

# Cultural factors not contributors to corruption

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Ground-breaking research led by Swinburne University of Technology academics has undermined the common assumption that cultural factors are to blame for business and government corruption in countries undergoing political and economic transformation.

The study, coordinated by members of Swinburne's Faculty of Business and Enterprise, surveyed 868 managers in the public and private sectors in Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary and the Slovak Republic - nations that have undergone a turbulent transition from controlled political and economic systems.

All four [countries](#) score relatively poorly in international rankings for corruption and unethical practices, leading to suggestions that they need to change their leadership culture.

But the survey found culture wasn't the problem, and changing it wasn't the solution.

"This is a real eye-opener," said Dr Aron Perenyi, who with his Swinburne colleagues Professor Christopher Selvarajah and Dr Janusz Tanas co-ordinated the study with partners from universities in the four Central European nations.

"The survey shows managers in these countries have a clear idea of what's right and what's wrong," Dr Perenyi said. "This indicates that major ethical problems such as governance, corruption and transparency

in the business environment in those countries is not determined by a leadership culture."

Further research is needed to identify the real causes of unethical behaviour, which could include weak institutions and a poor legal framework.

The findings could have lessons for other nations undergoing a similar transition, as well as emerging economies in Africa and Asia, Dr Perenyi said.

The research was funded by the Visegrad Fund, set up by the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and the Slovak Republic to foster closer cooperation in the region and with other European countries.

Dr Perenyi said the research was unique in that it was led by Australian academics co-ordinating a study with European partners on a sensitive issue from a distance. The study was the first by Australian academics to win funding from the Visegrad Fund, which mostly sponsors European researchers.

"This was a potentially sensitive research question, which could be best coordinated by researchers outside the region, but in cooperation with researchers from within. It was a unique opportunity, and it granted the researchers further credibility," Dr Perenyi said.

**More information:** Read the complete report:  
[sites.google.com/site/v4lead/home](https://sites.google.com/site/v4lead/home)

Provided by Swinburne University of Technology

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