governor Rod Blagojevich extolling his ability to appoint a replacement to the U.S. Senate for President-elect Barack Obama (see the quote above), a scan of California Representative Randy “Duke” Cunningham’s U.S. House stationary listing a menu of federal contract amounts and corresponding kickbacks, or a surveillance video of Massachusetts State Senator Diane Wilkerson accepting a payoff by stuffing $100 bills into her bra, the popular understanding of corruption is likely shaped by media coverage of the most sensational failures of high officials. But how representative are these cases? Is corruption common among elected officials and high-ranking bureaucrats? And what kinds of crimes constitute most public corruption cases?

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Despite a growing social science scholarship on corruption in America, fundamental questions like these have yet to be answered, primarily for want of the requisite data.

Empirical research on the causes and consequences of public corruption in the United States typically measures corrupt activity by the number of federal convictions for “official corruption.” In nearly all such studies, the data employed by scholars are taken from annual reports to Congress made by the Public Integrity Section (PIN) of the Department of Justice (DOJ). The PIN reports to Congress are readily accessible and from these it is possible to cull annual data by state covering the better part of four decades. This, together with the imprimatur of originating from official documents, explains the pervasiveness of the PIN data in the empirical literature on public corruption in America.

Boylan and Long (2003) have questioned both the provenance and quality of the PIN data, although other scholars (e.g., Glaeser and Saks 2006) downplay those concerns and continue to use PIN data in their research.5 In this study, we compare more detailed and reliable data on official corruption to the commonly employed PIN data; in doing so, we amplify some of the arguments made by Boylan and Long (2003) while dismissing others, but we also document even more severe problems with the PIN data. In short, we demonstrate that the data-generating process for the PIN data is highly suspect and poorly documented; not surprisingly then, many scholars have used this data with an insufficient understanding of what

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5 PIN data on corruption are often reported in the popular press; recent prominent examples include: Kushner (2010), Maciag (2012), Maddigan (2013), Marsh (2008) and Wile (2013).
exactly is being measured in the data. Consequently, erstwhile lessons on corruption in the United States generated by earlier empirical research using these data should be set aside for re-examination with higher quality data.6

In contrast to most published studies, we analyze actual administrative records on corruption prosecutions from the Department of Justice (DOJ). In doing so, we follow Boylan and Long (2003) who obtained administrative records on convictions from the Federal Justice Statistics Resource Center (FJSRC). However, beginning in 2001, the FJSRC changed its classification system so that it no longer identifies public corruption cases.7 Instead, we access the DOJ administrative records via the Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse (TRAC), a non-profit group dedicated to facilitating public access to federal data.8 TRAC uses Freedom of Information requests to collect a plethora of up-to-date government records; this information is available to the public, albeit under a limited license.9

To date, only a few recent studies exploit this data resource from TRAC. One apt example is Cordis and Warren (2012), who examine the effects of Freedom of Information laws on official corruption. Alt and Lassen (forthcoming) study behavior of federal prosecutors. Cordis and Milyo (2013a) estimate the effects of state campaign finance reforms on state corruption; and Cordis and Milyo (2013b) re-examine whether federal disaster aid induces corruption in affected areas.

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6 Elsewhere, we re-examine the finding in Leeson and Sobel (2008) that federal disaster aid leads to increased public corruption; we demonstrate that their results are sensitive to both the source of data and the time period considered (see Cordis and Milyo 2013b).
8 See Long et al. (2004) for a discussion of strategies employed by TRAC to ensure data quality.
9 See: http://tracfed.syr.edu/. We have submitted our own freedom of information request to the DOJ for the purpose of making the data employed in this study freely available to other scholars. Our request, while approved by the DOJ, has still not been fulfilled after nearly 2 years.
Little is known about the frequency and types of crimes that constitute official corruption in the United States; therefore, we provide a brief taxonomy of public corruption (see Section Four, below). One lesson that emerges is that contrary to popular perception very few corruption cases involve elected officials stuffing bribes into their undergarments; instead, the typical public corruption case is decidedly less salacious. For example, most cases appear to involve stealing and lying by non-elected and lower-ranking officials. We then compare state corruption measures using TRAC data to other prominent measures; this likewise presents a somewhat different picture of the geography of corruption in the United States.

However, before describing public corruption convictions in detail, we first consider alternative measures of corruption, as well as some of the arguments for and against using convictions as a measure of corruption. For example, Boylan and Long (2003) raise three major concerns: 1) federal data do not include corruption prosecutions at the state and local level; 2) federal authorities may exaggerate or misclassify drug cases as official corruption; and 3) prosecutorial effort may vary systematically across states, perhaps in response to state prosecutions.

2. Objective and Subjective Measures of Corruption

Public corruption is something of a contested term; it may be defined most simply as the misuse of public office for private gain or more broadly as an abuse of public trust (Meier and Holbrook 1992). The former definition has the advantage of readily lending itself to

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10 Nye (1967) describes corruption as any “behavior which deviates from the formal duties of a public role because of private-regarding (personal, close family, private clique) pecuniary or status gains; or violates rules against the exercise of certain types of private-regarding influence.” Shleifer and Vishny (1993) describe it as “the sale by government officials of government property for personal gain.” Rose-Ackerman (2002) identifies corrupt activity with “an illegal payment to a public agent to obtain a benefit that may or may not be deserved in the absence of payoffs.”
objective measurement by official crime statistics, while the notion of “an abuse of public trust” is more nebulous and subjective. For this reason, abuses of public trust in a polity are typically gauged indirectly via expert rankings or opinion surveys of beliefs about the extent of corruption or overall trust in government.\textsuperscript{11} Even so, most studies that employ subjective measures of corruption treat these as proxies for criminal activity qua corruption.\textsuperscript{12}

Of course, evidence of public corruption may not be fully documented in official records, since a compromised government may not pursue corruption with as much vigor and competence as other types of crimes. These challenges are compounded when comparing corruption across countries, due to differences in legal standards, prosecutorial resources, record-keeping conventions, and public access to records. For these reasons, investigations of corruption across countries tend to rely on subjective surveys of experts or the attitudes of the general public to measure corruption.\textsuperscript{13}

In principle, similar challenges may arise when examining government corruption in the United States. However, such problems are greatly mitigated by the fact that nearly all official corruption cases in the United States are handled by independent federal prosecutors within the Department of Justice and tried in federal courts under consistent legal standards (Glaeser

\textsuperscript{11} There are several such international indices that are freely available to researchers: the \textit{Corruption Perceptions Index}, compiled by Transparency International [\url{http://www.transparency.org/research/cpi/overview}; viewed November 20, 2013], the \textit{Control of Corruption Index} (Kaufmann, Kraay and Mastruzzi 2010), and the \textit{Freedom from Corruption Index}, compiled by the Heritage Foundation [\url{http://www.heritage.org/index/freedom-from-corruption}; viewed November 20, 2013].

\textsuperscript{12} For a recent survey of the academic literature on corruption, see Treisman (2007).

and Saks 2006; and Goel and Nelson 2007 and 2011). But for this fact, federal prosecutions may well not be a useful indicator of corruption in the United States.

Do Federal Authorities Really Prosecute Most Corruption Cases?

It is therefore disconcerting that the only external support that we have found for the claim that federal prosecutions are ubiquitous is from Russell Mokhiber, a self-described progressive activist and editor of the Corporate Crime Reporter, a legal newsletter. Mokhiber quotes himself in the Corporate Crime Reporter (2004 and 2007), stating “... the vast majority of public corruption prosecutions – perhaps as many as 80 percent – are brought by federal officials.” But Mr. Mokhiber provides no original source for his assertion; nor has he responded to our repeated queries regarding his sources.

As it turns out, Mokhiber’s oft-cited estimate (however arrived at) is probably conservative. In the next section, we provide evidence which suggests that about 95% of all public corruption cases are handled by federal authorities. This addresses the first major complaint raised by Boylan and Long (2003) regarding the use of federal corruption convictions. A second complaint is that the set of crimes that are categorized by the DOJ as official corruption may include drug charges or other crimes far removed from the misuse of public office or the abuse of public trust. Alt and Lassen (2003) echo this concern, albeit without further elaboration.

Are Unrelated Drug Cases Included in Corruption Statistics?

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Publicly available administrative records from the DOJ do not identify individual defendants. Consequently, it is not possible to independently classify these records as public corruption; instead, scholars must rely on the coding done by prosecutors. At the time a charge is referred for prosecution, federal prosecutors assign cases to one of eleven broad categories (e.g., immigration, narcotics, weapons, organized crime, white collar crime, official corruption, etc.) based on the lead charges and details of each case. This coding leaves room for accidental or even purposeful misclassifications of cases, hence the concern about drug cases being included in official corruption statistics.

Boylan and Long (2003) provide only a single example of such a conviction, that of “a former assistant to a state attorney general indicted for use and possession of cocaine (p.422).” However, this description is not quite accurate or complete; in fact, there is much more to the story.16 The person in question, Henry Barr, was a long-time associate of Pennsylvania politician and former U.S. Attorney General, Dick Thornburgh. Barr himself was a former federal prosecutor; deputy attorney general in Pennsylvania; deputy counsel and later general counsel to then Pennsylvania Governor Thornburgh; and finally a special assistant to U.S. Attorney General Thornburgh. But shortly after he joined Thornburgh in Washington, a drug raid back in Harrisburg turned up connections to Henry Barr (along with an Uzi machine gun). Subsequent court testimony alleged that Barr purchased and used cocaine over several years, including during his tenure as general counsel to the governor. He was eventually convicted on two counts of making false statements to the DOJ, as well as for possession and conspiracy to use cocaine. Consequently, there is no mystery why this case is categorized as “official

16 The nature of Henry Barr’s career and crime are described in several contemporaneous media stories; our account is derived from Lewis (1991a,b) and Biddle and Lounsberry (1990).
corruption.” Henry Barr lied about his drug use in order to obtain a high-ranking position in the DOJ, then as a federal official he lied again to FBI investigators.

The Barr case certainly fits the description of an “abuse of public trust,” but it is perhaps more debatable as to whether this incident represents an abuse of public office. As such, this case does serve to illustrate the potential for subjective judgments among prosecutors in classifying cases as official corruption. Of course, this is just one anecdote. In the next section we show that official corruption includes very few instances of drug charges. In fact, just over 2% of all federal corruption convictions are for drug-related offenses, while fewer than 0.1% are for simple possession. Instead, most official corruption cases involve bribes, kickbacks, embezzlement or theft of public property (e.g., activities more closely tied to official duties).

Misunderstanding the Nature of PIN Data

Boylan and Long (2003) may have been wrong in some particulars regarding federal corruption data, but they also make a crucial observation that no prior study has acknowledged (and very few since): the PIN data used by most scholars are not a download of administrative records. Rather, the Public Integrity Section of the DOJ surveys U.S. district attorneys in March about their activities in corruption cases during the last calendar year. As we note below, it is unclear to what extent U.S. district attorneys consider the accurate completion of these surveys to be a high priority (e.g., not all district offices comply and some responses are hand-written).

Another common misconception regarding PIN data is that public corruption convictions are composed mainly of elected or high-ranking public officials. However, the PIN instructs

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17 For example, in order to compare corruption rates across states, Adsera et al. (2003) scale convictions by the number of elected officials in a state (as do Meier and Holbrook 1992 and Alt and Lassen 2008). In addition, Glaeser and Saks (2006) scale convictions across states by government employment, but state that: “Ideally, we
prosecutors to include incidents involving low-ranking public employees that are not otherwise classified as official corruption in the DOJ records. While we cannot state definitively how many elected or high ranking officials are convicted in the United States, in Section 4 we do observe that state and federal elected officials likely comprise fewer than 2% of all convictions reported by the PIN.

Yet another misconception is that corruption convictions include many cases related to election crimes (vote fraud, vote suppression, and campaign finance violations); again, we show this is simply not the case. Consequently, Boylan and Long are quite right to question the composition of official corruption cases reported by the PIN, since many scholars employ this data without a detailed understanding of what is really being measured or of the nature of the data-generating process. In Section 3, we demonstrate that the PIN data are, to be blunt, a mess.

Prosecutorial Effort

Boylan and Long (2003) also worry about prosecutorial discretion as a source of bias in federal prosecutions. They argue that federal prosecution may be a substitute for state or local prosecution and that federal prosecutors may have different preferences for allocating their limited resources across different types of crimes. However, as noted above, federal authorities pursue nearly all corruption cases in the U.S.; this blunts the first concern regarding substitution. Further, the FBI lists combatting official corruption as its top criminal priority. See: http://www.fbi.gov/about-us/investigate/corruption (viewed December 10, 2013).

This also means that malfeasant prosecutors who do not act on cases referred to them by the
FBI may themselves become targets of investigation. Beyond this, federal prosecutors have strong positive incentives to pursue corruption cases. Most offenses classified as official corruption are designated National Priorities by the DOJ (this is the highest priority designation). And if that weren’t enough, successful crusaders against public corruption enjoy popular acclaim and enhanced political prospects. Consider the examples of just two former U.S. attorneys: “America’s Mayor” Rudy Giuliani and New Jersey Governor Chris Christie (both of whom have been or are considered Presidential candidates). For these reasons, we expect self-interested and public-service minded federal prosecutors to exert a high degree of effort in combating corruption.

Even so, prosecutorial effort is no doubt a function of the underlying severity of public corruption. Whether and to what extent this produces bias in studies of corruption is context dependent. For example, absent any omitted systematic determinants of prosecutorial effort, researchers may confidently examine the reduced-form relationship between corruption convictions and other exogenous determinants of corruption. But it is incumbent on the researcher to investigate possible endogeneity bias stemming from unobserved prosecutorial effort. Examples of recent studies that explicitly consider the endogeneity of prosecutorial effort include Boylan and Long (2003), Alt and Lassen (forthcoming) and Cordis and Milyo (2013a).

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19 See: http://tracfed.syr.edu/help/codes/progcode.html (viewed November 20, 2013); all official corruption cases involving federal employees are classified as National Priorities, as are cases involving high-ranking state officials (“governors, legislators, department or agency heads, court officials, law enforcement officials at policymaking or managerial levels, or their staffs”) and local officials (“mayors, city council members or equivalents, city managers or equivalents, department or agency heads, court officials, law enforcement officials at policymaking or managerial levels, or their staffs”).

20 Boylan and Long (2003) use DOJ records of federal prosecutors’ reported time allocation as a proxy for effort; they also use state house reporters’ opinions about prosecutorial effort. Several other studies employ
**The Boylan-Long Corruption Perceptions Index**

Motivated by concerns about the quality of PIN data, Boylan and Long (2003) conducted a survey of about 300 state house reporters for the purpose of constructing a measure of corruption perceptions among elites. Aside from the small sample size and subjective nature of the survey itself, it is unclear how knowledgeable a reporter might be about the relative level of corruption in his own state versus all other states (Glaser and Saks 2006). Further, this survey was administered only in 1999, so it is not useful for analyzing trends or more recent conditions. Nevertheless, the corruption perceptions measure developed by Boylan and Long has been employed in several subsequent studies (e.g., Alt and Lassen 2003 and 2008, and Rosenson 2009).

**The State Integrity Index**

In 2011, a coalition of progressive groups including the Center for Public Integrity and Public Radio International completed a *State Integrity Investigation* (SII); the project resulted in another (single-year) measure of public corruption based on the observations of one veteran political reporter in each state. However, this measure is not constructed directly from perceptions of corruption, but instead from the existence of various state laws and regulations that are presumed to reduce corruption, as well as perceptions regarding enforcement of these laws. The set of institutions selected for this index is based upon input received after contacting “nearly 100 state-level organizations working in the areas of good government and expenditures on law enforcement or the judiciary as a proxy for effort (e.g., Cordis and Warren 2012). Cordis and Milyo (2013a) exploit the richness of the TRAC dataset and use prosecutions of federal officials as a proxy for effort in prosecuting state officials.

public sector reform around the country." However, there is no explicit consideration of
whether any of the institutions included in the index actually work in practice. For this
reason, the SII “risk of corruption” score for each state is best viewed as a report card on a
state’s progress toward a wish-list of “good government” initiatives. Below, we demonstrate
that this index is weakly and positively correlated to recent corruption convictions among state
officials.

Counts of News Reports

Historical research on corruption is limited by the lack of systematic data on convictions
or even perceptions of corruption. Consequently, scholars have had to be more creative in
order to examine corruption over longer swaths of time. Glaeser and Goldin (2006) use an
index based on counts of news reports in U.S. newspapers containing the words “corruption”
and “fraud.” They argue based on the time trend in these counts of news reports that
corruption in the United States has declined dramatically over the last two centuries. However,
the decline in the relative frequency of these terms occurs during the period 1875-1950, which
corresponds to the era of increased professionalization in journalism (Gentzkow, Glaeser and
Goldin 2006). Thus it is difficult to determine to what extent actual corruption was falling apart
from the decline in yellow journalism in the United States.24

22 Neither the response rate, the groups contacted, or the content of these communications are described
23 For example, restrictive campaign finance and lobbying regulations are included as key measures, even though
there is no convincing evidence that such laws reduce public corruption (Cordis and Milyo 2013a) or improve trust
in government (Milyo 2012). On the other hand, there is evidence that Freedom of Information laws impact
corruption (Cordis and Warren 2012) and the SII does count such laws favorably.
24 For example, the first professional school of journalism was established in 1908 at the University of Missouri.
Also, consider the opinion of Howell Raines, former Executive Editor of the New York Times, “Our greatest
accomplishment as a profession is the development since WWII of a news reporting craft that is truly non-partisan,
and non-ideological, and that strives to be independent of undue commercial or governmental influence. It is a
legacy that we must protect with diligent stewardship.” (quoted on CSPAN, February 20, 2003).
Corruption indices based on counts of news reports represent a relatively low-cost alternative measure of corruption that has not yet been well-explored, at least as applied to gauging corruption in recent years. A notable exception is Dincer and Fredriksson (2013), who derive a similar proxy for corruption from counts of Associated Press newswire reports. However, a cursory examination of the hits from this type of search reveals a large number of international stories and other articles not directly related to public corruption. Below we show that two examples of indices based article counts in the *New York Times* are not highly correlated with actual corruption rates over time.

*Reconsidering the PIN Data*

The absence of good alternatives to PIN data may explain its continued use as a measure of corruption in the United States. For example, Glaeser and Saks (2006) justify continued reliance on PIN convictions data by noting that it is correlated with the Boylan-Long index but is available over a longer time period. However, we argue in the next section that the PIN data are unreliable beyond salvaging. But we also strike a more positive note: the availability of detailed and reliable administrative records from DOJ via TRAC is a boon to future research in that it alleviates the need to rely on imperfect or one-off surveys and rankings.

3. **Comparing PIN and TRAC on Data on Corruption Convictions**

The most widely used measure of public corruption in the United States is derived from criminal convictions data published in the annual report to Congress by the PIN; however, few scholars even appear to recognize that these data are derived from surveys, let alone acknowledge this fact. The PIN is an agency within the DOJ, as is the Executive Office of the Unites States Attorneys (EOUSA), which oversees the individual U.S. District Attorneys and their...
staffs located in each of the 94 federal judicial districts (there is at least one district per state). It is these U.S. district attorneys that handle almost all federal corruption cases, although the PIN provides assistance and sometimes takes over investigations and prosecutions when there is a conflict of interest or a case that involves a federal judge. For example, from 2007-2011, the PIN handled 40-60 convictions per year, or about 4% of all the corruption convictions reported by the PIN in its annual reports to Congress.\(^25\) The remaining 96% of convictions are reported to the PIN via surveys turned in by each district.

The PIN was created in 1976 and since 1978 it has issued annual reports to Congress that describe aggregate data on federal corruption convictions broken down in tables by the type of official (federal, state, local), or by federal district --- but not both (see Tables 2 and 3 in the PIN annual reports to Congress). Federal judicial districts are wholly within or coincident with state and territorial borders, so it is straightforward to construct a state-level data series on convictions from the PIN annual reports. It is this data source that most scholars use to measure corruption in the states; this is also why these same studies cannot isolate corruption rates among local or state officials by state.

Prior to 2000, not all U.S. Attorney offices responded to the PIN surveys, so many scholars simply fill in the missing data by linearly interpolating missing values from adjacent years for the same district (e.g., Glaeser and Saks 2006). For all of the PIN data presented here, we follow suit and linearly interpolate missing data based on the five year period surrounding

\(^{25}\) See Table 4 of the PIN annual reports to Congress for 2007-2011. From 1993-2006, the PIN handled about 42 cases per year (see the DOJ Fact Sheet available at: http://www.justice.gov/opa/pr/2008/March/08_ag_246.html; viewed November 20, 2013).
the missing values. However, this adjustment has no substantive bearing on the patterns and problems that we discuss in this section.

As noted above, federal prosecutors code each case at the time a referral is filed for possible prosecution; “official corruption” is the designation for any prosecution in federal court of federal, state, or local public employees for official misconduct or misuse of office. The EOUSA has issued an annual statistical report since 1992; total official corruption cases by fiscal year are listed in Table 3 of these annual reports, albeit not broken down by district. Finally, TRAC maintains a database on federal prosecutions that includes these same coding designations; the TRAC data are generated from FOIA requests placed with the DOJ from 1986 onward and cover all federal prosecutions not otherwise withheld by the DOJ. However, no information is available regarding cases that are appealed (the same is true for data from PIN and EOUSA).

The TRAC data are available at the case level, so they include details such as the dates for referral, filing and disposition; the referring agency; sentences and fines; and lead charges by title and section of the U.S. code. The DOJ does not provide TRAC with and identifying information on defendants (not even demographics or occupation); however, official corruption cases are coded by the type of official involved in corruption (federal, state, local, or private persons connected to corrupt acts). Consequently, TRAC data provide researchers a wealth of information not available from the PIN or EOUSA.

Inconsistencies in the PIN data

We compare the aggregate annual convictions from each of the sources described above in Figure One. The first anomaly that we uncover is that the PIN data on convictions
reported in different tables within the same annual report do not add up. We plot annual PIN convictions constructed from Table 2 (listed by type of official) and Table 3 (listed by federal district) of the PIN annual reports. These series differ markedly prior to the mid-1990’s and then become quite similar. A second anomaly is that the PIN data exhibit dramatic swings from year to year during the early 1980’s to the early 1990’s. In contrast, the data series from the EOUSA and TRAC appear to be very similar and do not exhibit large annual swings.

In search of an explanation for the inconsistencies, we have made multiple formal and informal inquiries with the DOJ, as well as with several sitting and former federal prosecutors. The only explanation offered for the inconsistency and volatility in PIN data is from a former U.S. Attorney who confided that federal prosecutors may have an uneasy relationship with the PIN (a competing and parallel unit within the DOJ) and so may not consider the accurate completion of PIN surveys to be an important task. However, we have been unable to confirm this (or any other) explanation, primarily because no current officials will talk to us about these anomalies in the PIN records. In fact, not only has the DOJ been unresponsive to our inquiries, the agency has since removed from its website all of the PIN annual reports that document these problems.26, 27

Yet another anomaly apparent in Figure One is that the PIN data almost always indicate many more corruption convictions than either EOUSA or TRAC data. This is because both the

26 We have archived the complete set of PIN annual reports to Congress for posterity.
27 There is yet another inconsistency in the PIN reports. Prior to 2007, the annual reports do not enumerate all cases handled solely by PIN and there is no indication as to whether these cases are included in reported totals or not. From 2007 to 2011, cases handled by the PIN are separately enumerated in a new Table 4 of the annual reports, but there is no indication whether these cases are also included in other tables or not. In 2012, the PIN report notes that all corruption totals now include cases handled by the PIN but that earlier reports did not include these cases. However, the totals reported in the 2012 report for all prior years are identical to those reported in prior reports for the same years. Suffice it to say that the data documentation in PIN reports is both inadequate and contradictory; this is yet another reason to eschew using PIN data in future empirical work.
EOUSA and TRAC report only those cases that are contemporaneously coded by federal prosecutors as “official corruption”; in contrast, the PIN surveys require prosecutors to make a retrospective accounting of annual activity based on a more expansive definition of corruption. Since 1983 the PIN survey explicitly instructs respondents to report offenses by low-level public employees (including postal employees) that are not otherwise coded as official corruption.\textsuperscript{28} It is also interesting to note that prior to 1983, the annual PIN data series were at least highly correlated with each other and arguably more on line with the subsequent trends in convictions derived from EOUSA and TRAC.

\textit{Examining PIN Surveys}

We have submitted FOIA requests for copies of the completed PIN surveys for the last several years; our request has been approved by the DOJ and we have paid for the expense of photocopying these records. However, after nearly two years, we have received only 14 completed surveys from 2006.\textsuperscript{29} Undaunted, we have checked this sample to better understand the differences in convictions reported by PIN and EOUSA\textbackslash TRAC. While identifying information for defendants has been redacted from these reports, most of the cases we observe in our sample include the name of the employing agency of officials involved in corruption prosecutions. However, because specific dates in these surveys are also redacted (and PIN data are reported on the calendar year rather than the fiscal year), we cannot directly compare totals from the original surveys to the records from EOUSA or TRAC.

\textsuperscript{28} This practice is documented in a footnote to Table 3 in the 1983 PIN annual report to Congress.
\textsuperscript{29} Our FOIA request was lost by the DOJ --- twice. This does shed some light on the difficulties that Congressional oversight committees have in obtaining information from the DOJ.
Our sample of original PIN surveys reveals that of the 166 total convictions across 14 districts, at least 31% are for crimes committed by postal employees (some of the employer information is redacted). Furthermore, a minimum of 74% of all federal officials convicted of corruption are postal employees charged with either theft of Postal Service property or destroying, obstructing, or theft of mail. To the extent these types of cases involve higher ranking postal officers, they would be categorized as official corruption by federal prosecutors; however, this is not a common occurrence. Overall, only 5% of all official corruption cases involving federal officials from 1986-2012 have a lead charge of theft or destruction of mail by an officer or employee (see Table 1). So while our sample of PIN surveys is limited, it does suggest that a large part of the difference between the total corruption cases in PIN data versus EOUSA\TRAC data involve theft, destruction and delay of the U.S. mail perpetrated by postal workers.

The pool of postal crimes that might be added to official corruption by prosecutors filling out PIN surveys is actually quite large, at least relative to cases coded as official corruption. For the period 1986-2012, there were about 15,000 convictions for official corruption, but over 37,000 convictions for postal crimes and nearly 5,000 convictions with the specific lead charge of theft or destruction of mail by an officer or employee (section 1709 of Title 18 of the U.S. Code). Consequently, it appears that the PIN data include a large proportion of illegal acts committed by low-level employees, quite possibly mainly involving stolen or delayed mail.

30 Source: TRAC.
31 For an interesting field experiment on postal corruption in less developed countries, see: Castillo et al. 2014.
To further check the source of the discrepancy between total PIN convictions and total EOUSA\TRAC convictions, we collected newspaper and newswire accounts of federal prosecutions for corruption-related crimes by public officials for 2010-2012.\footnote{We searched Lexis-Nexis for news accounts from each state in 2010-2012; the search parameters included terms related to political corruption and scandal, as well as bribery, conspiracy, embezzlement, fraud, kickbacks and misappropriation.} If the PIN data actually contain hundreds of high-profile convictions that are omitted from the TRAC data, then we may well find some evidence of this from news reports. Specifically, we would expect to find more convictions covered in press reports than identified in the TRAC records. However, this is not the case for any state.

We have also checked for the frequency of drug charges in the sample of surveys obtained from PIN. Only two of the 166 convictions are for drug charges under Title 21 of the U.S. Code (Food and Drugs) and just one of these cases was for simple possession. Another eight cases involve military personnel convicted of “conspiracy to use the uniform to transport cocaine” under Title 18 (Crimes and Criminal Procedure). Of course, some official corruption convictions for making false statements or other crimes may well be drug-related, as in the case of Henry Barr described above. However, the paucity of actual drug charges in this sample of PIN surveys is consistent with our taxonomy of corruption convictions for 1986-2012 (see below).

4. A Taxonomy of Corruption in the United States

Public corruption is often portrayed as a growing problem in the United States, although Glaeser and Goldin (2006) argue that corruption in America has been declining for the last 150 years and is much lower in recent decades than at any point in U.S. history. The time trend in
convictions data from TRAC data is more consistent with the historical research than popular wisdom, since there has been no persistent increase in corruption convictions even with the growth in government over the last 20 years (see Figure 1).

Likewise, headline grabbing stories about high ranking elected officials ensnared in corruption prosecutions are not representative of the vast majority of official corruption cases. For example, Basinger (2013) identifies only 29 instances of criminal corruption scandals among members of Congress since 1974; in comparison, the TRAC data identify over 8,500 corruption convictions among federal employees since just 1986.

While many previous studies have used total official corruption convictions by state to examine state-level corruption, relatively few corruption cases actually involve state officials. We plot convictions by type of official from TRAC in Figure 2; on average, fewer than 10% of corruption convictions are state officials or employees (or a little over one per state, per year). Not surprisingly, convictions of federal officials and employees are the most common category, comprising about 56% of all convictions. Corruption by local officials has consistently been the second most frequent category, accounting for about 25% of all official corruption cases since 1986. Only convictions among local officials shows a strong trend; these cases have been on the rise since the early 2000’s and now account for about 30% of all corruption convictions.

As noted in several earlier studies, corruption convictions obtained in non-federal courts by state and local prosecutors will not be recorded by the DOJ. In order to get a sense of the frequency of such prosecutions, we searched Lexis-Nexis for all newspaper and newswire coverage of political corruption and scandals, as well as terms related to bribery, conspiracy, embezzlement, fraud, kickbacks and misappropriation from 1986 to 2012. We then searched
returned articles to see whether they identified a prosecution involving a public employee by a non-federal prosecutor. In doing so, we cast a wide net and included any public employees, not just high-ranking officials. Even so, we are only able to document a total of 799 convictions in non-federal courts that might be classified as public corruption (compared to 15,318 convictions in federal courts). Of these, 270 cases involved state employees; frequent examples include motor vehicle licensing clerks selling licenses or thefts by university employees, state police and prison guards. The remaining 529 cases involved local government employees; the most frequent examples include thefts by public school teachers and administrators, local police, firefighters, etc. This analysis suggests that since 1986 about 95% of all official corruption convictions were handled by federal prosecutors.

As part of our search of Lexis-Nexis records, we also recorded instances of state legislators or high-ranking state executive branch officials (e.g., governors, lieutenant governors, attorneys general, secretaries of state, state insurance or education commissioners, etc.) convicted for corruption-related charges in federal or state courts. Again, we cannot be sure that our Lexis-Nexis search will capture all such instances, but it does seem safe to assume that such events are generally considered newsworthy and so should be included. We find that only 11% of the state employees convicted on corruption charges from 1986-2012 were elected.

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33 For example, one bribery case prosecuted by local authorities in Florida led to a no contest plea by Ms. Tamara Tootle, a middle school teacher who charged students $1 a day to skip gym classes (http://staugustine.com/stories/010407/state_4314726.shtml).

34 An example of a state employee convicted in federal court involves John “Quarters” Boyle, who stole $4 million in quarters from the Illinois Tollway Authority. Boyle is also an example of a local official who was convicted for corruption in federal court. After leaving prison, Boyle was hired by the City of Chicago under Mayor Daly; he was later convicted again for taking bribes to award city contracts to trucking firms (http://www.suntimes.com/2206911-417/boyle-chicago-prison-quarters-owes.html).
or high-ranking officials. Combining this with the findings in Basinger (2013) noted above, elected officials account for fewer than 2% of all convictions of federal and state employees.

Types of Corruption Charges

In Table 1, we exploit the detailed case information contained in the TRAC records to describe corruption convictions by lead charges for each type of official. Nearly all convictions are for lead charges under Title 18 (Crimes and Criminal Procedure) with the most common specific charges being related to bribery, conspiracy, embezzlement, false statements and theft. As noted above, drug charges are rare among public officials and simple possession almost never categorized as official corruption. It is also interesting to note that despite popular concern, election related crimes are quite rare. From 1986 to 2012, there were only 41 official corruption cases with lead charges related to denial or abridgement of the right to vote.35

The composition of lead charges varies by type of official. Most notably the Hobbs Act is deployed against state and local officials most frequently. The Hobbs Act was passed in 1951 to combat racketeering and labor union corruption; it prohibits attempts, conspiracies and actual extortion and robbery that affect interstate trade. In public corruption cases, this statute is also applied whenever a public official obtains property or payment to which they are not entitled “under color of right.”36 Consequently, the burden of proof for prosecutors going after public officials is somewhat lower in Hobbs Act cases as compared to bribery; this is because

35 Source: TRAC.  
recipients of a bribe must intend to provide a service, while the Hobbs Act outlaws the mere receipt of payment by office holders (or attempts or conspiracy to do so).\textsuperscript{37}

The difference in the composition of corruption charges across federal and non-federal officials raises concerns about any corruption measure that lumps these cases together (as is done in nearly all previous studies). To further examine the comparability of these cases, we examine the prison sentences associated with them.

\textit{Prison Terms for Corruption Convictions}

Beginning in 1992, TRAC data also include information on prison terms associated with convictions, so it is possible to weight conviction counts by severity. We provide descriptive statistics on the disposition of corruption cases in Table 2. While conviction rates are similar in corruption cases across types of officials, state and local officials are more likely to receive a prison term and receive much longer sentences on average. Conditional on any prison sentence, the expected sentence is twice as long for non-federal officials compared to federal officials (about 26 months versus 13 months). Conditional on conviction, the expected sentence for non-federal officials is three times longer. Further, while the average prison months per government full-time equivalent (FTE) employment has been fairly constant over time for non-federal officials, it has been increasing somewhat among federal officials (see Figure 3). Consequently, adding up convictions across all types of officials may give a distorted picture of corruption at the state level, especially since federal officials make up the majority of government officials convicted of corruption.

\textsuperscript{37} An exception to this exists for campaign contributions to elected officials; the Supreme Court requires that there exist evidence of a \textit{quid pro quo} even for applications of the Hobbs Act (\textit{McCormick v. United States}, 500 U.S. 257 1991).
The Timing of Corruption versus Convictions

Dincer and Fredriksson (2013) note that previous studies have largely ignored the time delay from corrupt acts to observed convictions. While the exact timing and duration of illegal activity is generally not knowable, we can observe the date of criminal referrals and convictions in the TRAC data. Table 2 indicates that on average this delay is 1-2 years. Once again, state and local officials are comparable on this measure, but the delay is much shorter for federal officials. Presumably this is a reflection of the more serious nature of the crimes in the case mix associated with non-federal officials being prosecuted by federal authorities.

5. Comparing Measures of Corruption

In the previous section, we demonstrated that TRAC data on federal corruption prosecutions contain a wealth of unexploited information of interest to scholars who wish to investigate the causes and consequences of corruption in the United States. In this section, we consider a simple application by comparing corruption measures across time and states. We have identified severe flaws in the PIN data on convictions and have expressed some doubts about the reliability of other proxies for corruption based on surveys of reporters or article counts. However, these concerns would be moot if other measures turn out to be highly correlated with corruption measures generated from TRAC data. Instead, we demonstrate that previous measures of corruption are simply not good proxies for corruption among state officials in the U.S.

Correlation of Corruption Measures over Time

In Table 3, we list the correlation coefficients for several aggregate annual corruption measures over the period 1986-2012. We consider as our baseline measures of corruption in
the states either total corruption convictions per government FTE (federal, state and local), or convictions of state officials per state government FTE. We have argued that the former may not be a good indicator of the latter and indeed, we find the correlation in annual observations over time in these measures is just 0.29. Not surprisingly, PIN-sourced data on total convictions per FTE is essentially uncorrelated with the TRAC-sourced data on total convictions per FTE (and not highly correlated with state convictions).

We next consider two simple count-based indices. *New York Times I* is a simple replication of the Glaeser and Goldin (2006) measure; it is derived by summing article counts containing “corruption” or “fraud” and dividing the total by the count of articles containing “political.” This scaling was done by Glaeser and Golding to account for the change in newspaper pages that occurred over the historical period that they examine. However, even a casual glance at the search results from this exercise reveals a large number of articles that are irrelevant to corruption among state officials. For this reason, we construct a simple variant, *New York Times II*. This index is simply a count of articles containing “corruption” but also indexed by “United States,” “Crime and Law Enforcement” and “Government and Public Administration.” The two article-count indices are positively correlated with each other (p=0.44), but negatively correlated with the TRAC-sourced measure of total convictions and essentially uncorrelated with state convictions.

**Correlation of Corruption Measures across States**

In Table 4, we list correlation coefficients for several cross-sectional measures of state-level corruption. Again, the baseline measures are generated from TRAC data. We calculate the average convictions and prison months per FTE for state officials for the period 1992-2012
(i.e., for all years that data on prison sentences are available). These two measures are highly correlated ($p=0.67$). Somewhat surprisingly, the Boylan-Long Index is also positively correlated with both of these measures, even though it is generated by survey responses from 1999.

The State Integrity Index, despite being intended as a measure of good government and low corruption risk, is positively correlated with our baseline measures, as well. Of course, this may be due to states adopting reforms in response to past corruption. Consequently we check whether the State Integrity Index fares better when compared to average annual convictions for the most recent 5-year period. It does not; the correlation coefficient remains positive at 0.25 (see Figure 4).

**Ranking the States**

As a final exercise, we rank the states based on the two measures of corruption generated by the TRAC data. In Table 5, we list all 50 states from most to least corrupt, based on either average annual convictions or prison terms among state FTEs from 1992-2012 (also see Figure 5). Over the last 20 years, Kentucky and Tennessee stand out in both dimensions; while Mississippi has the most convictions per FTE over this time period. Florida and Alaska are notable for ranking relatively high on average prison months but lower on convictions, while Alabama and West Virginia are just the opposite. True to their reputations for corruption, Illinois, New York and Oklahoma rank among the top-10 most corrupt states in both categories. By these measures, the least corrupt states are found in the heartland (Colorado, the Dakotas, Idaho, Iowa, Utah and Wyoming), although there are two exceptions from the coasts: New Hampshire and Oregon.

6. Conclusion
We demonstrate that much of the empirical literature on the causes and consequences of public corruption in the United States is based on severely flawed data. Convictions of public officials from the Public Integrity Section of the Department of Justice are poorly documented, internally inconsistent and composed mainly of federal officials. The failure of the PIN data to add-up for the period 1976-1995 is quite problematic, since this is also the same period that many previous empirical studies examine. Further, federal officials tend to commit different crimes than non-federal officials and they serve fewer months in prison. Beyond this, the PIN survey data includes a large number of low-ranking federal employees (e.g., postal workers). Not surprisingly, convictions data from PIN are not highly correlated with superior measures generated from TRAC data (nor are other proxy measures based on word-counts or surveys of journalists).

Taken together, this suggests that scholars should discount lessons from earlier research and re-examine old questions with new and improved data. For example, in concurrent work, we demonstrate that state campaign finance laws are unrelated to state-level corruption (Cordis and Milyo 2013a). Further, we re-examine the claim made by Leeson and Sobel (2008) that federal disaster aid leads to increased public corruption; again we find no support for this using improved measures of corruption (Cordis and Milyo 2013b).

We also examine other proxies for corruption based surveys of journalists or article counts. The most prominent surveys exist for only a single year, so are of limited use. Beyond this, the State Integrity Index, while launched with some fanfare, is particularly problematic in its construction and not a useful indicator of corruption convictions. Our examination of
measures based on article counts reveals that these are also very noisy indicators of state corruption convictions.

Lastly, we demonstrate that administrative records on federal corruption prosecutions hold much promise for research, since most corruption cases are pursued by federal authorities and these data can be disaggregated down to the case level. Consequently, it is possible to analyze corruption by referrals, convictions or punishments; in addition, cases can be broken down easily by type of charge, type of official and geographic district. Our initial examination of the descriptive statistics reveals several lessons that have been underappreciated in both the academic literature and in popular commentaries on corruption. For example, relatively few corruption cases involve state-level employees and even fewer are elected or high-ranking individuals. Further, the types of crimes committed by federal employees are different than those for non-federal officials and carry shorter mean prison sentences. Drug charges and election-crimes (including campaign finance violations) are exceedingly rare among corruption convictions. Finally, our ranking of states by corruption convictions and prison months sheds light on the geography of corruption; at least for some cases, the choice of corruption proxy can greatly affect the placement of a particular state in these rankings. Even these few basic lessons make clear that the availability of federal administrative records on corruption prosecutions is a boon for future empirical work on the causes and consequences of public corruption.
References


Figure 1: Official Corruption in the United States

Notes: All four series are from the United States Department of Justice (DOJ), but differ by referring agency. PIN refers to the Public Integrity Section; table numbers identify the table within the PIN annual reports to Congress from which the data is obtained. TRAC refers to the Transactional Record Clearinghouse at Syracuse University; this data series is compiled from multiple FOIA requests from the DOJ (use of this data is under license from TRAC). EOUSA refers to the Executive Office of the United States District Attorneys; data are taken from Table 3 of the EOUSA annual statistical reports.
Figure 2: Federal Convictions by Type of Official

Notes: Source: TRAC. “Other” refers to private individuals involved in official corruption.
Figure 3: Prison Months by Type of Official

Prison Months per 100K Government FTEs vs. Year

- Federal
- State
- Local
Figure 4: Corruption among State Officials, 2008-2012

Convictions per 100K State Government FTEs

State Integrity Index
Figure 5: Ranking the States by Corruption among State Officials, 1992-2012
### Table 1: Official Corruption by Lead Charge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>U.S. Code Title for Lead Charge</th>
<th>Type of Public Official</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Federal</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total Number of Convictions</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>15,318</td>
<td>8,569</td>
<td>1,462</td>
<td>3,794</td>
<td>1,493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title 18: Crimes and Criminal Procedure</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>91.4%</td>
<td>92.6%</td>
<td>90.8%</td>
<td>92.1%</td>
<td>83.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§201 Bribery of Public Officials and Witnesses</td>
<td></td>
<td>14.1</td>
<td>20.3</td>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§371 Conspiracy to Commit Offense or Defraud the US</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§641 Public Money, Property or Records</td>
<td></td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>11.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§666 Theft\Bribery in Programs Receiving Federal Funds</td>
<td></td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>21.7</td>
<td>7.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§1001 Fraud and False Statements or Entries Generally</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>6.7</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>3.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§1028 Fraud and Related – ID Documents</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§1341 Mail Fraud- Frauds and Swindles</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>5.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§1709 Theft or Destruction of Mail by Officers or Employees</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§1951 Hobbs Act</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>26.7</td>
<td>21.6</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§1962 RICO Prohibited Activities</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal for most frequent sections under 18 USC</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>67.3</td>
<td>63.3</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>73.3</td>
<td>60.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title 21: Food and Drugs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
<td>3.1%</td>
<td>7.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§841 &amp; §843 Manufacture and Distribution of Drugs</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§844 Simple Possession of Drugs</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§846 Attempt and Conspiracy</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Subtotal for drug charges under 21 USC</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>7.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title 26: Internal Revenue Code</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
<td>2.4%</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§7201 Tax Evasion</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§7206 Fraud and False Statements</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Title 42: Public Health and Welfare</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
<td>1.2%</td>
<td>0.7%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§408 SSDI Penalties</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>§1973 Denial or Abridgement of Right to Vote</td>
<td></td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.9</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Notes:** Data are cumulative, 1986-2012; all percentages refer to column totals and are rounded to the nearest tenth. “Other” refers to private individuals involved in official corruption. Source: TRAC.
Table 2: Disposition of Corruption Cases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Public Official</th>
<th>All</th>
<th>Federal</th>
<th>State</th>
<th>Local</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total Referrals, 1986-2012</td>
<td>49,309</td>
<td>24,609</td>
<td>5,469</td>
<td>13,846</td>
<td>5,370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosecuted</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convicted if Prosecuted</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>84%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean (Days) Referral to Conviction</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>492</td>
<td>657</td>
<td>676</td>
<td>559</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Convictions, 1992-2012</td>
<td>11,438</td>
<td>6,374</td>
<td>1,179</td>
<td>2,959</td>
<td>971</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percent with Prison Sentences if Convicted</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Sentence (Months) if Sentenced to Prison</td>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>13.2</td>
<td>27.8</td>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>31.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Sentence (Months) if Convicted</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>5.9</td>
<td>19.4</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>21.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: Information on prison sentences is not available prior to 1992. Source: TRAC
Table 3: Correlations Over Time, 1986-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TRAC Total Convictions per Government FTE</th>
<th>TRAC State Convictions per State Government FTE</th>
<th>PIN Total Convictions per Government FTE</th>
<th>New York Times Index I</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRAC Convictions per 100K State FTE</td>
<td>.29</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PIN Total Convictions per 100K Gov’t FTE</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times Index I</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York Times Index II</td>
<td>-.43</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.44</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Notes: *New York Times* Index I is based on Glaeser and Goldin (2006); it is a count of articles containing “corruption” or “fraud,” divided by the count of articles containing “politics.” *New York Times* Index II is a count of articles on corruption among those indexed under “United States,” “Crime” and “Government.”
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>TRAC Prison Months per State FTE</th>
<th>TRAC Convictions per 100K State FTE</th>
<th>Boylan-Long Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>TRAC Convictions per 100K State FTE</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boylan-Long Index</td>
<td>.30</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Integrity Index</td>
<td>.21</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5: Ranking the States by Corruption, 1992-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Convictions per State Government FTE</th>
<th>Average Prison Months per State Government FTE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Mississippi</td>
<td>1. Kentucky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Kentucky</td>
<td>2. Tennessee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Rhode Island</td>
<td>3. Alaska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Illinois</td>
<td>4. Mississippi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Tennessee</td>
<td>5. Florida</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Oklahoma</td>
<td>8. Oklahoma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Massachusetts</td>
<td>10. Ohio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Louisiana</td>
<td>11. Rhode Island</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. New Jersey</td>
<td>12. Louisiana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Arkansas</td>
<td>15. Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. Alabama</td>
<td>17. Texas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. Florida</td>
<td>18. Arkansas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Maryland</td>
<td>19. Montana</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. New Mexico</td>
<td>20. New Jersey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. Delaware</td>
<td>22. Delaware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. Missouri</td>
<td>23. North Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. California</td>
<td>24. Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. Maine</td>
<td>25. Maryland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Texas</td>
<td>27. South Carolina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. South Carolina</td>
<td>28. New Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. Virginia</td>
<td>29. Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Nevada</td>
<td>30. West Virginia</td>
</tr>
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