

## **EARF Corruption, Social Norms and Behaviours in East Africa**

### **Drivers of Petty Corruption and Anti-Corruption Interventions in Developing Countries – a Semi-Systematic Review**

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# Acronyms

CSC	Community Scorecard
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DFID	Department for International Development
EARF	East Africa Research Fund
ETP	Extra Teacher Programme (Kenya)
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act
GTR	Grounded Theory Driven Review
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PTA	Parent Teacher Association (Kenya)
RED	Research for Evidence Division (DFID)
RTIA	Right to Information Act (India)
TNS	Textual Narrative Synthesis
VEC	Village Education Committee (India)
WDR	World Development Report 2015 (World Bank)

# 1 Introduction

Combatting corruption in the developing world has been a formidable challenge and taken a prominent place in the agenda of the international development community for the last two decades. Nonetheless, the results and outcomes of conventional anti-corruption interventions continue to be modest at best (Marquette and Pfeiffer, 2015; Mungiu-Pippidi, 2011). This is often reflected in the so-called implementation gap, whereby countries adopting sound legal and organisational anti-corruption frameworks continue to experience very high levels of corruption.

A growing critique has centred on the perception that many anti-corruption reforms and interventions fail to take into account and understand the local contexts in which they operate (Haruna, 2003; Mette Kjaer, 2004; Rugumyamheto, 2004). Also, several authors have argued that in developing countries corruption is fuelled by a large scale collective action problem where behaving corruptly represents a sensible choice for most individuals, whether because they expect everyone else to behave corruptly or because corruption is functional – as means to an end (Marquette and Pfeiffer, 2015; Mungiu-Pippidi, 2013; Persson et al., 2013). When this is the case, it is therefore unsurprising that conventional anti-corruption instruments yield limited results.

Thus, there is a need to re-think the practice of anti-corruption on the basis of evidence about the factors that drive corruption in different contexts, including the incentives, expectations and agendas across all groups in society (Baez-Camargo and Passas, 2017). In particular, it is necessary to understand the motivations shaping the behaviours of ordinary citizens who, although most sharply suffering the costs from the misuse of public funds, may nonetheless tolerate or even participate in corruption (Wrong, 2014). Thus, while much has been written in the literature about the potential of bottom-up collective action to stand up against corrupt government and state officials (Johnston, 2014; Landell-Mills, 2013; Mcneil and Malena, 2010), this potential may only be unleashed if the factors shaping attitudes towards corruption among citizens are properly addressed.

As the World Bank's 2015 World Development Report (WDR) on human decision-making compellingly argued, behavioural studies present a promising - but the most part unexplored - approach to improve development policies by incorporating a better understanding of how individuals make choices in their everyday lives. In fact, by suggesting that "fostering collective action is not purely a matter of incentivising self-interested individuals" (World Bank, 2015, p. 61), the 2015 WDR has invited scholars and practitioners to consider not only how quasi-rational and socio-cultural factors may play a role in perpetuating vicious cycles of poverty and weak governance, but also how those same factors may be creatively harnessed towards achieving better development outcomes. This stance was echoed in the UK Institute for Government's 2010 Mindspace Report on 'Influencing Behaviour through Public Policy', which stated that "shaping policy more closely around our inbuilt responses to the world offers a potentially powerful way to improve individual wellbeing and social welfare" (Dolan et al., 2010 p.8).

This literature review is part of a pioneering research effort commissioned by the UK Department for International Development (DFID) through its East Africa Research Fund (EARF) that explores the utility of behavioural economics for the study of petty corruption.<sup>1</sup> The review has been conducted following a

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<sup>1</sup> For more information about the EARF and the research project "Corruption, Social Norms and Behaviours in East Africa" please visit <http://www.earesearchfund.org/> and <http://www.earesearchfund.org/research-corruption-social-norms-and-behaviors-east-africa>.

rigorous methodological approach and it aims to contribute evidence conducive to the feasibility of developing of anti-corruption interventions based on behavioural principles.<sup>2</sup>

The review addresses *two* main review questions:

1. *What behavioural factors having an impact on individual attitudes towards petty corruption have been identified in the literature?*
2. *What does the evidence suggest about the relative effectiveness of different types of interventions to address petty corruption?*

The report is organised as follows:

Section 2 provides a brief overview of the WDR framework of human decision-making and lays out working definitions for key concepts utilised throughout the review. Section 3 is devoted to the review of the literature shedding light into behavioural factors that have a bearing on how individuals make decisions associated with practices of petty corruption. Section 4 presents the evidence from the comparative assessment of selected anti-corruption interventions. Section 5 provides a synthesis analysis integrating all reviewed studies, outlining the main messages learned and discussing the policy implications of the systematic review for the development of interventions to tackle petty corruption.

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<sup>2</sup> The present semi-systematic review is an abridged version intended for use by policy practitioners - concisely summarising and discussing all policy-relevant findings and insights yielded by a much longer and more detailed review semi-systematic review of Drivers of Petty Corruption and Behavioural Anti-Corruption Interventions in Developing Countries (Stahl et al., forthcoming), commissioned by DFID's East Africa Research Fund commissioned and conducted by the Basel Institute on Governance in the course of 2016. The long version provides more detail and depth about research-relevant insights and crucial aspects of the research designs, including study characteristics, methodological choices and research methods. This review is not a fully systematic but adheres to systematic principles of rigour, transparency and replicability (Hagen-Zanker and Mallett, 2013) - having followed a systematic search strategy, having compiled a search log and having made use of two established review methods:

- A grounded-theory driven approach (GTR) to summarising behavioural drivers of petty corruption following a behavioural-economic conceptual framework of human decision-making (Wolfswinkel et al., 2013, World Bank, 2015).
- A textual narrative synthesis (TNS) of effective behavioural and non-behavioural (social accountability) interventions targeting petty corruption in developing countries (Popay et al., 2006).

## 2 Definitions and conceptual challenges

### 2.1 The 2015 WDR framework

The 2015 WDR “Mind, Society and Behaviour” emphasised that common approaches to development policy making can be improved by considering cognitive psychological models of decision-making and human behaviour. In addition to dominant approaches of classic rational choice and economic theory, the WDR authors call for supplementary strategies based on behavioural-economic insights that take into account evidence on the determinants of human choice and action paying attention both to mind processes and to the impact of historical experience and social influences.

This review follows the conceptual framework laid out by the 2015 WDR that identifies *three* broad principles of human decision making:

1. “Thinking automatically” refers to the propensity of people to make most judgments and choices automatically, rather than deliberately. Thus, decisions may respond to the presence of *frames*, which refer to the way choices are presented (e.g. as a loss or a gain). Automatic thinking can also be associated to *anchors*, which are contextual aspects that have no direct relevance to a decision but that nonetheless affect judgement, leading individuals to jump to conclusions on very partial views of the problem. Choices may also be made on the basis of *default options*, which might be based on the modal patterns of behaviour prevailing in any given social context.
2. “Thinking socially” recognises that the way in which people act and think often depends on what others around them do and think. Thus, social preferences, social norms, social identities and social networks can exert a decisive influence on decision making because people care about their surroundings and strive to align with the patterns adhered to by the groups they identify with. Thus, engaging with the social determinants of individual choice involves taking into account intangible dimensions such as status, respect, shaming, and guilt, which may exert inordinate impact on patterns of decision making compared to other, perhaps more visible, factors.
3. “Thinking with mental models” means that individuals in any given society share common perspectives and ideas through which they make sense of the world around them. In other words, decision-making relies on concepts, categories, identities, prototypes, stereotypes causal narratives and worldviews drawn from one’s environment. Mental models can refer to the macro level, where individuals share a collective vision of how things work around them, which might be shaped by factors such as history, ideology, religion and exposure to different types of institutions. Mental models can also apply to the micro level, where an individual’s self-concept may consist of multiple identities, each associated with different norms that dictate adequate behaviours for different situations.

### 2.2 Defining petty corruption

Corruption is generally defined in terms similar to those of Transparency International, which understands corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain” (see also Tanzi, 1998; Kaufmann, 1997; Rose-Ackerman, 1999; Klitgaard et al., 2000). This general definition can be further refined according to different types of corruption such as grand corruption, petty corruption or political



corruption – which depend on the scale and magnitude the corrupt transaction, the actors involved as well as the sector where such corrupt transaction occurs (Transparency International, n.d.).

A review of the literature reveals that petty corruption – also often labelled administrative or bureaucratic corruption – has been defined in many different ways, ranging from definitions that are broad and general to those that focus on particular phenomena. For instance, Transparency International defines petty corruption as the ‘everyday abuse of entrusted power by low- and mid-level public officials in their interaction with ordinary citizens, who often are trying to access basic goods or services in places like hospitals, schools, police departments and other agencies’ (Transparency International n.d.). According to the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre (U4 Anti Corruption Resource Centre, n.d.), administrative or petty corruption takes place at the “implementation end of politics [policies], where public officials meet the public” most commonly in the form of acts of bribery or abuse of power in day-to-day situations. A recent systematic review on corruption identified petty corruption primarily on the basis that it involves small amounts of money and as such it may manifest in different forms and have different aims such as to “demand extra payment for the provision of government services; make speed money payments to expedite bureaucratic procedures; pay bribes to allow actions that violate rules and regulations [...] obtain posts or secure promotion, or the mutual exchange of favours” (DFID, 2015, p. 13).

Although it is clear that petty corruption can manifest in many different manners, much attention has been given to bribery as a most conspicuous form of petty corruption.<sup>3</sup> Thus, in the literature one encounters definitions that seek to differentiate among different types of bribes. Basu (quoted in Abbink et al. 2014) suggests that bribes are not limited to situations where a citizen pays to receive contracts or services from public officials in an expedited manner. Often, officials demand bribes even for delivering citizens their entitled services such as an admission to the hospital or approval of a passport. This latter situation involves what may be termed “harassment bribes”. In turn, collusive bribery happens when citizens and officials exchange favours at the cost of the public and whereby bribes are paid to obtain a favourable service that the briber is not entitled to (Abbink et al. 2014). Speed or grease money is another term that refers to the bribes given and taken in order to ensure that services are provided satisfactorily (Kaufmann and Wei, 1999).

There are significant conceptual challenges in defining and operationalizing a phenomenon as complex and multidimensional as petty corruption. In fact, as one seeks to move away from generic definitions to develop more precise and nuanced conceptualisations of petty corruption, the endeavour of arriving at universally applicable criteria becomes increasingly problematic. As Torsello (2011, p. 3) argues, at the root of the problem may be the fact that “the dichotomy private-public, informed by the Weberian rationality of the western bureaucratic machinery, is context-specific.” This is so, because practices that fall within the scope of what may be “normally” understood as petty corruption may be illegal or not depending on the context but also, and perhaps more significantly, because most conventional definitions of petty corruption fail to capture the extent to which such practices may have or not social acceptability. For instance, it is significant that several of the reviewed sources focusing on regions as diverse as Sub Saharan Africa, Asia, and Central and Eastern Europe, point out that practices of gift giving are extremely difficult to neatly separate into categories of corrupt or non-corrupt because they are associated to socially valued expressions of gratitude, congratulations or sympathy and tend to be

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<sup>3</sup> For instance Jain (2001, p. 75) defines petty corruption as a circumstance where “the public may be required to bribe bureaucrats to receive a service to which they are entitled or to speed up the bureaucratic process” whereas Djawadi and Fahr (2013) identify petty corruption as the “bribes that are offered by private citizens to lower level public officials for receiving special treatment, to which they are otherwise not legally entitled to.”

widespread (Ruud 2000; Blundo and Olivier de Sardan, 2006; Chang et al. 2001; Moldovan et al., 2013; Stepurko et al., 2015; Miller et al., 2000).

For the aforementioned reasons, and because this review seeks to shed light into behavioural factors impacting attitudes towards petty corruption, a broad approach to defining petty corruption has been deemed most appropriate in order to capture the various manners in which individuals understand petty corruption and the practices associated with it in their local contexts. Therefore, this review focuses on informal transactions (i.e. those that do not adhere to formal processes and rules) involving low to mid-level officials on one side and ordinary citizens on the other. In this regard, the terms citizen and user are used interchangeably and the same applies to the terms public official and service provider.

### **2.3 Defining behavioural and social accountability interventions**

One of the main goals of the present study is to review the evidence on the relative effectiveness of different types of interventions addressing petty corruption. Therefore, it is important to provide clarity on what are the defining elements that constitute alternative anti-corruption approaches. In particular, this review discusses top-down, social accountability and behavioural interventions addressing petty corruption.

Top-down interventions refer to those that aim to reduce the opportunity space for engaging in corrupt actions by addressing the incentives of public officers via changes to their contractual stipulations and promoting better controls at the workplace. The term top-down refers to the fact that this type of intervention aims to support the ability of management (and ultimately political leaders) to hold public sector workers accountable.

Social accountability interventions are those involving direct citizen engagement. The World Bank defines social accountability as “the broad range of actions and mechanisms beyond voting that citizens can use to hold the state to account, as well as actions on the part of government, civil society, media and other societal actors that promote or facilitate these efforts’ (World Bank 2006, p.5). This type of intervention typically seeks to strengthen formal accountability channels by means of mobilising citizens and civil society organisations (CSOs).

In most cases, social accountability programmes involve some type of awareness raising and/or capacity building activities aimed at disseminating information about citizens’ rights and entitlements. The assumption is that access to the right information will enable citizens to better identify, resist and denounce instances of abuse of power. Sometimes capacity building activities take the form of specialised trainings to empower citizens to exercise their voice and engage proactively in specific activities. Thus, the spectrum of activities considered under the broad term social accountability goes from those emphasising education and awareness raising to those involving participatory actions whereby citizens provide inputs conducive to demand accountability and denounce corruption. There are many different modalities of citizen participation but the majority involve some form of performance monitoring of public service delivery (Molina et al., 2013; Baez-Camargo, 2015).

It follows that social accountability interventions may be classified as a) information campaigns, b) community monitoring interventions or c) a combination of the former two. It is also useful to make a distinction between direct control interventions, where ownership is promoted by empowering participants to make decisions about programme content and/or implementation, and indirect control interventions, where citizens participate in programs that have been designed and managed by other (external) actors and therefore have no direct decision making powers (Banerjee et al., 2008).

Both the top-down and the social accountability interventions are modelled after a principal-agent model of accountability relations. This implies an underlying assumption on the causes of corruption, namely that it stems from a classical principal-agent problem arising when the two parties have different interests and asymmetric information. Social accountability interventions are therefore non-behavioural because they are based on assumptions of rational decision-making by individuals who consistently aim at maximising their own interest and therefore respond rationally to changes in their incentive structures.

In contrast, behavioural interventions are grounded in the acknowledgement that behaviour is often shaped by non-rational and quasi-rational factors such as in-built mental shortcuts, default solutions to problems and social and cultural expectations of acceptability. Individuals may be enculturated as a direct result of past experiences and the long-term exposure to a given and context-specific social environment and culture. Therefore, behavioural interventions, rather than directly targeting the incentives of individuals, aim at making changes in the wider environment in which people make decisions and respond to cues. Examples of behavioural interventions include approaches such as media and education campaigns aimed at changing mental models, social norms and changing the channels or the format in which information is communicated.

## 3 Behavioural drivers of petty corruption

This section summarises the findings aimed addressing review question 1:

*What behavioural factors having an impact on individual attitudes towards petty corruption have been identified in the literature?*

Certainly numerous factors have been identified as being associated to prevalence of corrupt behaviours in general and petty corruption in particular. Because the literature on the topic is abundant and because the focus of this review is on the behavioural underpinnings of corrupt practices, the main explanatory factors that have been conventionally associated with the prevalence of corruption are here only very briefly summarised in the manner of background to the review exploring the behavioural determinants of attitudes towards petty corruption.

Mainstream theories of corruption point to the importance of economic and political factors such as the level of economic development, the type of political system, the quality of institutions, the size of government and degree of its decentralisation, the relative level of salaries in the public sector, and the country's openness to trade. (see literature surveys by (Treisman, 2007; Lambsdorff, 2007; Pellegrini and Gerlagh, 2008). Indeed, a significant body of empirical evidence, stemming mostly from quantitative analyses, consistently finds a strong association between corruption and low economic performance (Mauro, 1995; Gatti, Paternostro, and Rigolini 2003). Thus, in developing countries, corruption has often been explained as a market clearing mechanism responding to an insufficient supply of retail public services such as education and health care (Peiffer and Rose 2014). In particular, among explanations based on economic factors, low salaries have been identified as critically important to explain high levels of petty corruption. In fact, although the majority of the sources included in this review focus on factors other than conventional economic incentives, due recognition of the importance of low salaries is given in several of the appraised studies covering very diverse geographical regions including Africa (de Sardan, 1999; Agbiboa, 2015; Heilman and Ndumbaro, 2002), Asia (Meagher, Upadhyaya, and Wilkinson, 1999; Quah, 2006) and the post-Soviet states (Grodland et al. 1998).

In terms of the political-institutional factors, big bureaucracies have been often associated with high corruption levels (Mauro 2004) as are weak or inadequate legal frameworks and institutions (Brogden and Nijhar, 1998; Johnston, 2005) and weak monitoring (Olken, 2007). Corruption has also been associated with regime type whereby democracies consistently perform significantly better in control of corruption measures as compared to authoritarian regimes (Acemoglu and Robinson, 2012). Some authors link this finding to particular features of democratic regimes such as freedom of the press, which has also been found to strongly correlate with indices of corruption (Rose-Ackerman and Soreide, 2011). Macro-level structural factors such as abundance of natural resources have also been associated with high levels of corruption (Leite and Weidmann, 1999).

What is perhaps more relevant to underscore in taking stock of the findings contributed by this body of literature is that a significant part rests on assumptions of rational decision making, most conspicuously on the basis of the principal agent model of accountability relations. Indicative of this is one of the most prominent formulations contributed by Robert Klitgaard, (1988), which conceptualises corruption as

equalling monopoly, plus discretion minus accountability. Because this understanding of corruption has strongly influenced the development of the mainstream anti-corruption paradigm, it is therefore no surprise that most conventional anticorruption prescriptions have also often been formulated on the basis of such assumptions. However, as mentioned earlier, conventional anti-corruption interventions have not as yet delivered the results expected in many countries (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2011; Marquette and Peiffer, 2015).

With this situation as the backdrop, the following review of the literature on behavioural determinants of corrupt behaviours and associated attitudes is intended to contribute to lay the groundwork to the development of a new generation of anti-corruption strategies that, by building on empirically derived and well contextualised insights, will be an effective complement to current approaches. The review followed a Grounded Theory-based Review (GTR) methodology in order to facilitate concept and theory building, which is especially important given the scarcity of studies explicitly exploring the links between behavioural factors of human decision making and anti-corruption outcomes. In what follows, the most salient points coming out of the literature review are organised along the three behavioural dimensions proposed by the 2015 WDR.

### **3.1 Automatic thinking**

The first of the three principles emphasised by the 2015 WDR postulates that people make most judgments and most choices automatically. This so-called automatic thinking has been found to have a significant impact on attitudes towards petty corruption. As Blundo and de Sardan (2006: 5) noted “(e)veryday corruption is a social activity, which is regulated de facto by a series of tacit codes and practical norms [...which] are never explicit and are often even unconscious and automatic.”

#### **3.1.1 ‘Everybody is doing it’: the power of frames**

One of the modalities in which automatic thinking takes over the rational mind is through the power of frames, whereby our choices and behaviours are affected by the perceptions of the generalised patterns of action adopted by others around us. A frequent scenario discussed in the literature is that, when people assume that everyone else around them is paying bribes and accepting that as a normal state of affairs, then corruption will indeed become normalised. Generalised corruption then becomes the *narrow frame*<sup>4</sup> shaping the reactions of individuals who, when faced with a public official, will immediately assume the person in front of them is expecting a bribe. Similar considerations also apply to providers of public services with the result that such a shared expectation overrides any ethical objections that individuals may have about engaging in corrupt practices, thus providing an explanation to instances of intention/action divide where people may emphatically condemn corrupt acts while still engaging in them.<sup>5</sup>

This type of scenario has been empirically validated by a wealth of studies across several disciplines and utilising different methodological approaches (Kahan, 2003; Mauro, 2004; Dong et al., 2009; Barr and Serra, 2009; Kotzian, 2011; Carson, 2013; Peiffer and Rose, 2014; Zaloznaya, 2014; Lindner, 2014). Overall, this literature supports the importance of automatic thinking in settings where individual behaviours are guided, not by rational decision-making, but by emotionally nuanced perceptions of reciprocity stemming from what are perceived to be the modal patterns of behaviour.

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<sup>4</sup> Narrow frames refer to the reference to which the automatic system of the mind refers to evaluate a situation or that which “automatically comes to mind” WDR (2015, p. 6).

<sup>5</sup> For instance, (Peiffer and Rose, 2014) reported that among Afrobarometer respondents who think bribery is wrong, 25% say they have paid a bribe in the past year. Since those thinking bribery is wrong and should be punished are a big majority of respondents, the upshot is that more than three-quarters of those who report the payment of a bribe are people who think bribery is wrong and should be punished.

An example of how narrow frames can override learned concepts comes from the study from Barr and Serra (2009) who tested the impact of education on values of integrity and professionalism among Ethiopian nursing students and found that increased exposure to the actual experience of prevailing high levels of corruption in the Ethiopian health sector led to the erosion of said norms among the students. Along similar lines, testing for the importance of reciprocity, Kahan (2003) found that the perception of others' corrupt behaviour induced individuals to be corrupt themselves out of pride, resentment and even revenge, whereas perceived integrity of others induced individuals to behave in a similar fashion out of feelings of honour and altruism.

### **3.1.2 The relevance of information**

Another line of inquiry, which is also consistent with the notion of automatic thinking, explores how corrupt behaviours are affected by the type of information available to individuals and the manner in which it is interpreted, with problems of incomplete information and biases in assessing the information playing a significant role.

Findings about failures to correctly account for the risks of engaging in corruption lend support to the behavioural thesis that very often individuals do not process the information available to them according to a rational actor paradigm. In an experimental setting, Djawadi and Fahr (2013) showed that individuals that engage in corrupt actions tend to systematically underestimate the probability of being caught. A plausible policy implication from such findings is that the type of information relative to the prosecution of corruption crimes that is communicated as well as the channels through which it is conveyed might have a strong impact on how it is processed by individuals. According to one study (Carson, 2013, p. 23) legal commands stated as clear rules that specify duties and responsibilities are best suited to deter corruption. Others argue that greater availability of information concerning the incidence of corrupt transactions can act as a deterrent because it increases the perception about the likelihood that corrupt officials are exposed and punished (Peisakhin and Pinto, 2010; Peisakhin, 2012). Also, information about the method and frequency of sanction enforcement may increase the perceived costs of engaging in corrupt behaviours by raising the visibility and profile of enforcing institutions, such as the police, legal authorities, watchdogs and other potential law enforcers (Carson, 2014). Finally, information about salaries of public officials may increase the willingness of citizens to denounce corruption (Barr and Serra, 2009) and motivate monitors to put more effort into exposing underperformance by public servants receiving higher wages (Abbink, 2004).<sup>6</sup>

Also important is by whom information is disseminated and the perceived authority, trustworthiness and legitimacy of the messenger (Dolan et al., 2010). For instance, Baez-Camargo and Sambaiga (2016) found that a high level of trust in civil society organisations in Tanzania was an important factor in determining the effectiveness of a community training intervention carried out by a local CSO, which provided health service users with the information required to identify and resist petty corruption in the health sector.

### **3.1.3 Environmental cues and automatic responses**

Environmental cues, understood as unspoken signals that trigger certain behaviours, may be important in eliciting corrupt behaviours, such as a corrupt official subtly hinting at a claimant to pay a bribe (Pfeiffer and Rose, 2014). These cues evoke different beliefs about corruption and may include

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<sup>6</sup> This points to the importance of the concept of distributive fairness the perception of which significantly affects behavioural responses to petty corruption (Abbink, 2004; Abbink et al., 2014).

observed behaviours of others, gossip and hearsay, traditional and religious principles (Zaloznaya, 2014) but also particular features of the material environment.

One manifestation of the impact of environmental cues on behaviour was demonstrated in an experiment that revealed that compliance with an honour payment system for coffee in a university common room increased when images of watching eyes were hung on the nearby walls – plausibly eliciting among coffee drinking students the unconscious feeling of being watched (Bateson et al., 2006). Along similar lines, and pointing to the potentially relevant policy implications of the impact of environmental cues, van Veldhuizen (2013) explored the relationship between salary increases and the prevalence of petty corruption based on evidence from experimental research. This author argues that increasing public officials' wages may decrease petty corruption but only if monitoring is also improved, if only just slightly. This is an interesting finding because it points to a behavioural effect where tendencies to extract corrupt rents went down disproportionately compared with the actual improvements in monitoring suggesting that the mere perception about monitoring may have served as a deterrent to public officials.

### **Summary points: Automatic thinking**

The studies considered in this section shed light on some of the impacts that automatic systems of decision making impinge on behaviours associated with petty corruption. Three areas stand out in this respect:

- First, the prevalence of narrow frames that inform a perception that corruption is the normal state of affairs suggests that interventions aimed at emphasising examples of good behaviours could be effective at deterring petty corruption, even relative to alternative (and often costly) incentive schemes.
- Second, the role of information is key. This includes biases in assessing available information, which can possibly account for the lack of effectiveness of formal systems of monitoring and sanctioning. Also relevant is the suggestion that careful consideration of the type of information that is made available to citizens, including the manner in which it is articulated and the channels through which it is communicated, can be key to decreasing the prevalence of petty corruption practices.
- Third, environmental cues present in the physical settings where public services are provided may trigger automatic reactions affecting the willingness of users and service providers to engage in corrupt transactions. Although studies on this latter topic are scarcer, there are some notable examples of success from incorporating environmental cues to support anti-corruption reforms such as the installation of prominently displayed monitoring cameras in Georgian public offices in the aftermath of the Rose Revolution (World Bank, 2012).

### **3.2 Sociality: social norms and community preferences**

Sociality and social norms constitute the second behavioural principle of human decision making, which states that the actions of individuals are significantly influenced by their social environment. Consistent with this general notion, a significant body of literature confirms the expectation that corrupt behaviours and practices are often influenced by social preferences, social networks, social identities, and prevailing social norms.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, several of the works reviewed articulate the complex challenges to anti-corruption in contexts where corrupt behaviours are rarely condemned (if not outright praised)

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<sup>7</sup> Social norms - defined as 'informal rules, driven by values and beliefs that govern interaction and are both shared and sustained by group members' (Banuri and Eckel, 2012) - represent an embodiment of social values and principles that are held dear by communities and therefore upheld by precepts of morality.

because they are understood as being pursued in the fulfilment of values held dear in the communities (Jackall, 1988; Anders, 2002 and 2005).

### **3.2.1 Social values and associated practices: Reciprocity and the ambivalence of gift-giving**

Reciprocity is one of the social values that appears to be strongly associated with practices of petty corruption. As such, it is often inherent in the language used to implicitly refer to bribery in the public service. In their study on the effect of cultural traits on practices of petty corruption in Ukraine, Bulgaria, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, Grodeland et.al (1998) describe the language used by their respondents to describe bribing in public services, such as: "A favour for a favour", "If you do not 'thank' you should not expect further assistance", "A service in return for a service" (Grodeland et al. 1998: 668). Interestingly, these formulations are strikingly similar to the definitions of petty corruption given by Tanzanians in the ethnographic study of Baez-Camargo and Sambaiga (2016) where corruption was articulated as "something for something" based on a notion of justice being founded on reciprocity.

One associated practice is gift-giving which tends to be widespread in contexts where reciprocity is highly valued. In West Africa, it is practiced conspicuously and occurs equally in the direction of 'superiors', 'equals' or 'inferiors' (De Sardan, 1999). The same is true for South Korea where a gift is fundamental to social practices to express congratulation, gratitude, condolence and attention (Chang et al., 2001).

The idea of defining clear-cut criteria to draw the line between a gift and a bribe is controversial. On one extreme, based on their study of South Korea, Chang et al., (2001) have attempted to develop precise measures of monetary value and gift size as indicators of whether there is an ulterior intention to a gift. Along similar lines, Grodeland et al. (1998) outlined possible additional criteria to differentiate a gift from a bribe based on aspects such as the timing of the gift, the type of service-seeking interaction in which the gift is exchanged and whether money is involved or not.

At the other end of the spectrum, Blundo and Olivier de Sardan (2006) strongly warn against conflating social norms with corrupt practices. Rather, the ethnographic literature suggests that coming up with clear dividing line between a gift and a bribe is virtually impossible in contexts where social interactions are characterised by multiple variations of actions that are similar in nature but carry ambivalent meanings (Ruud, 2000).

### **3.2.2 Informal social networks and the obligation to the group**

Social links and informal social networks are prominent in the literature, especially that specialised on Africa. Seminal works include Ekeh's exploration of the primordial public (Ekeh, 1975) and Hyden's investigation on the Tanzanian economy of affection referring to informal economic transactions which cannot be understood outside the social relationships in which they are embedded (Hyden, 2005 [1980]).

Social networks include primary organisations like family, clan, village, tribe or race – which are bound together by affectionate ties (Anders, 2002) but may also be open and fluid to include acquaintances of varied nature and degree of proximity. Thus, any given individual may belong to a plethora of parallel and overlapping networks grounded in varying attributes of group affiliation, including neighbourliness, work relationships, church membership, etc. Besides their relevance in African contexts, the literature review reveals that such social networks are also conspicuous in other regions. Examples include the importance of extended family in India (Jauregui, 2014; Ruud, 2000), of the so-called 'FAR' networks (family, alumni, region) in South Korea (Chang et.al 2001), and the importance of networks of family



and close friends in most of Eastern Europe and Asia (Grodeland et al., 1998; Ledeneva, 1997 [for Russia and China]; Sneath, 2002 [for Mongolia]).

What matters most in the definition of those social networks that are relevant to this review is that, regardless of the criteria for belonging, the relationships among group members are cemented by a strong sense of moral imperatives, including a sense of obligation towards the group in the form of a general duty of mutual assistance and reciprocity for favours given (Blundo and Olivier de Sardan, 2006; de Sardan, 1999). The practices of reciprocity among members of informal networks become entrenched in good measure because of their functionality – as coping mechanisms necessary to secure basic services and meet urgent needs in contexts where state performance and quality of public services is often precarious. For instance, in urban Tanzania, voluntary associations operate on the basis of strict rules and are extremely effective in pooling resources to help members during times of need. As a consequence, such network-based associations enjoy much more trust than any other social or state institution (Baez-Camargo and Sambaiga, 2016) – pointing to the problem of lacking legitimacy and trustworthiness of public institutions.

Informal social networks are strongly associated with corrupt practices to the extent that their reliance on reciprocity and sense of obligation seamlessly extends to those members employed in the public sector. Such individuals are often subject to strong pressures to respond to the demands and expectations of their social networks, which often include making use of their position to extract rents for the benefit of the group. The moral weight ascribed to these group obligations is often so strong that it tends to outweigh any sense of responsibility to protect public resources. This is to a large extent due to the fact that missing an opportunity to avail resources for the benefit of the group may have heavy social costs, including social shame, mockery and even dishonour.

Therefore, the role of these network dynamics in fuelling corrupt practices is closely associated to locally recognised norms of sociality involving very delicate questions of status, respect, shame, guilt, peer pressure, reputation and other socially reinforced normative constraints (Baez-Camargo and Sambaiga, 2016; Dong et al., 2009; Fjeldstad et al., 2003; Fjeldstad, 2005; Gatti et al., 2003; Heilman and Ndumbaro, 2002; Kindra and Stapenhurst, 1998). Furthermore, in contexts where unwritten social norms are strictly enforced and constitute a more binding normative framework than the formal legal framework, tackling corruption becomes highly problematic given that the distinction between public and private becomes not only blurred but unsuitable (Anders, 2002, 2005; Blundo and Olivier de Sardan, 2006; de Sardan, 1999; Heilman and Ndumbaro, 2002; Osei-Hwedie and Osei-Hwedie, 2000).

### **3.2.3 The contradictions of social capital and the social accountability approach**

The literature on informal social networks mentioned above stands in tension to another important body of literature on the presumed impact of sociality on development outcomes, namely the literature on social capital. As Rotondi and Stanca (2015) noted, this body of literature has generated contradictory predictions particularly with regard to the manner in which social capital relates to corruption.

On the one hand, higher levels of social capital are said to lead to a reduced opportunity space for corruption (Hellinwell and Putnam, 1995) with high levels of interpersonal trust reducing corruption (Bjørnskov, 2010; Uslaner, 2008). On the other hand, social capital can be associated with high levels of corruption because social network affiliation reduces informational asymmetries, favouring collusive behaviour while conveying a sense of impunity (Putnam, 2000). Similarly, strong ties, family orientations and particularised trust have all been associated with high levels of corruption (Harris, 2007). Against this backdrop the literature on informal networks in Africa stands out insofar as it shows that higher

levels of social capital can actually exacerbate corrupt behaviour: social network affiliates are more likely to pay a bribe (Pfeiffer and Rose, 2014).

### **Summary Points: Sociality and Social Norms**

The literature reviewed with regards to the second category of behavioural factors confirms that social norms and pressures are indeed highly relevant in the discussion about attitudes towards corrupt behaviours. In particular three topics stand out:

- Social norms enforced by a sense of moral obligation are highly context-dependent and reflect the values that are dear to communities. As such, social norms will translate into a plethora of behaviours sharing a similar, although not explicitly articulated, rationale. In non-Western contexts, where the social norms may not align well with the Weberian paradigm of the state, the resulting ambivalence of meanings and intentions make it practically impossible to discern clear-cut criteria to categorise actions and decisions as either corrupt or non-corrupt.
- Informal social networks that operate on the basis of solidarity and reciprocity are valued for pooling resources and solving problems. In Africa, as well as in other regions, the obligations towards the informal networks are closely associated with social status and reputation. Such group obligations tend to prevail when pitted against the formal rules of the state. As a consequence, the expectations from the informal groups - whereby a member holding a position of public office should do everything within his or her means to cater to the needs of the group - can fuel the incidence of corrupt actions.
- The literature on social capital demonstrates that tight communities where high levels of trust and interpersonal linkages abound are associated with both positive and negative anti-corruption outcomes. This suggests the potential of harnessing locally-esteemed values and norms to pursue improved governance and development goals.

### **3.3 Culture and Mental models**

The third behavioural principle discussed in the 2015 WDR postulates that individuals act and think influenced by the mental models prevailing in their culture. Mental models refer to categories and stereotypes that people use to make sense of the world and to shape their views. The concept of mental model may be useful for understanding precisely what corruption means in a given context. Mental models are also relevant to the extent that they shape the roles of different societal actors on the basis of what those actors believe is expected of them (World Bank, 2015). As such, mental models are often associated to culture but more broadly understood refer to predefined concepts, categories, identities, prototypes, stereotypes, causal narratives and worldviews that are shared among communities. The literature suggests several ways in which enculturation and mental models play role in shaping corrupt behaviour.

#### **3.3.1 Evidence of the impact of cultural traits on corrupt behaviours**

At a general level, a significant number of studies suggest that there is a link between culture and the predispositions towards acts of corruption of individuals (Husted, 1999; Osei-Hwedie and Osei-Hwedie, 2000; Hauk and Saez-Marti, 2002; Fisman and Miguel, 2006; Licht et al., 2006; Andaya, 2009; Jung et al., 2014; Agbibo, 2015; Gächter and Schulz, 2016).

Repeatedly quoted in the literature is the work by Husted (1999), who tested the effect of four cultural variables on corruption outcomes. The cultural variables included in this quantitative study were: a) power distance, referring to a culture of unequal power distribution and paternalism, b) individualism vs. collectivism, which refers to the extent to which decisions about a person's life are determined by the

individual or the in-group (circle of family, friends or peers) c) masculinity vs. femininity, measuring the extent to which competitiveness and material success are valued over quality of life, and d) uncertainty avoidance, or the extent to which a society feels threatened by uncertainty. The author found that more unequal societies favouring a competitive pursuit for materialistic rewards and a preference for risk aversion are more likely to be corrupt. Several studies have followed up on this line of research, many investigating the role of corruption in cultures that increasingly value money, materialism and economic success (Agbibo, 2015 [for Nigeria]; Andaya, 2009 [for Cuba], Osei-Hwedie and Osei-Hwedie, 2000 [for Africa]).

Another frequently cited study was conducted by Fisman and Miguel (2006) in which they investigated the influence of culture on corrupt behaviours among UN diplomats by looking at the number of traffic violations they committed in New York City. The authors found that diplomats from low corruption countries (e.g., Norway) behaved remarkably well even in situations where they could get away with violations, while those from high corruption countries (e.g., Nigeria) committed many violations, suggesting a cultural predisposition to engage in acts of corruption. Similarly, using an experimental approach across 23 countries, Gächter and Schulz (2016) found that individual predispositions to engage in rule breaking – what they refer to as intrinsic honesty- strongly correlate to the baseline level of such behaviours prevailing in the country of origin.

### **3.3.2 Culture – an appropriate explanatory variable? Critical views**

Several other authors regard the use of culture as an explanatory variable as problematic, since culture may be used as a residual explanation for differences that are not explained by other factors or is simply regarded as an inadequate concept to be utilised in such a manner (de Sardan, 1999; Chang et al, 2001; Gephart, 2009; Kapoor and Ravi, 2009; S. Banuri and Eckel, 2012; Yap 2013).

Some studies suggest that culture is not a strong explanatory variable once other factors have been taken into account. For instance, Kapoor and Ravi (2009) revisited the study on parking behaviours of UN diplomats and found that the effect of culture on corruption became insignificant after controlling for quality of civil services and quality and quantity of public infrastructure in a country. Barr and Serra (2010) also tested the robustness of the findings of Fisman and Miguel (2006) and, although their findings partially support the hypothesis that individuals carry corruption norms across borders, they also found that the effect wanes with time, suggesting that people update their values when confronted with changed environments, increasingly conforming to the new norms.

In their review of the literature on the relationship between culture and corruption, Banuri and Eckel (2012) concluded that, although experimental work has revealed certain patterns that support the association between corruption and certain cultures, more research is still needed. These authors suggest that corruption norms may not be intrinsic in a culture but rather incentive-driven and that one important area that needs to be further explored is the effect of short-term punishment. This latter approach is consistent with the study by Yap (2013), who found that punishment (or lack thereof) is a much better predictor of corrupt behaviour than any cultural difference.

Several other positions critical of culture as an explanatory variable for corrupt behaviours come from the authors of qualitative studies on non-Western contexts. Focusing on the case of South Korea, Chang et.al (2001) criticised the very premise of researching culture and corruption saying that there seem to be two equally unsatisfactory perspectives on the criteria that are applied to judge whether or not behaviour is ethical for people of different cultures: On the one hand, there is the assumption that a universally applicable code of ethics is valid for all people. If this were true, then the ensuing conclusion would be simple: any behaviour complying with this universal code of ethics is ethical; otherwise, it is

not ethical. On the other hand, one can also adopt the position that any code of ethics is culture-bound, according to which, there is no universal or superior code of ethics.

Jean Pierre Olivier De Sardan, who is arguably one of the most experienced ethnographers who has studied the roots of corrupt practices in Africa, has pointed out to factors associated to local cultures (such as a pre-colonial culture of ostentation), which in contemporary settings could appear to be associated to high levels of corruption. Nonetheless he has argued: "Should one therefore impute corruption in Africa to some kind of 'African culture'? Nothing would be more absurd. The notion of culture is extremely polysemic," and argues in favour of the avoidance of "both of these opposed and symmetrical stumbling blocks: an explanation by 'culture', or the denial of any 'cultural factor' whatsoever" (de Sardan, 1999: 44).

Adopting a different line of argument on the same topic, Gephart 2009 considers the importance of relative meanings and normative frameworks to question the very the concept of corruption on the ground that it is in and of itself exceedingly specific both socially and culturally. Therefore, this author finds the existing anti-corruption consensus to be problematic because it fails to grasp the nuances about which types of corruption emerge in different contexts and, even more basically, what corruption actually means to different social groups.

### **3.3.3 Mental models and collective imagination**

Moving away from arguments centred on culture, the power of mental models has been further studied in other works included in this review. One compelling example is the ethnographic work of (Foerster, 2012) who analysed collective imaginations of statehood and social relations in West Africa. According to this research, which was conducted in post-conflict contexts where a functional state is absent, social actors repeat what they have lived and experienced before- using their mental models of what a 'state looks like' and how state actors are supposed to behave - when enacting governance practices. In turn, the lack of mental models of the state and its bureaucracy can be problematic as argued by Widmalm (2005) who described an almost complete collapse of the distinction between the public and the private spheres in India because the state is in practice so intertwined in social relations that it is hard (or even impossible) to separate the two. This, the author claims, is much more relevant than arguments about cultural acceptability of corruption since people disapprove of corruption regardless of the context but may be helpless to stand up against it if they do not understand how the state is supposed to function in the first place.

Shared images and ideas about social roles -including what constitutes being a 'good' politician, service provider and public official- determine how people come to expect themselves and others to behave in different situations (Kotzian, 2011). Thus, De Sardan (1999) has argued that in the African context it is common to believe that acceding to a state position confers a prebendal prerogative, whereby it makes absolute sense to expect that "a policeman has the right to deduct his dues from transporters, in the same way that a directeur de cabinet has the right to dip into special funds, or the customary judge the right to exact fees from offenders" (De Sardan 1999: 42). Similarly, Peisakhin and Pinto (2010) argued that, given that graft is so deeply embedded in India, service providers do not regard bribery as wrong or even risky but rather as standard bureaucratic practice. Evidence of precisely this type of shared beliefs of certain corrupt practices as something normal has been also discussed by Gephart (2009) for the case of Bolivia and Meagher et al. (1999) for the case of Nepal.

Other research shows mental models at play in shaping behaviours vis-à-vis petty corruption but in different ways. For instance, Miller et.al (2000) studied corruption in the health sector in four post-

communist countries and found that doctors consistently justified taking informal payments and gifts from their patients on the basis of a perception that doctors work very hard and payment of extra work is fair, a position reinforced by a culture that justifies gift-taking to an unusual degree.

Sometimes the origins of mental models can be traced back a long time and therefore play a strong role in perpetuating collective patterns of social behaviour. For instance, Agbiboa (2015) studied the determinants of corrupt behaviours in the Nigerian police sector and found certain corrupt practices to be to a large degree the product of police officers' behaviours mimicking the police culture under colonial rule. This is in line with the arguments made by Ashforth and Anand (2003) (quoted in Zaloznaya 2014: 10), who analyse corruption as a property of a collective that exists outside any one individual actor. They argue that acts of corruption become embedded and routinized in the structures and cultures of specific organizations. These organisationally rooted assumptions, values, and beliefs may then override ethical convictions that new members bring in from the outside, whereby it is plausible that an otherwise ethically-minded individual may forsake universalistic or dominant norms of ethical behaviour in favour of particularistic behaviours.

Finally, mental models can also explain why some groups may be more vulnerable to fall prey to corrupt officials than others. An experiment conducted by Hall et al. (2014) among low-income individuals found that participants who were exposed to a self-affirmation exercise, where they recalled and described an event or situation that made them feel successful or proud about themselves, thereafter displayed greater willingness to avail themselves of benefits programs than their counterparts who were not exposed to the self-affirmation exercise.

### **Summary points: Culture and Mental Models**

As the reviewed literature considered here suggests, the evidence on the association of corrupt behaviours with certain cultures is hotly contested and inconclusive. Perhaps part of the problem is that associating undesirable behaviours with certain cultures is considered by many to be profoundly problematic and even potentially dangerous. Moving away from discussions centring on culture, mental models have been associated with behaviours of petty corruption in several manners. The following points summarise the discussion:

- There is evidence produced by several experimental and quantitative studies that suggests that there is a link between the culture individuals are enculturated into and their subsequent predispositions towards corruption. While this evidence should be taken seriously, it also seems clear that this is an area where further research is needed to better understand the conditions under which cultural background may override other variables in explaining individual choice and how changes in context and time impact the influence of cultural background in shaping attitudes towards corruption.
- The literature that is critical to cultural explanations of corrupt behaviours raises some fundamental questions about the suitability of adopting an admittedly Western influenced analytical lens –that of the good governance paradigm – to contexts that have evolved from substantially different circumstances.
- Widely held mental models can have a powerful influence over what individuals expect from the state but also can create strong preconceptions about social roles, defining identities and what are expected and acceptable behaviours associated with such identities. These collective images work to legitimise behaviours that may have no correlate to formal roles and legal mandates, thus opening the way for illicit actions to be tacitly tolerated and even accepted.

## 4 Assessment of the relative effectiveness of interventions against petty corruption

The second review question addressed in this study asks what the literature has to say about the relative effectiveness of different types of interventions to address petty corruption. In order to ensure the necessary rigour to extract meaningful insights to respond to the review question, the analysis has followed the Textual Narrative Synthesis (TNS) methodology, which has been already successfully applied to assess the effectiveness of anti-corruption policies (Hanna et al., 2011). The TNS methodology consists of a series of sequential steps through which intervention studies are clustered into comparable groups in order to allow for the identification of cross cutting themes, recurring patterns and relationships as well as moderating factors and characteristics that may account for variation in outcomes within groups. In a final step a meta-analysis investigates possible common causal relationships across groups (Barnett-Page and Thomas, 2009).

After conducting a preliminary review of a vast number of studies and subjecting them to rigorous inclusion/exclusion criteria, the main part of this assessment draws from the review of 15 experimental studies of anti-corruption interventions.<sup>8</sup> These studies have been categorised into six groups according to type of intervention, sector, type of corrupt practices that are targeted, and geographic region. All studies discuss interventions conducted in either Africa or India with the exception of one that describes an intervention that took place in Indonesia.<sup>9</sup> The latter study has been included because it involves an original intervention design that directly tests the relative effectiveness of top-down versus bottom up anti-corruption interventions, making it a suitable complement to the discussion.

In addition to the experimental studies discussed here, a review was also conducted of several observational studies of anti-corruption interventions. By virtue of their heterogeneity, these observational studies are less suitable for comparison. Nonetheless insights from the observational studies are discussed in the synthesis analysis (section 5) in light of the findings of the TNS review.

The intervention groups that have been considered for the TNS review of interventions addressing petty corruption are described in Table 1:

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<sup>8</sup> Experimental studies are highlighted because they provide a high degree of internal validity as compared to observational studies and are therefore more suited to produce clear and reliable findings (Hanna et al. 2011, p. 22).

<sup>9</sup> Drawing upon (Pandey et al., 2007) and (Chen and Ravallion, 2004) the assumption is made that the most important socio-demographic conditions prevailing in rural India and Sub-Saharan Africa are sufficiently similar to allow valid comparison.

**Table 1: Summary of intervention groups reviewed**

<b>Group number</b>	<b>Type of intervention</b>	<b>Sector or area targeted</b>	<b>Geographic scope</b>	<b>Number of studies</b>	<b>Short citations</b>
<b>1</b>	Social accountability interventions	Health and education	India	3	(1) Pandey et al. (2007) (2) Pandey et al. (2008) (3) Banerjee et al. (2008)
<b>2</b>	Social accountability interventions	Health and education	Africa	3	(4) Björkman and Svensson (2009) (5) Duflo et al. (2012) (6) Björkman-Nyqvist et al. (2014)
<b>3</b>	Educational campaigns	Health and education	Africa	3	(7) Reinikka/Svensson, (2004, 2009,2011) (8) Keefer and Khemani, (2011) (9) Keefer and Khemani, (2014)
<b>4</b>	Educational campaigns	Political corruption	Africa and India	3	(10) Fujiwara/Wantchekon, (2013) (11) Banerjee et al. (2010) (12) Vicente (2014)
<b>5</b>	Right to information interventions	Social programs and political rights	India	2	(13) Peisakhin/Pinto (2010) (14) Peisakhin (2012)
<b>6</b>	Mixed (top-down and bottom-up intervention)	Infrastructure	Indonesia	1	(15) Olken (2007)

**4.1 Group 1: Social-accountability anti-corruption interventions in the health and education sectors (India)**

**4.1.1 Description of the studies and results**

Starting with the Indian studies, Pandey et al (2007, 2008a) studied the effects of social accountability initiatives aimed at informing rural populations about their rights and entitlements regarding health and education in several Indian states (Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh), where public service delivery is inadequate and high levels of absenteeism and other malpractices of petty corruption prevail. The studies tested the impact of one social accountability campaign based solely on information against the impact of a similar campaign that additionally included an advocacy component motivating people to take concrete actions. The hypothesis tested was that informed and empowered citizens are less likely to tolerate petty corruption.

The information-only campaign consisted of two rounds public meetings in selected villages informing citizens about their rights and entitlements when accessing public health and education services. The meetings were complemented with the distribution of informative materials, such as posters and leaflets. A survey assessment conducted after one year revealed significant improvements of service delivery measured by an increase in the number of nurse visits, prenatal examinations and tetanus vaccinations, as well as a decrease in excess school fees charged and more village council meetings convened.<sup>10</sup>

Notwithstanding the overall positive result, the study also shed light into important challenges to the exercise of social accountability in these communities. The most notable challenge referred to the disempowering impact of social cleavages and power asymmetries in the community. While the frequency of village council meetings significantly increased after the intervention, according to participants service delivery-related issues were rarely taken up in such meetings out of a mix of fear and a 'sense of futility'. The common perception was that village heads tended to be unapproachable and to unduly favour the particular interests of members of their own caste.

The second intervention added a participatory component - in the form of advocacy for community monitoring - to the information campaign. Data from follow-up surveys indicated significant impact as registered by indicators such as teacher effort, but only modest effects on learning outcomes. However, a strikingly positive result in the communities that received the advocacy component was more efficient delivery of entitled benefits overcoming caste differences, whereas in the communities that received the information-only component entitlements were more likely to be redistributed within the caste to which the decision maker belonged.

The third social accountability study in this group was implemented in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, which was also included in the previous studies of Pandey et al (2007, 2008a) described above. The researchers (Banerjee et al., 2008) implemented three types of interventions aimed at encouraging and promoting community and beneficiary participation in education. The programmes were implemented by Village Education Committees (VECs), which consist of 3 parents, the head teacher and the head of village government.

The first intervention was an indirect control, information-only campaign that disseminated material describing school norms, rights and entitlements.

The second intervention added a participatory component to the information campaign. In this intervention participants created learning report cards intended to help parents to monitor their children's school performance.

The third treatment added yet another component to the intervention design by providing training in simple tutoring activities to small groups of local volunteers, who were subsequently expected to offer voluntary 'reading classes'.

The assessment conducted by the authors revealed that the first two interventions did not have any impact, even though villagers mobilised and attended the village meetings. Only the third intervention generated significant mobilisation on the part of the trained volunteers, which translated into significant improvements in learning outcomes of the students who received the tutoring. However, none of the three interventions had any measureable effect on large-group behaviours to demand accountability from local service providers.

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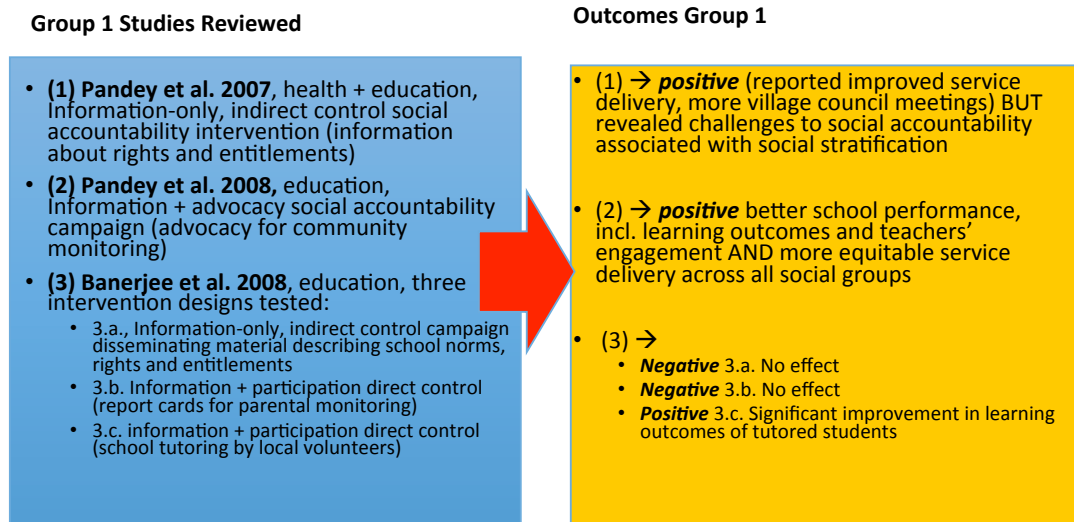
<sup>10</sup> A follow-up focus group discussion after two years further confirmed these improvements.



#### 4.1.2 Discussion

Among all intervention studies reviewed, those in this first group are among those with highest level of comparability because of almost identical intervention design implemented in same geographic context. Thus, it is important to discuss plausible explanations for the differing results from these studies, which are summarised in Figure 1.

**Figure 1: Group 1 Social-accountability anti-corruption interventions in the health and education sectors (India)**



From a methodological viewpoint, it appears that differences in sample selection may have been relevant. While Pandey et al (2007, 2008) took care to account for socio-demographic characteristics of the target population (making a distinction between low caste and middle and high caste households) Banerjee et al. (2008) did not.<sup>11</sup> The authors in the latter study only stated that the majority of villages where the interventions took place were illiterate, which would suggest that most village participants belonged to a low-caste. Notably, the body implementing the unsuccessful interventions (the VEC) included the head of the village government, which points to the problematic impact of social stratification and status on the effectiveness of the interventions.

Local power asymmetries could also explain why the smaller-sized, direct control intervention involving village volunteers was successful in mobilising tutoring activities since these took place outside the sphere of influence of village council members who could potentially discriminate against them on the basis of their caste. Furthermore, this explanation is consistent with the findings of the Pandey et al, (2007, 2008) studies, which revealed the problematic nature of power disparities for social accountability to the extent that they can lead to elite capture and contribute to feelings of disempowerment and scepticism among the excluded.

<sup>11</sup> Banerjee (et al. 2008) only randomly select 65 treatment villages out of 280 villages, whereas Pandey et al. (2007, et al. 2008) use clustered samples at the village level. Banerjee's chosen simple random sampling method potentially decreased sample variation whereas by resorting to cluster sampling, Pandey et al. made sure that both low and middle-to-high caste households were covered more or less equally.

## **4.2 Group 2: Social-accountability anti-corruption interventions in the health and education sectors (Africa)**

### **4.2.1 Description of the studies and results**

The first intervention in this group was conducted by Björkman and Svensson (2009). It addressed common problems of petty corruption in 50 public health care dispensaries in rural Uganda, including absenteeism and the leakage of medical supplies and drugs. The campaign, which was implemented by local NGOs, involved a community scorecard (CSC) exercise containing both an information and a participatory component. The CSC approach encourages community members to identify key problems with health services making use of a scorecard instrument. Subsequently, meetings are organised in which community members and service providers can discuss the state of health care services and feasible steps for improvement.

The evidence suggests that the communities that were exposed to the CSC programme became more involved in monitoring, instances of corruption decreased in frequency and user utilisation and quality of service outcomes improved. Notably, citizens became more active in monitoring those issues which they themselves had identified and discussed with each other as opposed to issues presented to them by village heads.

The second African intervention was studied by Björkman-Nyqvist et al (2014), who evaluated whether providing key information on performance had an effect on intervention effectiveness. The authors wanted to test the proposition that with access to the right type of information, users would be better able to distinguish between actions that hinge on health workers' choices -and would therefore be susceptible to accountability demands - from other factors beyond health workers' control. To test this idea, two types of interventions were designed and implemented in 75 Ugandan communities.

The first was a participatory intervention where health workers, service users and community members identified and talked about issues of key relevance to the performance of health services in an open discussion format.

In the second intervention, report cards were distributed at the beginning of each meeting with the performance data of health care providers that included comparative data of other facilities as well as national standards.

The results showed that the first, purely participatory, intervention had little impact. When there was no performance information from outside sources available, service providers and facility managers tended to significantly misrepresent and underreport performance problems and issues, such as absenteeism and waiting times. When asked to list the most important factors impeding adequate availability of health services the health workers often mentioned insufficient availability of funds, staff, medical materials and drugs - all problems outside the health workers' control. Issues such as corrupt practices (absenteeism, leakage of supplies) or bad performance (shirking, mistreatment of patients) were rarely verbalised.

In contrast, the participation and information campaign resulted in far more engaged communities and long-lasting effects in both health provision and health outcomes. In fact, as expected, the information helped users to identify those service shortcomings associated with health workers' efforts, which in

turn empowered them to better monitor performance, contributing to improved long-term health outcomes.<sup>12</sup>

The final study in this group was conducted by Duflo et al. (2012), who tested for the effectiveness of a programme applied in selected Kenyan schools suffering from poor performance associated with high student-teacher ratios, high teacher absenteeism, favouritism in hiring of human resources and capture by local elites. The intervention, known as the Extra Teacher Programme (ETP), sought to improve school underperformance by targeting three areas: a) shortages of teachers were addressed by contracting additional teachers, who were hired and managed locally, b) incentives for the new teachers were targeted through short term contracts with conditional performance-based renewal, and c) school governance reforms were implemented by the creation of oversight school committees. These committees were composed of parents who received training on how to interview prospective teachers, how to monitor teachers' effort level and performance, and how to conduct a formal performance review conducive to contract renewal.

The study tested for effects on teacher performance and children's learning outcomes measured by test scores. Students were randomly assigned into classes taught either by the newly contracted teachers and governed by the school parents' committee, or classes taught by regular civil service instructors with a significant lower pupil teacher ratio.

The authors found little improvement in test scores of students taught by regular civil service teachers despite the significant decrease in student-teacher ratio. In contrast, the test scores of students taught by locally contracted, managed and monitored teachers increased by almost 30%. Additionally, teachers contracted under the pilot scheme were better motivated and incentivised as suggested by their significantly lower absence rate.

These findings suggest that weak governance institutions and teachers' incentive structures play a considerable role in explaining underperformance. In fact, civil service teachers, who had no contractual changes and were not monitored by parents' committees, were even more likely to be absent if their school received extra funding to hire additional teachers. Perhaps even more strikingly, some civil service teachers even tried to take advantage of the increased resources to favour their relatives to be contracted to the new teaching positions, which suggests the importance of exogenous factors, such as pressure from social networks, on the propensity to engage in corrupt actions. However, the findings suggest that proper governance mechanisms of monitoring linked to performance-based contracts incentives can significantly decrease the incidence of corrupt practices and improve learning outcomes. In the study, monitoring on the part of the oversight school committees improved teacher efforts (even of those employed under regular civil service contracts) and the proportion of hired contract teachers who are also relatives of regular civil service teachers was cut in half.

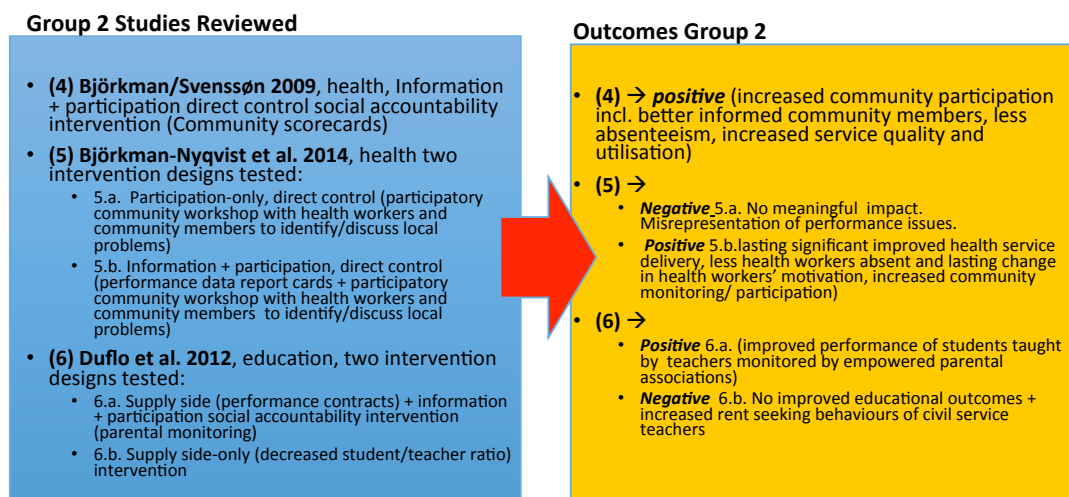
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<sup>12</sup> A key strength of this study was the long time horizon of three years (2004-2007) allowing to measure long lasting effects at the impact level.

## 4.2.2 Discussion

Figure 2 summarises the interventions reviewed in this group and their outcomes.

**Figure 2: Group 2 Social-accountability anti-corruption interventions in the health and education sectors (Africa)**



The three African social accountability studies demonstrate the importance of information. The findings of Björkman-Nyqvist et al. (2014) confirmed the relevance of sharing the right content to enable citizens to demand accountability. The study by Björkman and Svensson (2009) outlined the importance of ownership by showing the positive impact when citizens themselves compile the information to evaluate public services. Furthermore, these two studies show how access to the right kind of information helped to identify locally manageable issues and feasible solutions to those problems. The findings by Duflo et al. (2012) highlighted how empowerment of parents with the information required to effectively monitor and evaluate the performance of school teachers was instrumental to the successful enforcement of an incentive structure that deterred teachers from engaging in corrupt practices.

The study by Duflo also shows how anti-corruption interventions can generate unintended negative consequences when the incentives of service providers are not adequately aligned. In this case, teachers whose financial and career incentives were not addressed took advantage of the rent extracting opportunities that the ETP brought along.

## 4.3 Group 3: Educational campaigns in health and education (Africa)

### 4.3.1 Description of the studies and results

The third group of studies deals with educational campaigns aimed at improving outcomes in the health and education sectors (Reinikka and Svensson 2004, 2009 and 2011, Keefer and Khemani 2011, and Keefer and Khemani 2014).

The first intervention was a newspaper campaign of broad regional coverage initiated by the Ugandan government in 1995, which has been discussed in a series of studies by Reinikka and Svensson (2004, 2009 and 2011). The campaign informed parents about expenditure data of centrally distributed funds

to schools in rural areas. It also provided communities with information about ways to monitor local officials' handling of public funds.

The intervention produced remarkable positive results. The public schools in question effectively received more than 80% of their official grants and entitlements in 2001 as compared to an average 24% in 1995, a significant reduction in the capture of public funds. The improved availability of funds for education was furthermore accompanied by a steady increase in student enrolment rates and positive, albeit weaker, effects on student learning outcomes. The authors (2004) have explained the decrease in resource leakages by suggesting that as the community became better informed it increased its monitoring capabilities, although it is not clear whether the monitoring actually took place or not.

The authors also propose (2009) two plausible explanations for the observed increase in enrolment rates: (1) the increased availability of funds reduces the cost burden for parents which in turn leads more families to enrol their children, or (2) the increased availability of funds improves the overall quality of education which in turn raises the value of investing in education.

The second educational campaign (Keefer and Khemani 2011) was also originally conceptualised as an information-only social accountability programme aimed at promoting quality of education and better school performance. This intervention delivered educational programmes through community broadcasting to 210 villages in predominantly poor, rural and sparsely populated areas of Northern Benin, where government accountability structures are generally weaker. Northern Benin possesses a vibrant network of local community radios, which are often the only source of news coverage for local households, and it was hoped that educational broadcast programmes would promote public interest in education and elicit an increase in citizens' demand for more accountable health and education services.

The findings revealed significantly higher literacy rates among children living in areas receiving the educational broadcasts but, surprisingly, the radio campaign did not trigger the expected mobilisation to demand accountability on the part of parents. Rather, the analysis indicated that educational programming impacted the private behaviours of parents who, following exposure to the educational programmes, started to buy more books and became more willing to pay tuitions.

In fact, a closer look at the content of the educational programmes revealed that the community broadcasting did not disseminate information about rights, norms and entitlements, nor about the performance of public institutions and service providers. Rather, it conveyed powerful messages about the overall value and importance of education. The background to this intervention was a recent government reform that increased funds for public education, which had raised already the saliency of education as an issue in the country. Therefore, the community broadcasting appears to have worked to frame the issue further, contributing to sensitising and convincing listeners about the value and utmost importance of education, which translated into a greater willingness to invest in children's education.

The third study (Keefer and Khemani 2014) measured the indirect effects of the same community broadcasting campaign described above (Keefer and Khemani 2011) on attitudes towards political patronage, including practices of gift-giving.<sup>13</sup> The findings revealed that respondents from villages with greater access to educational programming, notwithstanding its non-political content, were significantly less likely to support patronage jobs for a few that came at the expense of decreased spending in public education.

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<sup>13</sup> Although the measured outcomes consist of behaviours associated with political corruption, this study has been categorised in group 3 because the intervention in question involved information about the value of education.

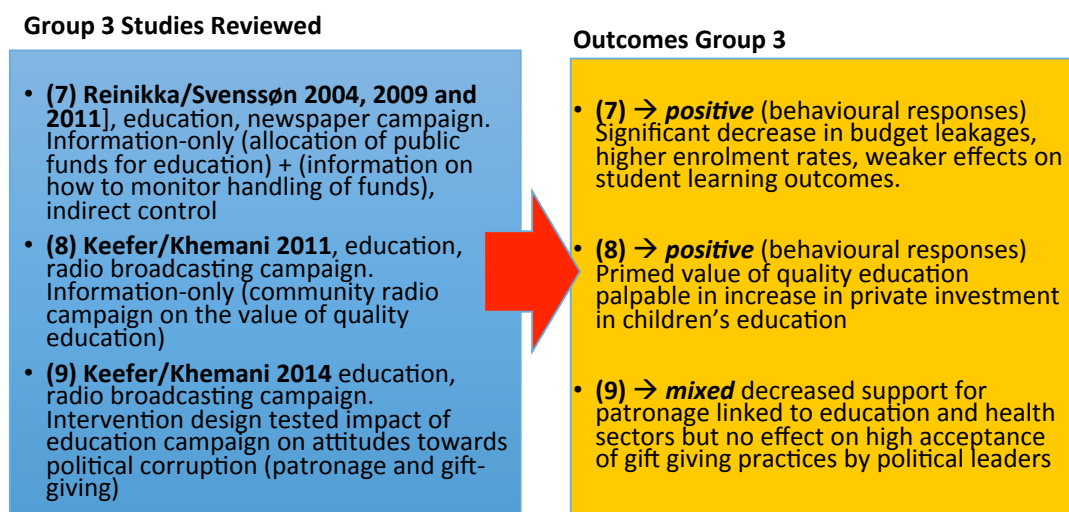
The analysis of the findings of this third intervention suggested that, by increasing citizen demand for improved service delivery, the educational broadcasting had also re-shaped individual preferences towards clientelist practices that negatively affect the quality of education services. In the authors' view, by underscoring the value of education, the radio broadcasts appealed to values of parental responsibility towards children, which in turn influenced political preferences. Thus, community broadcasting presumably contributed to framing an issue, raising its salience and ultimately persuading individuals to adopt new behaviours consistent with the new information.

However, notwithstanding the positive results reported above, Keefer and Khemani (2014) also reported some ambivalence in the attitudes of citizens exposed to the educational campaign towards other types of patronage practices, namely those associated with gift-giving. In a survey conducted by the authors, 70% of respondents believed that clientelist politicians are corrupt, but half of them still thought that clientelist candidates are more effective in delivering health and education outcomes than are non-clientelist candidates (Keefer/Khemani 2014: 28). Interestingly, the authors also found that households with more children were more likely to favour clientelist candidates, perhaps because they were investing more of their private resources in their children's health and education, and thus might regard patronage gifts as supplementary income.

### 4.3.2 Discussion

Figure 3 summarises the interventions reviewed in this group and their outcomes.

**Figure 3: Group 3 Educational campaigns in health and education (Africa)**



These studies involved information-only social accountability interventions where the expectation was that making information available would trigger increased citizen engagement to monitor services and demand accountability of teachers and school management. Of the three studies two reported positive impact while the third had mixed results. What is most relevant to underscore with regard to these studies, is that the positive outcomes were not associated with the mobilization of citizens to make use of the information to demand accountability of the local authorities and service providers. Rather, the responses to the education campaigns can be characterised as behavioural in nature.

In the first study by Reinikka and Svensson (2004, 2009 and 2011), the newspaper campaign, which instructed communities how to monitor the execution of public funds for schools, achieved remarkable results in decreasing budget leakages even when it was not clear that the communities in question actually mobilised to conduct monitoring activities. This suggests the possibility of a strong deterrent impact of increased perceptions of being monitored on the part of public officials, who become less likely to embezzle funds as a consequence. Also, the awareness about availability of public funds for education led parents to enrol their children in school more than had been the case before.

The intervention that made use of community radio programmes to raise awareness about the value of education had a direct positive impact on the parents' decisions regarding investment in the education of their children (Keefer/Khemani 2011). By stressing the importance of education for improving the future livelihood of children, the campaign presumably appealed to values of parental love and responsibility, which in turn changed the way in which parents framed their spending decisions.

Furthermore, the study probing for the impact of the education campaign on attitudes towards political corruption (Keefer/Khemani 2014) sheds important insights about how some mental models may remain entrenched even when others change. The increased value given to education did decrease support for clientelistic practices that could affect quality of education (such as appointing unqualified political patrons to jobs in the education sector). However, support for politicians who appeal for voter support on the basis of vote buying ("gift-giving") did not decrease, highlighting the persistence of ambivalent attitudes towards corrupt practices.

#### **4.4 Educational campaigns against political corruption (Africa and India)**

Group number four consists of three interventions focusing on political corruption, namely clientelism, patronage and vote buying.

##### **4.4.1 Description of the studies**

The study by Fujiwara and Wantchekon (2013) analyses the electoral effects of a clean political campaign on the prevalence of clientelism and voter turnout in Benin during the 2006 presidential election. Instead of organising the usual clientelist campaign rallies where votes are garnered through gift-giving and the promise of favours and patronage, four leading presidential candidates cooperated in the experiment and agreed to a non-clientelistic campaign strategy in randomly assigned villages. The campaign was based on candidate-endorsed hall meetings where specific policy platforms were discussed and voters were given a chance to deliberate.

The campaign reduced self-reported measures of clientelism, and did not affect voter turnout. However, in the regions considered political strongholds of the candidates, voter turnout decreased and the candidates in fact lost votes when they conducted a non-clientelistic campaign.

A second study by Banerjee and team (Banerjee et al., 2010) consists of a randomised field experiment in India where two types of non-partisan voter mobilisation campaigns were conducted in the state of Uttar Pradesh during the 2007 local elections. The first campaign was intended to prime citizens against voting along ethnic lines or for candidates of their own caste. The second campaign primed citizens against voting for corrupt candidates with a criminal record. Both campaigns were designed and implemented by local NGOs and consisted of visits to villages to deliver the messages by means of meetings, posters and a puppet show.

The analysis of the outcomes revealed mixed results: While the anti-corruption campaign had no effect on either voter registration, electoral outcome or overall turnout, the caste campaign did have a positive effect on electoral behaviour – with a 10% drop in caste voting in the treatment villages.

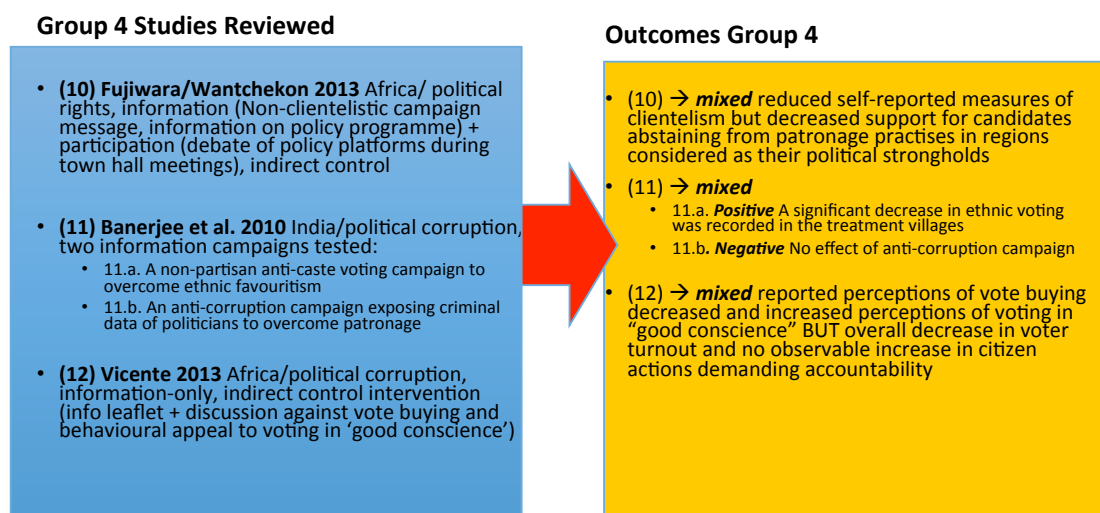
The third study in this sub-group (Vicente, 2007) focuses on the effects of a non-partisan voter education campaign on vote buying practices in Sao Tome and Principe conducted during the 2006 presidential election. The campaign consisted of a leaflet distributed, read and discussed door-to-door. In terms of content, the campaign contained two appeals: a message stressing the illegality of vote buying and a behavioural appeal to morality, good ethics and one’s better nature calling for one’s vote to be casted with ‘good conscience’.

The results from this campaign were mixed. On the one hand, reported perceptions of vote buying decreased and there were also increased perceptions that voting was exercised in “good conscience”. However, overall voter turnout decreased and no there was no observable increase in citizen actions demanding accountability in the conduct of electoral campaign practices.

#### 4.4.2 Discussion

Figure 4 summarises the interventions reviewed in this group and their outcomes.

**Figure 4: Group 4 Educational campaigns against political corruption (Africa and India)**



The analysis of these three information campaigns to tackle political corruption sheds light into relevant behavioural factors that are likely behind some of the negative outcomes observed, such as decreased voting for non-corrupt candidates and lack of impact of campaign appeals to reject corrupt practices such as vote buying.

In their study, Fujiwara and Wantchekon (2013) showed that in some contexts candidates who shift from clientelistic to clean electoral campaigns may suffer electoral losses. This finding has several implications. First, it underscores the power of clientelist practices and how these are fuelled by the expectations of receiving particularistic benefits on the part of the social groups supporting the candidates. Secondly, the findings suggest how voter preferences may be reinforced by risk averse dispositions and short-term benefit calculations. This would be the case when individuals give greater



consideration to short-term losses (loss of the patronage resource) even when longer-term gains may be of considerably larger magnitude (better quality of essential public services). Finally, the experiment shows how from the perspective of political elites the incentives are aligned against running clean electoral campaigns.

It is meaningful that the successful (anti-caste) voting campaign in the study by Banerjee et al. (2010) emphasised in its message the importance of voting for well-prepared politicians to foster development, which led to changes in voting behaviour by undercutting an influential decision heuristic to vote automatically in favour of one's caste, and shifting the focus to information on the importance of quality of policy for development. The anti-corruption campaign, however, failed in its formulation to weaken the heuristic of voting for candidates when they have a corrupt record, perhaps due to lack of adequate framing of the anti-corruption message in terms of the costs to citizens' welfare and development that corrupt behaviours generate.

Finally, the outcomes from the information campaign described by Vicente (2013) point to behavioural challenges stemming from an intention/action divide whereas people reported improved perceptions of voting in "good conscience", voting turnout actually decreased and there was no measureable increase in political engagement to demand accountability. The findings yielded by this and other interventions reviewed so far could confirm the assumption that appeals based on legal, moral and fairness principles may not suffice to change attitudes about the value of political accountability without presenting some performance data or making a compelling case about the ways in which corruption hurts the wellbeing of individuals and their families.

#### **4.5 Right to information interventions (India)**

##### **4.5.1 Description of the studies and results**

This group comprises two experimental studies that focus on an information campaign targeting bribery in the Indian public sector. It should be noted that the interventions included in this group are not conventional social accountability interventions. Thus, rather than focusing on citizen engagement and mobilisation these interventions have sought find out the effectiveness of a legal approach available to citizens - filing a Right To Information (RTI) request - compared to other strategies for incentivising better performance of public officials. Therefore, these interventions may better be characterised as top-down.

Concretely, the two studies in this group tested the effects of India's Right to Information Act (RTIA) on preventing bribery (Peisakhin and Pinto 2010, Peisakhin 2012). The RTIA is a freedom of information law that established the right of citizens to secure access to information under the control of public authorities within 30 days with the purpose of promoting transparency and accountability of public sector institutions.

The first intervention by Peisakhin and Pinto (2010) sought to test whether underprivileged citizens seeking to obtain benefits from public social programs could make use of the RTIA instead of resorting to bribery. To this effect, 86 underprivileged slum dwellers were randomly selected and assigned into three experimental groups and one control group before applying for a subsidised food ration card.

While the first group submitted their application and did not follow up, the second group attached a recommendation letter from an NGO to their application, the third group paid a bribe and the fourth group filed an RTI request to follow up on their application.

The results for each experimental group were measured in terms of the average processing time to obtain the ration card. The differences recorded were significant. The fastest results were obtained by the group that utilised speed money (median processing time of ca. 6 weeks) followed by the group filing an RTI request (processing time of approximately 4 months). In contrast, only a few participants in the NGO intervention group and the control group received a ration card within a 1-year window. This suggests that although resorting to RTIA is not as effective as bribery, it is still substantially more effective than the standard application procedure or reliance on NGO support. The authors concluded that India's RTIA is almost as effective as bribery in helping the poor gain access to public services due to increased transparency and voice even in highly unequal and socially stratified societies – thus emphasising the importance of the availability of legal channels to overcome some of the challenges arising out of social inequality.

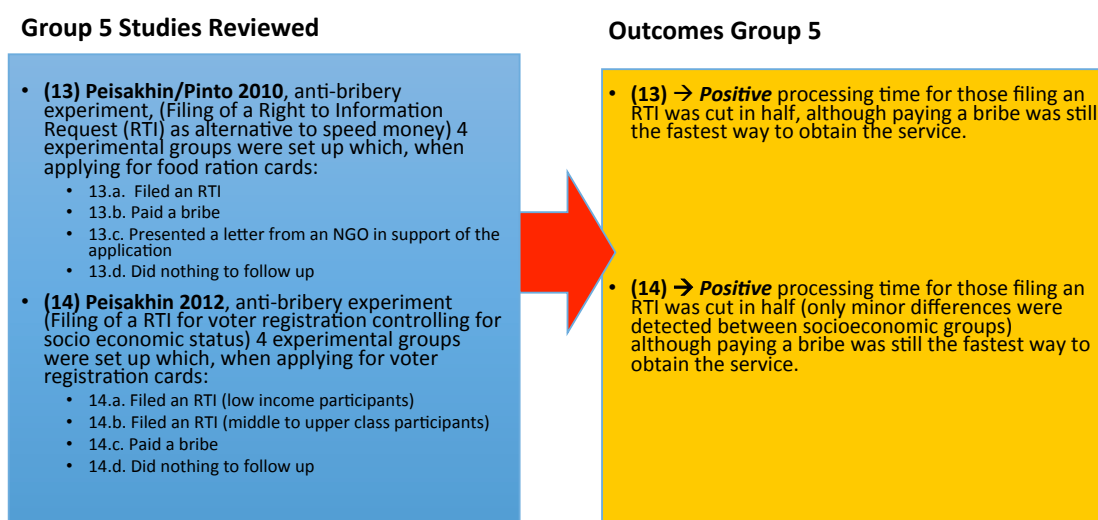
The second study by Peisakhin (2012) tested the effectiveness of the RTIA as an alternative to bribery when registering to vote and to measure effects on the quality the delivery of public services. This study involved lower and middle-to-high class citizens, who were randomly selected and assigned to 3 field experimental groups and 1 control group. Two RTI groups were formed, one consisting of lower class individuals and the second of middle to upper class individuals. These groups were informed about the existence of the RTIA and asked to file an RTI request after applying for a voter registration card. One bribery group resorted to speed money to obtain their voter registration. A final control group consisted of individuals who adhered to standard administrative procedures to apply for their voter registration cards.

Results showed that again the bribers were most successful, waiting 123 days to receive the voting cards. Next came the middle-to-upper class applicants from the FOIA group, who waited on average 150 days to obtain their voter ID, whereas lower income FOIA participants awaited 164 days in average. These results were still significantly better than those obtained by the control group participants who had to wait 219 days. This second study confirmed the previous findings that recourse to the RTIA is almost as effective as bribery in expediting processing times of public services. Furthermore, only minor differences were detected between low and middle-to-high citizens. The author concluded that freedom of information not only leads to higher levels of transparency, administrative efficiency and lower incidences of bribery, but also has the potential to overcome and reduce class differences.

## 4.5.2 Discussion

Figure 5 summarises the interventions reviewed in this group and their outcomes.

**Figure 5: Group 5 Right to information interventions (India)**



The two studies considered in this group focus on the incentives of service providers to perform their duties efficiently and transparently.

The results from the studies suggest that the RTIA can exert a strong effect towards improving efficiency (measured in processing times) in service delivery. These findings show that formal legal accountability instruments can play an important role in positively influencing effort level and performance of service providers by means of restructuring incentives. In this case, the effect of a formal RTI is to trigger a formal monitoring mechanism that, in the perspective of the service provider, embodies the possibility of punitive action if substandard work performance is revealed. Interestingly, the RTI impact on providers' incentives appears to be more a consequence of changed perceptions on the likelihood of being punished for underperformance rather than actual experiences of enforcement of sanctions as the Right to Information Act's penalty provisions are rarely used. Rather, the authors suggest that in India's competitive bureaucracy service providers share the perception that any blemish on a public servant's career, whether punished or not, can negatively affect his or her chances of promotion.

## 4.6 Group 6: Mixed (top-down and bottom-up) anti-corruption intervention

### 4.6.1 Description of the study and results

This group includes one single intervention, an experimental study (Olken, 2007) that contrasted a centralised (top-down) state monitoring intervention with a decentralised (bottom-up) citizen participatory programme that sought to tackle problems of local capture and rent-seeking on the part of local elites during the implementation of road infrastructure projects in Indonesia. The study involved 608 villages that were about to start an infrastructure project funded by the central government.

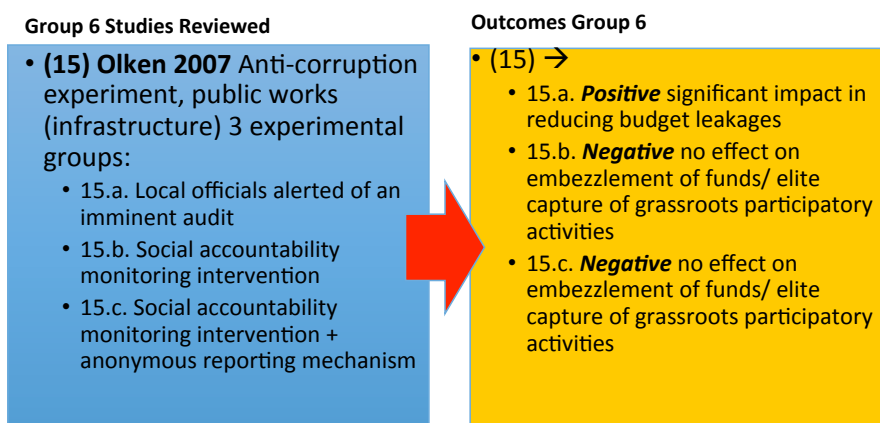
The villages were divided into 3 experimental groups: in the first treatment group the local implementing authorities were told of an imminent government audit prior to beginning the construction. The second treatment group involved a community monitoring mechanism in which participants were invited to attend special ‘accountability meetings’ and to directly participate in the monitoring of the project implementation. The third group involved the same participatory scheme as group two but added the possibility for participants to input anonymous comments into sealed drop boxes.

The study found that grassroots participation increased notably in the social accountability (second and third) groups. Furthermore, village meetings were more likely result in some action to resolve corruption-related problems where the possibility for providing anonymous inputs was offered. However, discussions of corruption-related problems during village meetings also showed that community members were more interested in monitoring the correct payment of their own wages, rather than paying attention to the misappropriation of building materials by local authorities. Furthermore, village meetings were susceptible to capture by village heads, who selectively showcased comment forms from villagers favourable to their own particular interests and whose supporters vastly outnumbered other community members. As a consequence, the author notes that increased citizen mobilisation did not result in reduced corruption outcomes measured by the extent of missing resources. In contrast, the top-down audit treatment had a significant positive impact in reducing budget leakages.

#### 4.6.2 Discussion

Figure 6 summarises the intervention reviewed in this group and its outcomes.

**Figure 6: Group 6 Mixed (top-down and bottom-up) anti-corruption intervention (Indonesia)**



This study makes a case for the superior effectiveness of centralised anti-corruption instruments (such as audits) in deterring embezzlement of public funds on the part of subnational level actors as compared to citizen monitoring activities. The findings are especially relevant in contexts such as the Indonesian, where power asymmetries and social cleavages at the community level heighten the risk of capture of citizen participatory interventions by local elites.

However, this study also confirms the relevance of behavioural factors in impacting the propensities of public officials to engage in corrupt actions. Similar to the studies by Peisakhin and Pinto (2010) and Peisakhin (2012), Olken’s (2007) findings show how the threat of sanctions (as opposed to actual, instances of enforced sanctions) can act as a strong deterrent to corruption.

## 5 Synthesis analysis and policy considerations

The synthesis of the literature across the two review questions allows us to extract one important overarching message for policy practitioners:

Overall, the practice of anti-corruption should be adequately contextualised to account for what the behavioural approach reveals as critical factors impacting the perspectives and preferences of citizens (service users) and public officials (service providers). Concretely, the review illustrates the importance of understanding the social context including factors such as social cleavages, informal networks as well as collectively held mental models.

It is meaningful that among the reviewed interventions, those yielding improved governance outcomes – whether by conventional accountability or behavioural channels – involved substantive sectors and/or topics that were clearly and immediately relevant to the intended beneficiaries. Thus, interventions that managed to establish a strong connection between the desired changes in behaviour and improved welfare for individuals and their families in the form of tangible benefits were more likely to succeed in eliciting change than those that appealed to more abstract goals and values.

Therefore, the evidence stemming from the literature review suggests that individuals – citizens and public officials alike – while influenced in their choices by behavioural factors, are nonetheless acutely *pragmatic* and will respond to stimuli they find useful, credible and beneficial.

In this final section, this main lesson is further discussed with regards to what the review revealed about the importance of information and of understanding the social context. Subsequently, the report concludes with a reflection on the concrete implications for programming anti-corruption interventions.

### 5.1 Harnessing the power of information

The importance of information in the fight against corruption is evident and the literature confirms that the right use of it may trigger changes in behaviour strengthening formal accountability structures for service providers and promoting a sense of empowerment among citizens. However, the review exercise also underscores the importance of tailoring the information used for anti-corruption purposes to fully take account of the context. Of particular importance are the factors that shape perceptions of citizens and service providers about the acceptability of corrupt behaviours and the prevalence of environmental cues or mental models leading to rash decision-making associated to corruption. Ideally, the right type of information should effectively convey a strong anti-corruption message and rebut environmental cues leading to corruption (in contexts where corruption is perceived to be the norm).

#### 5.1.1 Citizens and service users

Successful social accountability interventions in the review utilised information that provided compelling evidence that helped override expectations or mental models about the corruption being normal and harmless. Such information made a convincing link between corruption and the costs citizens endure as a direct consequence of it, such as lack of adequate medical treatment. Thus, although the information in most of the reviewed intervention studies does not elaborate on possible behavioural effects, based

on the assessment (GTR) of the literature it is possible to propose that people will respond to compelling evidence that questions or contradicts those narrow frames and mental models that they - *ceteris paribus* - respond to.

As the behavioural literature suggests, automatic thinking and associated behaviours are significantly influenced by perceptions about reciprocity and solidarity in a given society. Therefore, when people assume that bribing and sub-standard service quality are the natural state of affairs, these perceptions and expectations become normalised and engrained as narrow frames in people's minds. Consistent with the importance of reciprocity and other similar values, the reviewed studies suggest that individuals react to abuse of power and injustice even in highly corrupt countries.

One of the interventions reviewed illustrates this particularly well. In the study by Björkman-Nyqvist et al. (2014), open discussion about service delivery problems between citizens and service providers was dominated by a narrative where providers blamed limited resources and lack of funds for the problems of poor service delivery. Very little changed as a result. However, markedly better outcomes were obtained when the intervention participants received benchmark information that clearly showed the performance levels of their local health services compared to other facilities and to the national average. Such information was effective because it allowed users of underperforming facilities to recognise that the quality of services they were receiving was not the simply the normal standard to be expected, but could in fact be attributed to various types of corrupt practices among the health workers.

Information on budget allocations might also be conducive to overcoming narrow frames that would justify an expectation of bad service quality. Such effect was attained in the study by Reinikka and Svensson (2004, 2009, 2011) by providing communities with data on tracked expenditure vs. budget allocation for the provision of public services, as well as in the observational study by Francken (2009) that used information on the disbursement of public funds. Along similar lines, other studies suggest that information about salaries of high earning public officials may motivate individuals to denounce corruption and expose underperformance (Bar and Serra 2009, Abbink 2004).

These studies all suggest that concrete information such as that about budgets and performance of the local public services motivates service users to question underperformance and become active accountability seekers. By linking corruption to critical underperformance of local public services, this type of information may be more effective at changing attitudes of tolerance towards corruption than simply sharing information about incidence of corruption as evidenced by the unsuccessful intervention described by Banerjee (2008).

Information also seems to be effective when it promotes ownership and direct control by citizens. Successful citizen engagement was achieved, for instance, when the intervention participants were given an active role in generating performance assessments (Björkman/Svensson 2009). In the study by Duflo et al (2012) positive outcomes were attained when parents were trained, not on abstract rights and entitlements but rather on how to monitor and assess teachers' performance. Similarly, in Reinikka and Svensson (2004, 2009 and 2011), the campaign's success was linked to the dissemination of information on how to monitor the handling of funds at public schools. In all these examples, information empowered citizens to identify concrete evidence of state capture, mismanagement and underperformance.

Positive results were also recorded in interventions that stressed messages about the importance of enjoying access to quality public services. Such information may remind citizens about the value of education for promoting their own and their children's wellbeing, as demonstrated by Keefer and

Khemani's (2011) educational radio campaign in Benin. The subsequent study by these authors (2014) illustrated that the revalorisation of essential public services had an additional effect of lowering preferences for patronage practices of recruitment of ill prepared staff that would affect the standard of service provision. However, the same was not true of other practices such as vote buying and the distribution of patronage in the form of gifts by political leaders, which continued to be openly accepted, presumably at least in part because the costs of political corruption may not be obvious at first sight. From the perspective of the recipients of a patronage "gift" it is clear that they receive a short-term concrete and measureable benefit whereas the longer-term uncertain benefit from rejecting such gifts is less obvious. In fact, this and other studies provide insights on why interventions centring on awareness raising about corrupt activities of politicians and public officials seem to lack effectiveness, especially in contexts where corruption is perceived to be the normal state of affairs. Banerjee's study on ethnic voting in India (2010) shows how preferences for voting for members of one's own caste do not change significantly even when they are knowingly and openly corrupt. Tellingly, the parallel campaign that emphasised the impact of caste-based voting on development achieved significantly better outcomes (ibid) suggesting that voters tended not to appraise the suitability of political candidates based on their corrupt records but rather on their expected ability to deliver positive outcomes. Thus, in India where corruption is endemic and graft is normalised (Peisakhin and Pinto 2010, Gächter 2009, Meagher et al. 1999), individuals may develop greater tolerance towards corruption – with the result that information on corruption becomes a powerless nudge.

The lesson drawn from the analysis of these studies is that in order to address the social acceptability of corruption, a clear and forceful message needs to be articulated as to how different types of corruption have a direct and tangible impact on the wellbeing of citizens. Another implication from the analysis is the need to reflect on how the use of information on corruption levels should be used when designing anti-corruption strategies in contexts where corruption has become normalised and socially accepted. In the worst-case scenario, the dissemination of corruption data, such as high levels of bribery, may reinforce individuals' perception that most others are indeed corrupt and thereby bolster their propensity to think of and resort to corruption as the default behaviour. Drawing from what we have learnt from the review of anti-corruption campaigns, the implication would be that the emphasis should be made on conveying clear and concrete examples of how corruption hurts the welfare of citizens.

### **5.1.2 Public officials and service providers**

The studies reviewed highlight important lessons about how corrupt behaviours of public officials can be significantly deterred. In all cases, the key factor was to make the threat of detection and punishment more likely and *credible*. Thus, success was linked to interventions that changed perceptions about the presence of monitoring mechanisms and of more stringent enforcement of sanctions. These success stories throw light into how behavioural mechanisms might be at play in the fight against corruption.

The behavioural literature suggests that individuals who engage in corrupt actions typically underestimate the probability of being caught (Djawadi and Fahr 2013), in extreme cases even leading them to believe that impunity is the normal state of affairs. An interesting implication for policy making is the fact that, according to these behavioural studies, the decisions of individuals on whether to engage in corrupt behaviours depend on their *perceptions* about the likelihood of punishment, which may not strongly correspond to the actual effectiveness of the prevailing corruption detection systems.

Two of the studies reviewed appear to have succeeded in deterring corruption precisely by effectively altering the perception of the likelihood of detection by conveying messages about increased monitoring. In one intervention in Uganda, the availability of information instructing citizens on how to

monitor the handling of budget allocations was enough to drastically reduce embezzlement of funds, even without evidence that citizens were actually undertaking the monitoring (Reinikka/Svensson 2004, 2009 and 2011). Similarly, Olken's work (2007) in Indonesian communities showed that social accountability initiatives were significantly less successful in preventing embezzlement of public funds than a non-existent audit of which local government officials were alerted.

A similar effect is corroborated by other studies that showcase the positive impact of increased transparency. The experiments by Peisakhin and Pinto (2010) and Peisakhin (2012) demonstrate how the Indian Right to Information Act (RTIA) successfully influenced the incentives of service providers to work more efficiently. Right to Information (RTI) requests submitted along with food ration and voter registration applications provided a concrete mechanism whereby handling of those applications could be traced and thus faulty performance sanctioned. The improvement in efficiency that the RTI-supported applications reported was significant. Therefore, these studies showed that service providers react to the perspective of having underperformance reports smearing their records with the consequent negative impact on their professional and personal career advancement.

This deterrence effect, which appears to yield more than commensurate responses to the actual improvements and/or enforcement of detection mechanisms, has been further confirmed by van Veldhuizen (2013) whose experimental work confirmed that the propensity to extract rents goes down disproportionately compared with even marginal improvements in monitoring. Also along these lines, Bateson et al. (2006) manipulated simple environmental cues (pictures of watchful eyes on the wall) to significantly reduce cheating at a self-service coffee station. These insights also point to the potential of information and communication technologies (ICTs) as instruments that, by making public administration and service delivery more transparent and thus traceable, convey a credible message about an increased likelihood of detection among service providers (Krolikowski, 2014).

Several other studies also indicate that bottom-up monitoring (or the perception of being monitored) can have important effects on anti-corruption, which may be especially relevant in contexts where the implementing capabilities of the state are weaker at the local level. Citizen monitoring was conducive to more equitable provision of health and education entitlements across all castes in one Indian study (Pandey et.al 2007, 2008), and parental monitoring of teachers accounted for better school performance and learning outcomes in Kenya (Duflo et al 2012). These findings are further supported by several observational studies that have demonstrated that interventions instructing citizens on how to file complaint procedures to report corruption are associated to a positive impact in diminishing discretionary powers and rent seeking behaviours on the part of state officials and service providers (Krolikowski 2014, Caseley, 2003, Callen and Hasanain, 2011, Deininger and Mpuga, 2004, Mahmood, 2004)

In sum one of the main insights from the cross-synthesis of the literature is that information should not only be easy to grasp but must also have practical relevance for the intended target groups. In other words, information must be clearly associated with concrete actions that have an impact on the incentives of citizens (better public services) and public officials (increased risk of corrupt behaviours being exposed and punished) while taking into account context-specific biases and commonly shared perceptions about the normality of corruption and degree of impunity. Thus, strategically formulated information on the costs of engaging in and condoning corrupt transactions may be more effective in deterring corrupt behaviours than information illustrating the mere prevalence of corrupt practices (Djawadi and Fahr 2013).



## 5.2 Accounting for social context and the prevalence of social bias

Another of the main lessons learnt from the review is that adequately accounting for the social context in the development of anti-corruption interventions involves understanding prevailing social cleavages and informal social networks.

Several of the studies in the review demonstrate how social cleavages generate risks of elite capture of anti-corruption social accountability interventions. Such concerns are particularly common in contexts where local elites are in an advantageous position to take control of the initiative and steer it towards serving their own particularistic agendas. Four of the reviewed experimental studies (Pandey et al. 2007, Pandey et al. 2008, Banerjee et al. 2008, Olken 2007) showed how social cleavages in the Indian and Indonesian contexts can compromise the effectiveness of social accountability interventions as a result of elite capture. The observational studies reviewed further support that, when local power asymmetries are pronounced, even well meaning anti-corruption initiatives may trigger undesirable outcomes as elite capture not only reinforces and perpetuates patterns of social domination and exclusion (Rodall and Mendoza, 2004, Fritzen, 2007) but can also fuel higher levels of ‘decentralised corruption’ (Shankar, 2010). Furthermore, differences in social status and the interference by local elites can greatly affect the willingness of community members to hold public officials to account, especially when citizens are fearful of the repercussions from reporting corrupt behaviours (Caseley, 2003, Rodall and Mendoza 2004, Shankar 2010, Callen and Hasanain, 2011, Wild and Harris, 2011, King, 2015).

The GTR review pointed to the importance of informal social networks, which may be constituted along several different criteria such as family, clan, village, friendship, or professional association. Such networks are typically bound together by affectionate social ties and links (Anders, 2002) and rely upon a strong sense of obligation towards the group (Blundo and De Sardan 2006, De Sardan 1999, Hyden 2005, Harris 2007, Pfeiffer and Rose 2014, Baez-Camargo and Sambaiga 2015). The cross-synthesis analysis of these studies suggests that the appropriation of corrupt opportunities can be linked to high levels of social pressure by informal networks (cf. Meagher et al. 1999). In the review of experimental studies, the findings by Duflo (et al. 2012) showed how public school teachers took advantage of the availability of new staff positions to promote hiring of members of their informal social networks. Furthermore, the expectations about fulfilling the obligation to one’s group extend to the political realm and are presumably linked to the entrenchment of clientelistic networks and practices of patronage, as illustrated by the experimental studies by (Fujiwara and Wantchekon 2013 and Vicente 2007).

The review also suggests that informal social networks are important from the perspective of their members to the extent that the networks are functional. Social networks are coping mechanisms that help “get things done” and gain access to resources. The review evidences the relevance of this point not only for the case of African countries (Baez Camargo and Sambaiga 2015, Baez Camargo and Passas 2017) but also in India (Jaregui 2014, Ruud 2000), South Korea (Chang et.al 2001) and in most of Eastern Europe and Asia (Grodland et al. 1998, Ledeneva 1997, Sneath 2002).

Although the high value ascribed to informal social networks can be seen to originate in patterns of sociality and cultural traits, the argument seems incomplete and questionable without recognising the functionality of those networks. In the analysis, this is another aspect in which the pragmatism of individuals stands out as highly relevant. Such considerations can explain the lack of success of Fujiwara and Wantchekon’s (2013) non-clientelist candidacy campaign and Vicente’s (2013) anti vote-buying campaign – both of which had negative effects on voter turnout. Seen through the lens of the informal reciprocity precept inherent to social networks, it is plausible to think that voters either

abstained from voting altogether or stopped to support a formerly clientelist candidate who suddenly endorsed a policy platform because they were suddenly cut off from the resources they felt entitled to.

### **5.3 Anti-corruption interventions' focus and implications for programme design**

The synthesis review of the literature allows us to infer implications for policy practitioners making decisions about the focus and programme design for interventions targeting petty corruption.

A key lesson drawn from the cross-synthesis is that local actors are pragmatic and most likely to respond to interventions that target problems and identify solutions in sectors that they themselves deem relevant and salient – and which have a direct positive impact on their personal welfare. This suggests that selection of a particular sector for an anti-corruption campaign should be informed by an understanding of the areas that are most relevant for the intended campaign beneficiaries. The review of anti-corruption interventions strongly supports this point, since all successful social accountability campaigns were conducted in sectors where the practical benefits derivable from lower corruption levels and better service are more obvious, namely health and education. The successful campaigns furthermore emphasised the link between corruption and welfare, thus bolstering the impact of participatory monitoring activities.

In contrast, corrupt practices such as clientelism, vote-buying and patronage, proved more difficult to tackle in the reviewed studies due to the direct benefit they bring to voters. This means that targeting political corruption effectively should probably involve a substantial effort to compellingly demonstrate the negative links of patronage and associated practices with individual welfare. Otherwise, it is highly likely that the promotion of political rights and the call for political accountability come across as rather abstract concepts, lacking appeal especially to the most vulnerable groups, whose education levels tend to be extremely low. Furthermore, interventions targeting practices of patronage face additional challenges of a behavioural nature, such as preferences for risk aversion and short time horizons in decision-making. It is thus difficult to expect individuals to forgo a small – but certain – benefit (such as the gift or money received for voting a certain way) immediately, in exchange for a less certain – though supposedly larger – benefit (better health services and public education) at an indefinite point in the future.

It is therefore recommendable to evaluate the choice of sector targeted for the anti-corruption intervention in terms of the expected value given by citizens to improved performance and service delivery outcomes. The superior effectiveness of the campaigns targeting education and health services as compared to those targeting political corruption corroborates this and suggests that pragmatic people are more receptive to initiatives that they perceive as having a more direct repercussion on their welfare.

Another important message from the cross-analysis of the literature emphasises the importance of assessing the social context to determine the feasibility and potential impact of different types of intervention. Thus, in principle the literature seems to indicate that social accountability interventions that encourage direct control by participants tend to be more effective. However, as indicated by the study by Björkman-Nyqvist (et al. 2014) direct control in and of itself may not be effective in the absence of access to relevant information. This combination of empowerment of social accountability participants through information and direct control is corroborated by several of the intervention studies reviewed (Pandey et al 2007 and 2008, Duflo et al. 2012, Björkman and Svenssøn 2009), as well as some of the observational studies (Rodall and Mendoza 2004, Meagher et al. 1999, Wild and Harris 2011).

Also, the experimental studies from India strongly advise about exercising caution in rolling out social accountability interventions in communities where social cleavages are deeply entrenched because of a high risk of capture by powerful local actors. Rather, a top-down intervention may be more effective in contexts in which enabling credible social monitoring may not be realistic due to the entrenched dominance of certain groups, as suggested by the Indonesian study of Olken (2007). It is therefore important to contextualise and understand the social and cultural landscape in order to assess the feasibility of demand or supply-side interventions.

However, in terms of intervention design the cross-synthesis mostly suggests that no one approach is by definition preferable or superior to others. Thus, while undoubtedly valuable, bottom-up participatory approaches are not a substitute to traditional top-down accountability mechanisms or a functional state able to implement policies and enforce rules. In a similar fashion, the findings also suggest that informing the design of social accountability with behavioural insights can be potentially fruitful. Overall, the key message is about the critical importance of adequately contextualising anti-corruption. As members of the UK Behavioural Insights Team shared with the authors of this review, what is often required is the willingness to experiment and test different approaches to find out to which the target population is most responsive.<sup>14</sup>

The literature review also makes relevant suggestions as to how a behavioural approach may begin to be tested in order to promote better control of corruption outcomes:

First and foremost, good news for policy practitioners is that although prevailing social patterns and practices may be very well entrenched, they are not necessarily immutable. Behavioural insights can thus provide some ideas for potentially innovative entry points to anti-corruption programming. This point has been made by several authors, such as Barr and Serra (2010) and Kapoor and Ravi (2009), who claim that enculturated social norms and cultural values and practices of corruption may be updated by, for instance, exposure to a better public infrastructure. Other work (Hauk and Saez-Marti, 2002) suggests that parents, due their ties of affection and responsibility to transmit values to their children, are promising intervention subjects to be exposed to ideas that contest conventional wisdom and pave the way for better futures.

Another promising entry area for innovative interventions refers to the power of social networks in shaping behaviours. As the GTR literature review made clear, high levels of social capital are compatible with both good and bad outcomes. This means that, at least in theory, it should be possible to think that in contexts where social networks play an essential role in people's lives, the values and norms that keep the networks functional could be harnessed or nudged to promote positive outcomes. This is not only in line with the spirit of "working with the grain" (Booth, 2011), but also may be an especially effective channel of eliciting changes in behaviours. Certainly, more work remains to be done in this area although more recent research has demonstrated important behavioural impacts whereby strong contagion effects take place across social networks.<sup>15</sup> This type of findings speak of the enormous potential of devoting further energies and efforts to understanding how social networks promote behaviours that are associated with corruption, including the understandings and expectations enveloping those behaviours and, of course, coming up with novel ideas that could promote behavioural change precisely by means of the logic upon which those networks operate.

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<sup>14</sup> Meeting with Luke Ravenscroft, Head of International Programmes, and colleagues at the Behavioural Insights Team headquarters in London, on 19<sup>th</sup> April, 2017.

<sup>15</sup> Such as the work by Yale Professor Nicholas Christakis, see <http://nicholaschristakis.net/>

Regardless of the specific type of intervention, the cross-synthesis and analysis strongly threw into relief the power of information in triggering behavioural responses. This underscores the importance of carefully informing decisions about the messages to be delivered through the intervention with evidence from the local contexts. The messages should be directly relatable to the pragmatic interests of the relevant actors, whether by exposing otherwise hidden costs inflicted by corruption or by making threats about detection and punishment credible. Thus, there appears to be great potential in exploring the impact of disseminating broader messages that contest the conventional wisdom of mental models by demonstrating the benefits of alternative behaviours and/or the hidden costs of corruption. This is one of the major messages emerging from the review analysis.

Finally, cues in the closer environment can send out strong messages, in the form of unwritten information, which may nevertheless trigger cognitive and behavioural responses related to beliefs about corruption. This is probably one of the least explored aspects appearing in the literature on anti-corruption interventions. However, several behavioural studies suggest how environmental cues may send out strong messages capable of overshadowing even the most articulated information campaign. For example, authors such as Zoloznaya (2014) describe how the perception about how others behave is critically important in shaping individual choices. Therefore, in contexts where everyone is expected to be corrupt, the strong automatic response is to be corrupt as well. Ironically, in such contexts, dissemination of data confirming high levels of bribing may reinforce resorting to corruption as the default behaviour.

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