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Combating Corruption Among Civil Servants: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on What Works

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Combatting Corruption Among Civil Servants: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on What Works

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PREFACE

In 2016, USAID's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights, and Governance launched its Learning Agenda—a set of research questions designed to address the issues that confront staff in USAID field offices working on the intersection of development and democracy, human rights, and governance. This literature review, commissioned by USAID and the Institute for International Education, addresses one of those questions:

In the context of hiring civil servants and providing positive and negative incentives for their behavior, what kinds of interventions are most effective at reducing the propensity (potential and actual) of civil servants to engage in corruption?

The resulting literature review, conducted by graduate students and faculty at Northwestern University, will help to inform USAID's strategic planning, project design, and in-service training efforts in the democracy, human rights, and governance sector. For more information about USAID's work in this sector and the role of academic research within it, please see <https://www.usaid.gov/who-we-are/organization/bureaus/bureau-democracy-conflict-and-humanitarian-assistance/center>.

ACRONYM LIST

ACA	Anti-Corruption Agency
EU	European Union
FCPA	US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act
FOI	Freedom of Information
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICAC	Independent Commission Against Corruption (Hong Kong)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
UN	United Nations
US	United States

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report assesses the interdisciplinary state of knowledge regarding anti-corruption policies, with a particular focus on reducing corruption among civil servants. The report—created by a team of economists, political scientists, sociologists, and anthropologists—synthesizes scholarship bearing on this question from diverse research traditions.

Part I of this report evaluates the interdisciplinary evidence on specific anti-corruption strategies. We examine seven categories of strategies: 1) rewards and penalties, 2) monitoring, 3) restructuring bureaucracies, 4) screening and recruiting, 5) anti-corruption agencies (ACAs), 6) educational campaigns, and 7) international agreements. Overall, there is not a great deal of rigorous evidence either for or against the majority of commonly prescribed anti-corruption strategies. The partial exception concerns **anti-corruption audits** and **e-governance** which, based on existing evidence, appear to hold promise. In addition, adequate **civil service wages** seem to be a necessary but not a sufficient condition for control of corruption, as does a **free press**. An emerging skepticism regarding the effectiveness of **ACAs** also is apparent in the literature.

We then turn to a broader analysis of why the first wave of corruption reforms has generated so few success stories. Part II of this report finds scholarship converging on the consensus that **corruption reforms fail in the long term when they are focused only on cases of individual deviance**—the “bad apples” who need to be rewarded for good behavior and punished for bad behavior. In many developing country contexts, the problem is that corruption represents not individual deviance from a social order, but an alternative social order. This means that programs to reward good behavior or punish bad behavior eventually fail because those tasked with doing the rewarding and punishing are themselves corruptible, and programs of monitoring are only as corruption-free as the monitors themselves.

Given the systemic nature of the problem, we turn first to historical studies that examine not individual policies (as in Part I), but rather, how corruption has been overcome at a country-wide level: we survey historical studies that have investigated how countries that have overcome corruption have managed to move from a social order in which corruption is sanctioned, to one in which it is not. The overarching lesson of this section is that **successful, long-term corruption reform requires that there be endogenous demand in a country for corruption reform**, and specifically, that some group or set of individuals develop a stake in fighting corruption.

If endogenous demand for corruption reform is necessary, the next section examines how and why endogenous demand is undermined. Civil servants and ordinary people engage in everyday corrupt practices for three main reasons: because it is necessary to do so to survive in a broken state system; because the distinction between a corrupt act and a non-corrupt act is unclear in a given context; and in response to pressure from ethnic or kin groups. These factors can undermine endogenous demand for anti-corruption reform even where corruption is condemned in the abstract.

Finally, we suggest three anti-corruption strategies that keep these broader lessons in mind. Because the anti-corruption agenda of the last several decades has been focused on individual-level rather than system-level policies, these suggestions are necessarily speculative, but they are informed by both historical and ethnographic evidence. First, the historical scholarship suggests that because corruption is

a system-level problem, it can only be reformed through a **“big bang” or a “big push” that attacks all dimensions of the problem at once**. However, we note that this strategy is limited in usefulness as it can generally only be implemented in very rare historical moments, such as following defeat in a major war. A second suggestion is to **address citizens’ need for help in navigating state bureaucracies**. Much corruption exists because citizens need to be corrupt to meet everyday requirements, such as finding electricity or water. In such contexts, citizens often need the help of intermediaries to navigate state bureaucracies, and these intermediaries can drive up levels of corruption. **Reformers should consider providing citizens with other ways of navigating the state**. Finally, given the need to attack multiple dimensions of the problem at once, and the difficulty of doing so at the level of a whole country, scholars suggest the strategy of **attacking all dimensions of the problem within particular organizations**. Scholarship shows that some organizations can remain free of corruption even in countries where corruption is widespread, and therefore **it may be possible to address corruption organization by organization, by conducting a “big push” inside one organization at a time**.

We conclude with recommendations regarding future, policy-oriented anti-corruption research. We suggest the need for **more research most immediately on e-governance, educational campaigns, organizational-level strategies, and strategies for helping citizens navigate the state**. Other areas where there is not yet enough evidence to draw conclusions include on strategies of simplification of bureaucracies, on what counts as public or private in different countries, on intrinsic motivation, on recruitment and screening, on the measurement of corruption (*e.g.*, using new methods of big data), on historical cases where corruption was controlled without a “big bang” (such as the US), and on how specific anti-corruption policies work in particular contexts. We also believe research that draws on multiple research traditions could significantly improve our understanding of how to combat corruption.

INTRODUCTION

The pernicious economic, social, and political effects of bureaucratic corruption have been well-documented (for reviews, see Svensson 2007, Olken and Pande 2012), inspiring a global anti-corruption movement over the past two decades. In an effort to reduce corruption, foreign assistance practitioners have deployed a wide array of strategies, ranging from supply-side approaches that reform the state from within to demand-side approaches that support civil society and media groups striving to hold governments accountable; from technical assistance for the implementation of laws and policies to public awareness campaigns and citizen advocacy initiatives.

But although both scholars and policymakers place great emphasis on combatting corruption, evidence about which anti-corruption strategies are likely to succeed remains scarce. This report assesses the interdisciplinary state of knowledge regarding anti-corruption policies, with a particular focus on reducing corruption among civil servants. The report is unique in that it is the result of a collaborative effort by a team of economists, political scientists, sociologists, and anthropologists. We have sought to identify areas of consensus across disciplinary divides, as well as—and no less importantly—areas of divergence in the findings of scholars working with different methodological tools and analytical frameworks.

To date, no single academic discipline has produced sufficient insights for formulating best practices. Consequently, in this literature review we draw on multiple scholarly traditions, each of which is rooted in multiple academic disciplines, to develop lessons for durably addressing corruption in the civil service. Each tradition on its own presents weaknesses and blind spots, but we propose to draw them together into a framework that offers a reliable path forward for practitioners.

Within economics and political science, an **impact evaluation** tradition has risen to prominence in recent years. Scholars in this tradition use field, lab, and natural experiments to rigorously establish causal relationships between variables of interest and corruption. Where the comparison of fully randomized groups is not possible, impact evaluation proponents turn to quasi-experimental designs and econometric approaches aimed at approximating experimental conditions, such as regression discontinuity, difference-in-difference analysis, and propensity score matching. These strategies all promise to address questions of omitted variable bias and endogeneity that bedevil other approaches.

Nevertheless, this tradition has also been criticized from many angles. It is not clear that carefully controlled experiments have “external validity”—that is, whether the results from the experiment apply to the world at large, much less to a particular context in which a development practitioner is considering introducing an intervention. Field experiments and quasi-experiments may more accurately reflect the contexts of real-life development interventions than do lab experiments, but they may also be less conducive to rigorous causal inferences because the challenge of implementation in difficult field conditions inherently involves loss of control over the research setting.

Moreover, impact evaluations are routinely conducted without an overarching theoretical framework, which has led to a proliferation of low-level results that are difficult to aggregate into overarching lessons. While this problem can be partly remedied by carrying out related impact evaluations in divergent contexts, impact evaluation methodologies themselves offer no tools to explain systematically

why a particular intervention may yield good results in some contexts but not in others. And, experiments and other policy evaluation techniques often focus on short-term factors and ignore the broader social context, potentially leading to a situation in which practices adopted from this tradition will be undermined in the longer term.

These weaknesses can be addressed by drawing on the second tradition of research on corruption, the **comparative-historical** tradition. This tradition examines how corruption in civil service bureaucracies has been overcome in the developed countries—which, up until the early 20th century, witnessed levels of corruption that are similar to what we see in developing countries today. This tradition features rich contributions from history, historical sociology, and comparative politics that draw on primary and secondary sources to examine the long-term and system-wide results of various reforms in reducing corruption. Comparative-historical analysis complements impact evaluations by teasing out the effects of reforms that have proven successful at a society-wide level and over the long term—reforms that would be impossible to study through conventional impact evaluation methods. Historical analysts can further shed light on the mechanisms through which independent variables have their effects by scouring the historical record for evidence that can adjudicate between alternative causal explanations. Like impact evaluators, comparative-historical researchers often examine particular cases in great depth. But, unlike impact evaluation, comparative-historical analysis makes extensive use of cross-case comparative techniques designed to generate and test theories about how context shapes causal relationships. These comparisons may be qualitative, drawing on thick historiography and text analysis, or quantitative, drawing on observational econometric techniques like panel regressions and event-history analysis.

But this tradition also has weaknesses, the main one being that this work has not been distilled in a format that would be useful for those looking for lessons for today. Much of the work is focused on describing historical events in detail, or resolving historiographical debates, rather than in generating theories of how to combat corruption. We aim to overcome this problem by using the tools developed in recent comparative-historical social science to generate theoretical insights from the historical material. A second important problem with the historical approach is that not all lessons of history can be translated into contemporary contexts, without additional analysis using tools that this tradition does not provide. To address that weakness, we turn to the third tradition of research on corruption in the civil service.

The third tradition, **ethnographic**, is found most prominently in anthropology, sociology, and political science. The ethnographic tradition, in which researchers spend long periods of time embedded in civil service bureaucracies, uses techniques such as interviews and participant observation to attempt to understand corruption from the point of view of those who are behaving in corrupt ways. This perspective has been enormously important in understanding corruption from the inside, and is sensitive to broader social factors that sustain corruption. This tradition can help to understand when and where historical experiences can be translated into contemporary contexts, and when they cannot.

But ethnographic research is also unsatisfying on its own, as it generally hesitates to suggest solutions to corruption, or ideas for how to address it. Even when ethnography generates clear findings for a particular case, the tradition lacks the tools to situate insights within broader theories that apply across

contexts. The strength of ethnographic work—its rich attention to social context and detail—can be a weakness when it comes to posing lessons and suggesting solutions.

Although all three traditions of research have their limitations, we believe that combining insights from the three traditions is a promising way forward, because each tradition’s weaknesses can to some extent be overcome by drawing on the other traditions. The narrow focus of the impact evaluation tradition is complemented by the broader, longer-term, and more detailed examinations of the other two traditions; the question of whether and which lessons from history can be applied in contemporary contexts can be answered using insights from the ethnographic and impact evaluation traditions; and the inability of the comparative-historical and ethnographic traditions to provide clear solutions and lessons can be overcome by casting an explicitly theoretical lens onto the existing scholarship, informed by the experimental tradition’s sharp analytical focus on deriving lessons.

A review of the “state of knowledge” in any area of inquiry requires a clear definition and conceptualization of the topic at hand. We define corruption as the misuse of public office, authority, or resources for private gain. While recognizing that the definitions of many of these terms themselves may be contested, we found—somewhat to our surprise—that the definitions of corruption employed by nearly all studies we examined were compatible with our conceptualization, despite the multi-disciplinary nature of our sample. Within the broader concept of corruption, our focus was on corruption involving appointed civil servants rather than elected officials—or on what we refer to as bureaucratic corruption. However, many studies do not emphasize a clear distinction between bureaucratic and political corruption, leading us to include several works that broadly address corruption, as well as studies that explicitly address the corruptibility of elected versus appointed officials. Finally, we recognize that bureaucratic corruption itself comes in many forms and that each of these may require different anti-corruption policies.¹ But given the relative lack of empirical evidence on policies for combatting corruption, we did not find it feasible at this time to offer a systematic assessment of policies for addressing specific sub-types of bureaucratic corruption.

The findings presented below are based on our analysis of more than 200 articles and books from across the social sciences. These studies have been culled from a broader preliminary survey of the literature on corruption. They represent what we believe to be a nearly exhaustive collection of analyses that primarily focus on bureaucratic corruption; offer implicit or explicit insights into strategies for reducing corruption; and consist mainly of empirical, as opposed to theoretical, analyses. Our focus is solely on academic literature, and we do not include policy reports in the review. Most of our sources have been published in a peer-reviewed format, but given the recent burst in empirical work on corruption, we also include working papers that we believe will be published in high-quality journals in the near future.² The broader context of this report is a widespread perception that the first generation of attempted anti-corruption reforms has not met with great success. Part of the reason for the absence of significant

¹ For example, Shleifer and Vishny (1993) distinguish between coordinated and uncoordinated corruption, and Ryvkin and Serra (2016) emphasize the difference between extortionary and collusive corruption.

² For additional information about our inclusion criteria and process for selecting studies to include in the review, please see Appendix A. Note that while we do not include a separate section on debates about the cross-national determinants of corruption, a topic that has been ably covered by others (see, *e.g.*, Treisman 2007, Svensson 2005, Serra 2006), we do discuss cross-national regression studies where they have been helpful in providing insight on specific policies or themes.

success stories is that the first generation of anti-corruption reforms, which moved onto the agenda of development practitioners starting in the 1990s, were part of larger projects of stabilizing economies and supporting democratic and market economy transitions. The anti-corruption agenda often took a backseat to the market reform agenda, but there was widespread hope that deregulation, privatization, and other forms of economic liberalization would themselves contribute to a decline in corruption. However, in retrospect, it has become clear that simply streamlining the state is not a reliable path to reduced corruption (Kaufmann and Siegelbaum 1997, Reeves 2013, Hanlon 2004, Reeves 2013, Hanlon 2004, Anders 2010, Gerring and Thacker 2005, McMann 2014, Moshonas 2014, Hanlon 2004).

But even when practitioners focused on fighting corruption more specifically, success has been elusive. One trend in the 1990s was the adoption of ACAs, national-level specialized law enforcement agencies devoted to the control of corruption. Inspired by the cases of Hong Kong and Singapore, which had achieved significant anti-corruption reform in the 1970s and 1980s through ACAs, more than 100 countries had adopted them by 2008. However, these have generally not proved successful outside the small authoritarian contexts in which they were pioneered, as we discuss in greater detail below (Klitgaard 1988, Quah 2011, Mungiu-Pippidi 2015).

More recently, the case of Georgia, which saw a sustained crackdown on corruption in its civil services, has inspired great interest in the development community. We discuss the Georgian case more systematically below, but we also note that it is rare, its lessons may not be applicable to larger countries, and questions have been raised about the level of coercion and possible human rights abuses involved (Schueth 2012, Light 2014). Other countries, such as Romania, have held anti-corruption drives that have been successful in drawing attention to the issue, but they cannot yet demonstrate measurable decreases in corruption (Mungiu-Pippidi 2015).

Scholars have not been able to agree on whether even the most celebrated and widely promoted laws and agreements, such as the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention and the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act (FCPA), have been successful. While Cuervo-Cazurra (2008) and D'Souza (2012) argue the OECD Convention and the FCPA have redirected investment flows away from corrupt countries, Gilbert and Sharman (2016) emphasize that even OECD Convention signatories with low levels of corruption have failed to fully prosecute offenders, and Batzilis (2015) suggests that the OECD Convention's apparent successes stem from more general factors that influence firms in countries that chose to sign the Convention. In terms of the impact of international anti-corruption agreements, the lack of solid research—quantitative or qualitative—into their effects stands in stark contrast to the international community's active and optimistic promotion of international collaboration as an anti-corruption strategy.

Indeed, in a few cases, scholars have argued anti-corruption reforms since the 1990s have ended up generating more corruption, or otherwise had negative consequences (Chalfin 2008, Babul 2012). For example, Mathur's (2012) study of the Indian state's implementation of a "transparency" initiative regarding social security legislation shows that these initiatives required additional paperwork, bureaucracy, and labor for both employers and workers. This increased the opportunity for fraud, corruption, and dispossession of rural laborers, for whom "transparency documents" ended up getting in the way of obtaining labor and fair wages. Overall, despite two decades of anti-corruption reform efforts, the lack of significant success stories is striking.

To offer an accounting of what we do and do not know, Part I of this report evaluates the interdisciplinary evidence on specific anti-corruption strategies. We examine seven categories of strategies: 1) rewards and penalties, 2) monitoring, 3) restructuring bureaucracies, 4) screening and recruiting, 5) ACAs, 6) educational campaigns, and 7) international agreements. The general impression from this analysis is that while evidence about the effectiveness of a handful of strategies—such as anti-corruption audits of municipalities and various e-governance reforms—is emerging, robust evaluation of the vast majority of commonly proposed anti-corruption strategies remains thin.

Part II of the report then turns to broader lessons about corruption, examining the subtler reasons why anti-corruption reform efforts to date have not seen significant success, and what an evidence-based reform effort might look like. This part of the report focuses on the importance of endogenous demand for anti-corruption reforms, the significance of addressing corruption at a systemic level, and the need to incorporate understanding of citizens' role in sustaining corruption—despite widespread condemnation of corrupt practices in nearly all societies. An overarching lesson from multiple disciplines is that corruption is a systemic problem that cannot be treated in the long-term with individual-level solutions. This section suggests several anti-corruption strategies that keep that point in mind.

We conclude with recommendations regarding important avenues for future policy-oriented anti-corruption research.

PART I: EVALUATING ANTI-CORRUPTION STRATEGIES

Part I analyzes the state of knowledge regarding seven categories of anti-corruption strategies. For each group of strategies, we provide an overview of evidence from ethnographic, qualitative, quantitative, and experimental studies, with the aim of assessing the extent to which evidence from across social science disciplines has converged in support of specific policies. Table 1 at the end of Part I summarizes our findings.

Overall, we find relatively robust evidence in support of anti-corruption audits, although questions remain about their long-term effectiveness. A high-quality literature also is emerging regarding the effectiveness of e-governance. And social scientists from across disciplines seem to agree that adequate civil servant salaries are a necessary but insufficient condition for addressing corruption. By contrast, scholars express skepticism that the creation of ACAs is an effective strategy, with the notable exception of a handful of cases such as Hong Kong that have drawn extensive international attention to such agencies. Beyond these strategies, scholars and policymakers have prescribed numerous other policies. But, although we believe that many of these policies deserve further attention, the existing evidence is too thin to offer rigorous assessments of their effectiveness.

A. Rewards and Penalties

Perhaps the most straightforward approach to fighting corruption is to reward integrity and penalize illicit behavior. This section addresses the effectiveness of strategies that rely on 1) rewards targeting extrinsic motivations, such as increased wages; 2) rewards targeting intrinsic motivations, such as a desire for a better society; and 3) penalties for corrupt acts.

i. Extrinsic Motivations

Evidence from ethnographies and qualitative case studies provides support for the contention that corruption emerges when salaries are below a basic living wage. Corruption has been particularly prone to flourish when austerity measures or other crises of state capacity force wage cuts for civil servants (Chew 1990, Hanlon 2004, Polese 2008, Anders 2010, Oka 2013, Reeves 2013). However, ethnographic and qualitative research also indicates that increasing wages—at least in isolation from a broader anti-corruption strategy—often has a modest effect on corruption levels. From Uganda to China, examples exist of wage increases failing to stem corruption (Fjeldstad 2005, Gong and Wu 2012), even as other studies attribute anti-corruption success stories in countries such as Georgia in part to rising wages (Schueth 2012). Shore (2005) further bolsters the case that adequate salaries are insufficient for combatting corruption—drawing attention to the repeated corruption scandals among well-compensated EU bureaucrats.

While ethnographic and qualitative research indicate that improving civil servants' salaries is often a necessary but insufficient step toward reducing corruption, cross-national regression analyses offer a more ambiguous picture. Although Panizza *et al.* (2001) and Van Rijckeghem and Weder (2001) identify a statistically significant but substantively modest relationship between higher relative government wages and lower levels of corruption, as measured by expert perception indices; the more comprehensive analysis conducted by Treisman (2008) indicates these relationships are not robust (see also Treisman 2000 and Rauch and Evans 2000). Treisman (2008) also finds no correlation between relative civil service wages and the frequency of citizens' reported encounters with corruption. At a sub-national level, Alt and Lassen (2014) similarly find no correlation between relative wages for state and local government employees in the US and the number of corruption convictions across states.

At a micro level, evidence in support of the role of extrinsic rewards in reducing corruption is more robust. Lindkvist (2014) finds in a survey of health workers in Tanzania that both merit-based promotions and higher wages are associated with a lower probability of accepting informal payments. Meanwhile, Kwon (2014), drawing on a survey of 800 South Korean bureaucrats, finds that civil servants who believe promotion is tied to performance are less likely to tolerate corruption in a hypothetical vignette. A number of laboratory experiments provide additional support for a wage-corruption nexus, showing that subjects are less likely to engage in acts of corruption when receiving higher pay (Azfar and Nelson 2007, Armantier and Boly 2011, Van Veldhuizen 2013), although the link between wages and propensity to engage in corruption is weaker in some studies than others (*e.g.*, Barr *et al.* 2009) and sometimes contingent on increased monitoring to supplement rising pay (Schulze and Frank 2003).

While suggestive, research based on surveys or laboratory experiments does not directly evaluate the effectiveness of real-world policies aimed at extrinsic motivation. Evidence from more rigorous quasi-experimental and experimental approaches only recently has begun to emerge. Using a difference-in-difference approach comparing examination scores for public and private high schools in Romania before and after a large and unexpected cut in public sector wages, Borcan *et al.* (2014) find a significant improvement in public school exam scores relative to their private counterparts. They attribute this outcome to public school teachers' and administrators' efforts to solicit bribes to compensate for their loss of salary. However, while these findings provide additional support for the notion that impoverishment of public officials contributes to corruption, they cannot speak to the effectiveness of

wage increases as an anti-corruption strategy.³ By contrast, Foltz and Opoku-Agyemang (2015) directly examine the impact of a doubling of Ghanaian police officers' salaries on their propensity to extort bribes at checkpoints along trucking routes. Also employing a difference-in-difference approach, they compare Ghanaian police behavior before and after the salary reforms with police behavior in neighboring Burkina Faso, where salaries remained low. Their findings offer a striking note of caution against wage increases as a surefire corruption cure: while the number of bribes extorted fell following the salary reforms, the average bribe size rose and the total amount of bribe revenue collected by police increased.

With respect to pay-for-performance schemes, Khan *et al.* (2016) conduct the first, large-scale, randomized field experiment, assigning different reward schemes across units of tax collectors in a province of Pakistan. They find that linking pay to inspectors' collection levels increases tax revenue. However, much of this revenue appears to come from a handful of properties being reassessed more accurately at a higher value, while many property owners report an increase in bribes paid to avoid reassessment of their tax bills. Though highly informative, the reforms studied in Khan *et al.* (2016) focused on improving tax revenues, not on linking pay to anti-corruption efforts. Ultimately, to the best of our knowledge, there remains a dearth of direct experimental evidence regarding the impact of wage increases and pay-for-performance systems on corruption.⁴

Finally, ethnographic, qualitative, and quantitative analyses, as well as laboratory experiments, point to the importance of considering the ways in which wage increases interact with other anti-corruption strategies, and with the broader institutional and political context. In particular, Kiser and Tong (1992), Di Tella and Schargrodsky (2003), Fjeldstad (2003), and Barr *et al.* (2009) provide evidence of complementarities between higher wages and the effectiveness of audits and other forms of monitoring. Meanwhile, the cross-national analyses of Van Rijckeghem and Weder (2001) find that the effect of higher wages on corruption is largest in countries with higher quality bureaucracies and more rule of law, while ethnographic and qualitative research emphasizes the importance of embedding increased wages in a broader anti-corruption campaign (Shore 2005, Fjeldstad 2005, Schueth 2012). However, these findings regarding complementarities between higher wages and other strategies have yet to be evaluated using rigorous policy impact evaluation tools such as field experiments.

In summary, there is a near consensus across disciplines that poverty-level wages for civil servants contribute to corruption, and that sudden declines in salaries can be particularly detrimental. But although adequate wages may be necessary for reducing corruption, qualitative and macro-level quantitative studies indicate they are often insufficient, though it should be noted that micro-level quantitative research and laboratory experiments are somewhat more optimistic. Evidence from field

³ Niehaus and Sukhtankar (2013) provide evidence that civil servants' expectations of rising future income streams can reduce fraud in the present, based on a natural experiment exploiting discontinuous changes to India's rural welfare program across state borders. However, the future income streams in this study pertain to long-term embezzlement opportunities, not to an increase in official wages.

⁴ A handful of well-designed experimental studies also show that increased wages attract more qualified applicants to work in the public sector (*e.g.*, Dal Bo *et al.* 2013, Gagliarducci and Nannicini 2013), but unfortunately these studies do not directly address the question of whether more qualified candidates are less likely to engage in corruption.

experiments remains scarce, as is scholarship on the effects of pay-for-performance systems on anti-corruption efforts.

ii. Intrinsic Motivations

Public administration scholars have long argued that civil servants are motivated to a significant extent by intrinsic—rather than extrinsic—factors, including a sense of obligation to society, a desire to help others, or professional norms (Perry and Wise 1990, Perry 1996). Unfortunately, the link between intrinsic motivations and corruption has been all but ignored.

The limited existing evidence suggests that anti-corruption strategies targeting intrinsic motivation could prove promising. Based on interviews and focus groups with public officials from water and sanitation bureaucracies in Pakistan and India, Davis (2004) produces qualitative evidence that staff morale is crucial for successful anti-corruption efforts, as is instilling a sense of pride from participating in the fight against corruption. Kwon (2014), drawing on a survey of South Korean bureaucrats, finds lower tolerance for corruption in a hypothetical vignette among respondents who report being motivated to perform tasks because they find their job intrinsically interesting. And, in laboratory experiments, Barr and Serra (2009) find that subjects' willingness to offer or accept bribes falls as the harm inflicted by corrupt transactions on other participants rises. They also find that subjects are less willing to offer bribes when the game is explicitly framed as a corruption scenario designed to elicit moral considerations, rather than in abstract terms.

In summary, there is a near absence of analysis on the effects of intrinsic rewards on reducing corruption. We strongly encourage support for this promising research agenda.

iii. Penalties

As with higher wages, the logic for higher penalties creating a deterrent effect against illicit behavior is straightforward. In theory, civil servants weigh the payoffs and costs of engaging in corruption, and raising the cost side of the equation should reduce corrupt acts (Becker and Stigler 1974). However, evidence in favor of this proposition is strikingly limited.

Laboratory experiments produce results in accordance with theoretical expectations, with subjects becoming less willing to offer bribes in corruption games as the penalties for corruption rise (Abbink *et al.* 2002). And, in a natural experiment in which they studied UN diplomats' willingness to abuse diplomatic privilege to avoid paying parking tickets, Fisman and Miguel (2007) found that after the city of New York started stripping the official diplomatic license plates from vehicles that accumulated more than three unpaid parking tickets, violations decreased significantly. But it is by no means clear that these results offer broader lessons for anti-corruption campaigns. Ethnographic and qualitative research in particular calls into question the feasibility of *implementing* stringent penalties. Hasty (2005), in an ethnography of anti-corruption efforts in Ghana, draws attention to the challenges prosecutors face in encouraging public officials to distinguish between customary gifts and illicit bribes. She notes that, at least in the Ghanaian case, encouraging civil servants to repay embezzled funds or return stolen goods has often proved more effective than jail time or fines. Fjellstad's (2003) study of the Tanzanian tax bureaucracy offers insights into how dismissal of corrupt officials can backfire. Because corrupt tax officers often are embedded in networks of collaborators that cut across the public and private sector, private companies often recruit former officials as "tax experts" who can then act as intermediaries in

facilitating corruption. Finally, Kiser and Tong (1992) offer historical analysis of imperial Chinese tax bureaucracies, emphasizing how even the strongest penalties had little effect in the absence of monitoring capabilities.⁵

In summary, there is a notable lack of empirical research assessing the effectiveness of increased penalties—or of different types of penalties—for engaging in corrupt acts. Although research in the ethnographic and case study traditions largely provides grounds for skepticism that harsh penalties are an effective route to combatting corruption, much more research is needed before drawing definitive conclusions.

B. Monitoring

Rather than shaping incentives of civil servants through rewards and penalties, a second set of strategies seeks to increase the chance that corrupt activity will be observed. This section addresses four sets of anti-corruption policies related to monitoring: 1) top-down audits, 2) bottom-up civil society monitoring, 3) transparency initiatives, and 4) e-governance.

i. Top-Down Audits

Top-down monitoring has received relatively little attention in the ethnographic and case study literature. The studies that do exist sound a note of warning about potentially detrimental aspects of crackdowns against corruption. For example, Shueth's (2012) ethnographic analysis of anti-corruption reforms in Georgia emphasizes the important role of monitoring and prosecution in these reforms' success, but he also notes that the crackdown entailed worrying elements of coercion, including the use of the security forces' surveillance system to encourage civil servants' compliance with new procedural codes. Davis' (2004) study of water and sanitation bureaucracies in Pakistan and India, meanwhile, provides evidence that while improved oversight of civil servants does have the potential to reduce corruption, it can also reduce staff morale and undermine efforts to induce active participation in, and intrinsic support for, anti-corruption campaigns.

Laboratory experiments also offer mixed results. Serra (2012) finds in a study conducted with Oxford University students that the introduction of a low-probability audit—a 4% chance corruption will be detected and fined—reduces the willingness of subjects acting in the role of a bureaucrat to request a bribe by 5 percentage points, but this finding is not statistically significant. Banuri and Eckel (2015) conduct a game with US and Pakistani university students in which corruption goes unpunished in the first “pre-crackdown” phase, can be punished in the “crackdown” phase, and then again goes unpunished in the “post-crackdown” phase. They find that the risk of punishment has no significant effect on Pakistani students' willingness to engage in corruption, but that it does reduce corruption during the crackdown phase in the US setting. However, there are no longer-term effects of the crackdown: corruption returns to previous levels in the third phase of the game even among the US students. Laboratory experiments have also raised the prospect that excessive monitoring can crowd out intrinsic motivation to act honestly. Schulze and Frank (2003), for example, found that the number

⁵ That the effectiveness of penalties is likely to be conditional on sufficient resources is underscored by Alt and Lassen's (2014) finding of a robust association between the resources available to prosecutors and the number of corruption convictions across US states. However, it is not clear whether their findings generalize beyond the US and other wealthy countries.

of fully honest subjects in a corruption game without monitoring—that is, subjects who refused to accept even a small bribe—declined when the possibility that corruption could be detected and punished was introduced (see also Armantier and Boly 2011).

In contrast to the lukewarm assessments of ethnographies, case studies, and laboratory experiments, from a policy impact evaluation perspective, top-down monitoring is arguably the most thoroughly and rigorously studied anti-corruption policy to date—and the findings are nearly unanimous in the ability of audits to significantly reduce corruption at least in the short term, although questions remain about their long-term effectiveness. Di Tella and Schargrotsky (2003) study the effects of a crackdown involving extensive audits of public hospitals' procurement in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Drawing on panel data from 28 hospitals, they find that, during the crackdown, the cost of basic medical supplies fell by approximately 15%, an outcome they attribute to the elimination of corruption-related expenses incurred by hospitals prior to the crackdown. As the intensity of audits diminished, prices again rose but stayed well below their initial levels. Acconcia and Cantabene (2008) use panel data from 95 Italian provinces to examine the effect of a surge of anti-corruption investigations initiated by Italian judges in the mid-1990s. They find that, before the crackdown, infrastructure spending appeared to be frequently diverted to corruption schemes, as evidenced by a robust positive relationship between provincial-level infrastructure spending and the number of corruption crimes prosecuted or the number of public officials convicted for embezzlement. After the crackdown, the association between infrastructure spending and corruption levels disappeared.

Experimental work provides further evidence regarding the impact of audits and crackdowns. Olken's (2007) field experiment, involving around 600 village road projects in Indonesia, randomly assigned projects to government audits. He finds that the certainty of facing an audit reduced missing expenditures by approximately 8%, as measured by a comparison of official village expenditure reports to estimates produced by independent engineers. Other studies exploit exogenous variation in the assignment of municipal audits. Bobonis *et al.* (2016) study the effectiveness of municipal audits in Puerto Rico, which are carried out in a predetermined order established by an independent agency, allowing local officials to anticipate upcoming audits. They find that, when conducted prior to an election, audits reduce municipal corruption levels by around 67% relative to audits carried out after elections. However, they find no evidence of audits' longer-term effect on corruption. In contrast to Puerto Rico, municipal audits in Brazil are conducted at random. Avis *et al.* (2016) use this institutional feature to investigate the long-term effects of random audits by comparing municipalities facing their first audit to municipalities that had been previously audited. Corruption levels in municipalities that had faced earlier audits were 8% lower. They also find that the effects of audits spill over to neighboring municipalities, presumably as local politicians and citizens react to media reports of audit results in nearby cities.⁶

In summary, although ethnographic and qualitative research raises important questions about possible side effects of monitoring, a robust literature is emerging regarding the effectiveness of anti-

⁶ It should be noted that recent work by Lichand *et al.* (2016) has pointed to unintended consequences of anti-corruption audits in Brazil, such as declines in public spending by audited municipalities which have resulted in fewer per capita hospital beds, lower immunization coverage, and a smaller share of households with access to piped water. In contrast, drawing on user satisfaction surveys, Zamboni and Litschig (2016) find no evidence that Brazil's anti-corruption audits reduce the quality of health services.

corruption audits, at least in the short term. However, because these studies draw on data from diverse institutional settings, more research is needed to assess the effects of specific institutional arrangements, such as predetermined or random audits. Additional research on the long-term effectiveness of top-down audits also is warranted.

ii. Bottom-Up Civil Society Monitoring

Compared to top-down audits, there have been fewer efforts to empirically assess civil society monitoring. Ethnographic and case study research offers a mixed picture regarding the effectiveness of bottom-up approaches. Conning and Kevane's (2002) assessment of community-based programs for the distribution of social welfare finds that such programs enmesh aid providers and recipients in shared local networks. These networks may reduce distributors' willingness to engage in corruption that could harm the local community, but can also be coopted by local elites for corrupt purposes. Véron *et al.*'s (2006) case study of a welfare program in rural West Bengal also demonstrates how, when vertical accountabilities (*e.g.*, to political parties) are weak, horizontal accountability structures such as participatory community-based monitoring can mutate into corrupt networks that facilitate collusion between local civil society and officials. Moyo (2014) notes that in contexts such as Zimbabwe, civil society groups' effectiveness in combatting corruption is curbed by fear of legal prosecution for their "anti-state" motivations. And Muñoz (2014) shows how the effectiveness of civil society representatives who sit on boards designed to oversee the transparency of public contracts in Cameroon is marred by the fact that many of these representatives themselves are public contractors.

The one field experiment to address bottom-up monitoring also provides grounds for skepticism. Olken (2007), in his study of Indonesian village road projects discussed in the preceding section, compared the effectiveness of civil society monitoring to top-down audits, randomly assigning both the use of anonymous comment forms designed to encourage grassroots reporting of corruption incidents and the conducting of "accountability meetings" at which public officials reported to villagers on the use of project funds. While these interventions increased community participation in the monitoring process, they had no statistically significant effect on corruption levels. By contrast, Serra's (2012) laboratory experiment, also discussed above, indicates that combining top-down and bottom-up monitoring may be effective. She finds that introducing a mechanism whereby subjects in the role of a citizen can report instances of bribery, which then triggers the possibility of a low-probability audit, reduces the willingness of those playing the role of public officials to request a bribe by a substantive and statistically significant 25 percentage points. She attributes this result at least in part to participants' concerns about the social disapproval of other participants.

In summary, too few studies have been conducted to draw conclusions about the effectiveness of bottom-up monitoring for reducing corruption, despite increasing efforts to evaluate such monitoring's effectiveness on bureaucratic performance more broadly (see Finan *et al.* 2015 for a review). More research on this topic would undoubtedly be fruitful.

iii. Transparency Initiatives

Effective rewards, punishments, and monitoring all rely on information. It is therefore not surprising that ample evidence exists linking freedom of the press to lower levels of perceived corruption, as found in a number of cross-national regression analyses (Brunetti and Weder 2003, Treisman 2008, Camaj 2012). At a more micro-level, Di Tella and Franceschelli (2011) show how higher newspaper dependency

on government advertisement revenue in Argentina is associated with less willingness to provide coverage of government corruption scandals, while Campante and Do (2014) demonstrate that geographic isolation of state capitols across the US is associated with less newspaper coverage of state politics and subsequently higher levels of corruption. Ethnographers such as Hasty (2005) and Chalfin (2008) also point to the importance of robust investigative journalism for combatting corruption. And emerging evidence additionally indicates that information flows work in conjunction with other monitoring strategies, as shown by the spillover effects noted above of municipal government audits in Brazil resulting from media coverage of audit findings (Avis *et al.* 2016).

Encouraging freedom of the press is, however, a laudable but challenging goal. Fortunately, evidence is emerging that more specific transparency initiatives can contribute to anti-corruption efforts. After documenting massive leakage in government grants allocated for local school funding in Uganda, Reinikka and Svensson (2005) find that the government's publication of data about grant transfers in local newspapers had a dramatic effect. Exploiting variation in teachers' access to information, instrumented by each school's distance from the nearest newspaper outlet, they show that a one standard deviation increase in information exposure results in 44.2 percentage points more funding reaching the school. More recently, Banerjee *et al.* (2016) conducted a randomized control trial in Indonesia aimed at reducing leakage in food subsidy programs resulting from local government corruption. Households in villages assigned to the treatment condition were mailed cards with information about the quantity and monetary value of food subsidies to which they were entitled, resulting in a 26% increase in subsidies received.

Specific laws, such as freedom of information (FOI) and financial disclosure laws, also potentially can contribute to transparency. Although such laws have rarely been the focus of ethnographic and case study researchers, Mathur's (2012) analysis of transparency initiatives in India provides a note of caution. She finds that these initiatives have led to more bureaucracy, which in turn has contributed to even more severe fraud. Early studies drawing on cross-national regression analyses also produced counterintuitive results: adoption of FOI laws is associated with higher perceived corruption (Escaleras *et al.* 2010, Costa 2013). These findings appear to reflect reliance on corruption perception indices. If the FOI laws lead to increased exposure of corruption, then experts' and citizens' evaluation of corruption levels in a given country may rise, even if these laws contribute to a decline in the actual level of corruption. Accordingly, the use of a difference-in-difference approach by Cordis and Warren (2014) to study the implementation of stronger, state-level FOI laws across the US produces findings more in line with expectations: corruption conviction rates increase significantly immediately after the laws' adoption due to increased rates of exposure, but then decline over time as actual levels of corruption fall.

Systematic evidence about financial disclosure laws is, unfortunately, much more scarce, consisting only of Djankov *et al.*'s (2010) cross-national regression analysis of rules governing legislators' disclosure of financial information and conflicts of interest across 175 countries. They find that disclosure requirements that are not made available to the public at large have little effect, but that public disclosure is related to lower levels of perceived corruption.

In summary, although there is evidence that a free press is beneficial for reducing corruption, more research is needed on the effectiveness of specific transparency initiatives.

iv. E-Governance

Over the past two decades, tools for transmitting information have been changing rapidly, with implications for fighting corruption. Andersen *et al.* (2011) provide evidence of a link between internet diffusion and reduced corruption levels both within the US and cross-nationally, using a novel instrumental variable approach based on the correlation between internet diffusion and damage to digital equipment following power outages resulting from lightning strikes (see also Lio *et al.* 2011).

Beyond internet diffusion in general, e-governance—the use of information technology to provide government services—is increasingly being hailed as a promising anti-corruption approach. To be sure, case studies such as Ganie-Rochman and Achwan (2016), which shows how networks of public officials and public contractors in Indonesia managed to circumvent anti-corruption measures built into an e-procurement system, make clear that digitization is no panacea. But drawing on a UN e-governance index measuring the scope and quality of online services, telecommunication infrastructure, and human capital, Elbahnasawy (2014) finds—in a dynamic panel of more than 160 countries across a 14-year period—that the introduction of more e-governance is on average followed by lower levels of perceived corruption.

At a more micro-level, there is a small but high-quality set of studies emerging on e-governance. In a large-scale randomized control trial involving nearly 19 million people, Muralidharan *et al.* (2016) show that introducing biometric smart cards in India substantially decreased embezzlement of government transfers. Similarly, Banerjee *et al.* (2014) randomly introduced an electronic system of public funds provision across local village bodies for a workfare program in the Indian state of Bihar. They find that e-governance leads to a substantial decrease in financial outlays, even while participants in the workfare program reported no decline in earnings—evidence of decreased leakage resulting from fraud or other forms of corruption. Further evidence of the program’s effectiveness was the decline of reported assets among public officials—*i.e.*, those who previously were skimming from the workfare program—in treated districts. Finally, exploiting the gradual rollout of e-procurement systems in India and Indonesia, Lewis-Faupel *et al.* (2016) find evidence that e-procurement improves product quality and increases the likelihood that firms from outside a given region will receive government contracts. They do not find evidence of an effect on prices, nor do they offer a direct assessment of whether their outcomes are the result of lower corruption or increased competition among contractors.⁷

In summary, e-governance itself is relatively new, yet a high-quality literature on its effectiveness is already emerging, based largely on natural experiments and randomized control trials. The existing evidence provides cause for optimism, although the few case studies to address the topic offer insights into the limitations of e-governance.

C. Restructuring Bureaucracies

A third fundamental way to shift incentives faced by civil servants is to alter the structure of bureaucracies in which they work. This section investigates the evidence for seven sets of anti-

⁷ Changes in information technology beyond e-governance—such as social media—also may contribute to reduced corruption. Enikolopov *et al.* (2016) show that postings about corruption in state-owned companies in Russia faced an almost immediate fall in their stock returns following social media postings by the anti-corruption activist Alexei Navalny.

corruption policies related to bureaucratic structure: 1) decentralization, 2) bureaucratic discretion, 3) bureaucratic competition, 4) staff rotation, 5) whistleblowing, 6) streamlining regulation, and 7) electoral incentives.

i. Decentralization

In theory, decentralization can reduce corruption by creating inter-jurisdictional competition: if citizens are dissatisfied with the services provided by corrupt bureaucrats in one location, they can move to another. It may also be more feasible to hold local rather than national-level public officials accountable for their actions. The framework developed by Shleifer and Vishny (1993), on the other hand, indicates that decentralization might lead to lack of coordination among bribe-seeking bureaucrats, raising the burden that corruption imposes on firms and citizens. Empirical evidence, largely in the form of cross-national regressions, has yet to resolve these countervailing predictions, in part because decentralization comes in many forms and because analyses rely on several distinct indicators of decentralization.

Treisman (2000) finds based on cross-national regressions that countries with federal systems have higher levels of perceived corruption, although his subsequent analysis with updated data and a larger set of countries finds no correlation in specifications controlling for national religious traditions (Treisman 2008). By contrast, indicators based purely on fiscal decentralization produce the most optimistic results. Fisman and Gatti (2002a) show that when decentralization is measured by the subnational share of total government expenditures, cross-national regressions produce evidence of a robust association between more decentralization and lower levels of perceived corruption. Recent work by Fiorino *et al.* (2015), employing a panel data analysis of 24 countries between 1995 and 2007, comes to similar conclusions (see also Lederman *et al.* 2005). Additionally, drawing on subnational regression analyses that exploit variation across US states, Fisman and Gatti (2002b) find that a larger proportion of a state's expenditures derived from federal transfers is associated with higher levels of corruption.⁸

Fan *et al.* (2009) move the debate beyond indices measuring levels of perceived corruption and consider the relationship between multiple indicators of national-level decentralization and firm-level survey data measuring reported encounters with corruption in approximately 80 countries. A similar divergence between political and fiscal measures of decentralization emerges. More tiers of government or administration are associated with higher rates of reported bribery, but a larger share of revenues as a percent of GDP for local governments is associated with lower rates. Notably, a larger share of revenue as a percent of GDP accruing to central governments also is associated with lower levels of reported corruption, indicating that coordination problems linked to revenue sharing itself—rather than the level of fiscal centralization—might be responsible for more extensive problems with bribery.

Other studies provide further support for the notion that uncoordinated bribe-taking in decentralized political systems leads to higher levels of corruption. Based on firm-level survey data for 24 transition countries, Diaby and Sylwester (2014) find that bribe payments are higher under a more decentralized

⁸ It is also worth noting that some preconditions may be necessary for decentralization to reduce corruption. For example, Lessmann and Markwardt's (2010) cross-national analysis of about 60 countries reveals that decentralization counteracts corruption in countries with high levels of media freedom, but has the opposite effect in countries without a free press.

bureaucratic structure, as measured by firms' beliefs that even if they pay bribes they will be asked by other public officials to make additional payments. Olken and Barron's (2009) study of 6,000 bribes paid at checkpoints by Indonesian truckers also provides evidence that decentralized corruption can result in higher bribes, based on a novel natural experiment that exploits an exogenous shift in the number of checkpoints resulting from the Indonesian military's withdrawal from the Aceh province.

In summary, despite a longstanding debate, disagreement persists about whether decentralized or centralized bureaucracies are more conducive to anti-corruption efforts.

ii. Bureaucratic Discretion

Since the classic work of Klitgaard (1988, p26, pp87-89), many have argued that limiting the discretion of agents—the ability to interpret and apply regulations independently in the process of implementation—constitutes an effective strategy for reducing corruption. Although this proposition has only been rarely subjected to empirical examination, the existing evidence seems to be favorable. Chan and Gao's (2008) case study of target-based anti-corruption reforms in China illustrates that when targets were specified vaguely and allowed for discretion among local officials, superiors had little incentive to punish subordinates and tended to establish easy-to-achieve targets, thereby compromising anti-corruption endeavors. Drawing on a survey of 800 South Korean bureaucrats, Kwon (2014) finds that more bureaucratic discretion, measured by the extent of delegation by supervisors, is associated with the bureaucrats' higher corruptibility, as measured by toleration of corruption in a hypothetical vignette. And Duvanova's (2014) analysis of survey data covering 25 post-communist economies between 1999 and 2005 also suggests a link between greater bureaucratic discretion and the extent to which firms face bribe requests.

Indirect evidence that bureaucratic discretion may be linked to corruption comes from studies linking bureaucratic delays—which are often intentionally created by corrupt bureaucrats to increase opportunities for extortion—and levels of bribery. In ethnographic fieldwork in Benin, Niger, and Senegal from 1999 – 2000, Blundo *et al.* (2006) note that by creating long queues, administrators induce their constituents to offer informal payments. Based on the 2002 and 2003 waves of the Peruvian household survey, Hunt (2005) finds that bribery rates are higher at agencies whose clients are frustrated with slow service; Kasuga's (2013) analysis of survey data from 234 garment-producing firms in Cambodia also finds that delays are associated with more bribery.

In summary, although the issue has not received sufficient empirical evaluation, excessive bureaucratic discretion does seem to be associated with more corruption. To draw broader conclusions, direct evaluation of whether reducing discretion is an effective anti-corruption strategy is needed.

iii. Bureaucratic Competition

Another policy with a long pedigree in the anti-corruption literature concerns competition among government bureaucrats (Klitgaard 1988, p87; Shleifer and Vishny 1993). In some models, the possibility of citizens facing a corrupt bureaucrat and then turning to other bureaucrats to provide the same service does have the potential to drive down corruption to minimal levels. Unfortunately, evaluating such propositions is exceedingly difficult. Our review of the literature uncovered only one work directly devoted to this issue, a laboratory experiment by Ryvkin and Serra (2015). In the experiment, subjects in

the role of citizens apply for licenses from multiple officials, each of whom has the option to extort a bribe. They find that increased competition—that is, increasing the number of officials offering the same service—can potentially reduce bribe demands, but that these results are contingent on the costs to citizens of switching from one public official to another. With low, fixed “search costs,” increased competition can potentially have an adverse effect, leading to more demands for bribes from officials.

In summary, laboratory experiments have offered important insights into the potential impact of increased competition among bureaucrats, but much more research is needed.

iv. Staff Rotation

The rotation of bureaucrats across locations or functions has long been proposed as an anti-corruption measure designed to prevent the formation of corrupt networks and collusive relationships. Unfortunately, the effectiveness of such policies has faced minimal empirical scrutiny. To our knowledge, just one empirical study, a laboratory experiment by Abbink (2004), has directly addressed this question. In the experiment, pairs of potential bribers and public officials were randomly rematched in every round and compared to other pairs who engaged in repeated interactions without rotation. Abbink (2004) finds that, at least in the laboratory, staff rotation reduces bribery transactions by almost one half.

In summary, laboratory experiments suggest that rotation of cadres may be an effective anti-corruption policy, but whether these findings generalize to a real world setting remains to be studied.

v. Whistleblowing

Laws and policies designed to facilitate whistleblowing are frequently a prominent component of anti-corruption strategies. Yet, whistleblowing policies have not attracted the attention of empirical researchers, and the handful of existing studies focus largely on the developed world. Goel and Nelson (2014) provide evidence of a higher number of corruption convictions in US states with high levels of citizen awareness about whistleblowing laws, as measured by the number of search hits in Google and Yahoo related to the whistleblowing laws of a particular state. Although an innovative approach for assessing a difficult-to-research topic, their research design does not allow for direct assessment of whistleblowing laws’ effectiveness. Other studies—such as Zipparo’s (1998) study of public sector employees in New South Wales, Australia—use survey data to offer insights into the factors, such as lack of proof or lack of legal protection, that discourage the reporting of corruption. And laboratory experiments such as Abbink *et al.* (2014) have explored policies that might contribute to whistleblowing, such as lenient punishment for bribers that report bribe-taking public officials. **Yet, despite these studies’ insights, it is clear that direct evidence regarding whistleblowing laws’ effectiveness has yet to emerge.**

vi. Streamlining Regulation

Another policy often proposed for reducing corruption is to streamline government bureaucracies, thereby limiting opportunities for civil servants to extort bribes. In accordance with this line of thought, a number of ethnographic studies shows that overly complex bureaucratic regulatory policies can be breeding grounds for corruption (*e.g.*, Hoag 2010, Anand 2012, Gupta 2012, Mathur 2012). Meanwhile, ethnographers and case study researchers such as Toye and Moore (1998) and Schueth (2012)—in

studies of tax reforms in Indonesia and Georgia, respectively—suggest that simplifying tax rules reduces tax corruption by providing fewer opportunities for bureaucrats to use their discretion.

Cross-national regression analyses also provide some preliminary support to the proposition that reducing regulatory burden could reduce corruption levels. Early work by Ades and Di Tella's (1997, 1999) reveals that levels of perceived corruption are higher in countries where industrial policies favor domestic firms, markets are dominated by a limited number of enterprises, or antitrust regulations are generally ineffective. Djankov *et al.* (2002) show that countries with more regulation of entry for startup companies have higher levels of perceived corruption, while Gerring and Thacker (2005) find a positive correlation between measures of regulatory burdens drawn from the Heritage Foundation's Index of Economic Freedom and corruption levels. Treisman (2008), however, emphasizes the extent to which regulatory burdens may be the result, rather than the cause, of corruption.⁹

Regulatory burden is, of course, distinct from the size of government. As discussed in Part II of this report, there is ample evidence that merely rolling back the state rarely leads to reduced corruption. Quantitative analyses addressing the impact of government size also produce ambiguous results. Although Goel and Nelson (1998) find that, within the US, higher state spending is associated with more corruption, Gerring and Thacker (2005) find few robust cross-national correlations between levels of perceived corruption and indicators such as public consumption as percent of GDP, total central government expenditures as percent of GDP, state run enterprise as share of total economy, and government employees as share of population.

In summary, there is little evidence that reducing the size of government is an effective anti-corruption strategy, but appropriately targeted deregulation deserves further attention.

vii. Electoral Incentives

A final question pertaining to bureaucratic structures is whether institutions for selecting officials—elections versus appointments—affect corruption levels. At a macro-level, extensive attention has been devoted to the idea that elections should reduce corruption by holding officials accountable to voters. Scholars such as Treisman (2000, 2008) and Serra (2006) have demonstrated, using cross-national regressions, that long periods of uninterrupted electoral democracy are associated with lower levels of perceived corruption, while other studies have found evidence of a U-shaped relationship: corruption appears to be lower in stable dictatorships and well-established democracies, and higher in unstable authoritarian regimes or regimes in the process of democratizing (Montinola and Jackson 2002, Rock 2009).¹⁰ Alt and Lassman (2008), meanwhile, produce evidence that lower levels of perceived corruption across US states, as measured by surveys of local journalists, are associated with divided government (*e.g.*, one political party in control of the executive, the other in control of the state legislature) and with the election, rather than appointment, of state supreme court justices.

⁹ Another consideration is that *de facto* implementation of regulatory policies may have a more significant effect on corruption levels than *de jure* regulatory rules (see Duvanova 2014).

¹⁰ There is also a large cross-national quantitative literature on the effects of distinct constitutional structures and electoral rules within democratic regimes on corruption (see, *e.g.*, Gerring and Thacker 2003, Persson *et al.* 2004, Kunicova and Rose-Ackerman 2005, Lederman *et al.* 2005, Chang and Golden 2007, Treisman 2008).

These broad-brush findings offer a starting point for analysis, but it is clear that there is significant variation in corruption levels across both democracies and non-democracies. It is therefore not surprising that case studies and ethnographic research such as Rothstein (2011) and Anders (2010) caution against viewing democratization as a cure-all for corruption. Potential lessons to be drawn from analysis at a more micro-level are on firmer ground, though such studies are unfortunately in their infancy. Ferraz and Finan (2011) measure corruption using municipal-level audit reports and compare Brazilian municipalities governed by a first-term mayor to those governed by a second-term mayor. In line with the notion that electoral incentives matter, they find that first-term mayors engage in less corruption than their second-term counterparts, who are procedurally barred from running for a third term. Laboratory experiments also provide support for the importance of electoral incentives. In a corruption game conducted with US university students in which subjects play the roles of voters, attorney generals, and executives, Azfar and Nelson (2007) find that directly elected law enforcement officers work more vigilantly at exposing corruption than do appointed ones. Similarly—in another laboratory experiment in which Ethiopian nursing students play the role of community members, public service providers, and monitors in different rounds—Barr *et al.* (2009) find that service providers perform better when their monitors have been elected by the service recipients, and that elected monitors put greater effort into monitoring.

However, Beath *et al.* (2014) show that while electoral incentives may matter, electoral institutions' effect on corruption may be conditional on other institutional choices. In a field experiment studying the effect of local-level elected councils on governance and embezzlement in food aid distribution programs across 500 Afghan villages, they randomly assigned the creation of elected local councils to some villages while retaining customary governance structures in other villages as a control group. Among villages with elected councils, further distinctions were randomly assigned, with the council receiving an obligatory mandate to manage food aid distribution in some villages but not in others. Beath *et al.* (2014) find that the creation of elected councils did not reduce embezzlement, as measured by indicators such as the difference between the amount of food leaders reported allocating and the amount of food recipients reported receiving, and that when responsibility for food distribution was not clearly assigned—as was the case when elected councils did not have an explicit mandate for control—embezzlement actually increased.

It also bears emphasis that the removal of elected officials in favor of appointed officials may in certain contexts be an effective anti-corruption strategy. By analyzing a dataset of 243 local council dismissals in 191 Italian municipalities during 1991-2013, Galletta (2016) finds that replacing local councils shown to have mafia connections with a temporary board of technocrats can reduce public spending used for corrupt purposes.

In summary, more research on the role of elections versus appointments at a micro-level in reducing corruption—as opposed to macro-level debates over regime type—is warranted.

D. Screening and Recruiting

Rather than shaping the incentives of civil servants already in office, an alternative approach is to focus on *who* becomes a civil servant. This section assesses the effectiveness of anti-corruption strategies that rely on 1) meritocratic recruitment and 2) integrity screening.

i. Meritocratic Recruitment

Both scholars and policymakers often tout meritocratic recruitment—often via the implementation of civil service exams—as an effective strategy for reducing corruption.¹¹ However, although recent scholarship, such as Oliveros’ (2016) survey of Argentinean public servants, supports the contention that officials hired via patronage agreements are more likely to target public services to political supporters, direct empirical evidence linking meritocratic recruitment and decreased corruption levels is minimal.

Comparative case study research has emphasized the role of meritocratic recruitment in reducing corruption, particularly in places with British colonial legacies such as Hong Kong and Singapore. Quah (2011) contrasts the beneficial legacies of British civil service traditions with the non-meritocratic, clientelistic recruitment strategies that emerged in Indonesia following Dutch and Japanese colonialism. Yet, he also notes that Bangladesh emerged from colonialism with similar civil service institutions to those of Hong Kong and Singapore, yet ultimately faced higher levels of corruption. Other case study researchers have pointed to the implementation challenges of civil service reforms. For instance, Burns and Xiaoqi (2010) show how in China efforts to develop a competitive recruitment process for civil servants were undermined by informal norms of existing bureaucratic cultures. And, although historical studies of the US, such as Freedman (1988) and Hamilton (2002), found that anti-patronage staffing systems implemented in the city of Chicago were able to reduce, though not eliminate, abuse of city resources for political gain, these reforms also had negative consequences, such as adding considerable time and paperwork burdens to the process of hiring officials.

Beyond case studies, Rauch and Evans (2000) provide one of the few empirical assessments of meritocratic recruitment. Drawing on an expert survey of bureaucratic structures covering 35 developing countries, they show a robust correlation between reliance on meritocratic recruitment and lower levels of perceived corruption. The research design, however, does not rule out questions of reverse causality, encompasses a relatively small number of countries, and relies on experts’ perceptions for both the independent and dependent variables, leaving open the possibility that expert assessments of both bureaucratic structures and corruption simultaneously are shaped by their broader perception of a country’s level of governance.

In summary, despite the topic’s clear importance and recent attention to bureaucratic recruitment strategies more broadly (see Finan *et al.* 2015 for a review), the effects of meritocratic recruitment on corruption have yet to be rigorously studied.

ii. Integrity Screening

Nearly three decades ago, Klitgaard (1988, p75) noted that private companies had begun using “honesty tests” developed by psychologists to pre-screen potential hires in an effort to reduce fraud and improve integrity levels of their workforces. He also noted the role that pre-screening plays in the US government’s selection of contractors, including checks on criminal history, creditworthiness, and audit records. The idea has received little attention in the literature on bureaucratic corruption in the years since.

¹¹ Although meritocratic recruitment is often associated with civil service exams, scholars such as Sundell (2010) have challenged this conception, suggesting that recruitment processes based on interviews and resume screening may be more meritocratic.

A series of recent studies drawing on experimental games, however, indicate that more attention to screening might be warranted, particularly in environments in which corruption is widespread. Hanna and Wang (2013) find that university students in India who express a preference for joining the civil service are more likely to cheat when playing an incentivized dice task game than their peers planning to pursue a private sector career. Similarly, Banerjee *et al.* (2015) compare the play of Indian university students preparing for the civil service exam with their counterparts from a business school in an embezzlement game involving real cash payoffs and find the prospective bureaucrats more likely than the future businesspeople to engage in corrupt acts. By contrast, Barfort *et al.* (2015) employ a similar research design to that of Hanna and Wang (2013) but study Danish students. In this low-corruption environment, they find that students who cheat more often in a dice-task game are more likely to self-select out of the civil service and into the private sector. Together, this line of research points to the possibility that part of cross-national variation in corruption levels results from the self-selection of individuals who are more willing to engage in corruption into bureaucracies that are known for providing opportunities for self-enrichment, and out of bureaucracies where corruption is known to be circumscribed. However, more research is required to assess whether corrupt self-selection is actually a widespread phenomenon;¹² even if self-selection is widespread, the development of policy recommendations will require a systematic effort to identify and assess the effectiveness of integrity screening programs.

Another line of research has focused on individual characteristics associated with the propensity to engage in corruption. Foremost among these has been gender. Dollar *et al.* (2001) attracted attention to the issue when they found, using cross-national regressions, that countries with more women legislators had lower national corruption ratings. Swamy *et al.* (2001) expanded this analysis using several approaches. Their cross-national regressions produce evidence that not only more women legislators, but also more women ministers and other high-level bureaucrats, as well as more women in the labor force, are associated with lower corruption levels. At an individual level, they find, based on data from the World Values Survey for 18 countries, that women are less likely to perceive bribery as justifiable, and based on enterprise surveys in the country of Georgia that firms with female owners are less likely to engage in bribery. Lee and Guven's (2013) overlapping approach using data for 26 countries from the European Social Values Survey similarly finds that women are less likely than men to have offered or accepted a bribe in the last five years. Although they do not find robust evidence that women are less willing to tolerate corruption, they do find lower tolerance for corruption in countries with less traditional views about women's role in the workplace and at home.

Many of these studies explicitly, though cautiously, suggest that increasing the number of women civil servants might reduce corruption. However, as Swamy *et al.* (2001) emphasize, robust policy recommendations require additional research on the underlying reasons why women appear less willing to engage in corruption. If this is due to innate biological or psychological differences across genders, then increasing the number of women in government might be an effective policy. If instead apparent gender differences result from distinct social networks and socialization experiences, then women's attitudes and behaviors related to corruption might change over time as they play a greater role in the

¹² Atlas *et al.* (2009a) do not find a significant difference in the play of Indonesian university students with a preference for public over private sector career paths in a bribery experiment. However, this might be due to small sample size (N=60).

civil service. Experimental evidence also indicates that caution may be warranted. Alatas *et al.* (2009b) find that in laboratory bribery games in four countries—in Australia, India, Indonesia, and Singapore—gender differences in tolerance for and willingness to engage in corruption emerge only in Australia. They hypothesize that gender differences with respect to corruption may be limited to Western societies. Frank *et al.* (2011), meanwhile, review broader evidence from experimental corruption studies. Although most of the studies reviewed were not designed explicitly to investigate gender differences, they do find that corrupt transactions are less likely to take place in laboratory experiments when one or both parties to an exchange are women. However, they emphasize that these results are due not to higher levels of intrinsic honesty or aversion to corruption among women, but rather to higher levels of risk aversion.^{pe}

In summary, sufficient evidence about gender differences exists to warrant additional research. In particular, studies are needed that examine the effects on corruption levels of policies explicitly designed to increase female participation in the civil service or government more broadly.¹³ Meanwhile, policies related to integrity screening are all but unstudied. This, too, constitutes a potentially fruitful research agenda.

E. Anti-Corruption Agencies

ACAs first gained prominence due to success of such organizations in Hong Kong and Singapore in the latter half of the 20th century (see, *e.g.*, Klitgaard 1988, Quah 2011). ACAs, specialized law enforcement agencies with centralized control over the coordination of a country’s anti-corruption efforts, have since the 1990s become a prominent component of anti-corruption strategies promoted by international financial institutions and development agencies. Mungui-Pippidi (2015, p103) calculates that, whereas 12 countries had an ACA in 1990, this figure had reached nearly 100 by 2008.

Despite the prominence of ACAs, relatively few efforts have been made to systematically assess their effectiveness. In part, this is because such evaluation presents significant challenges (see Meagher 2005). For instance, Asibuo (2001) finds that in Ghana, a country with a relatively low level of government resources, an ACA succeeded in closing some loopholes that enabled corruption and in recovering large sums of stolen money. Yet, it did not succeed in having transformative effects on corruption. To what extent can this be considered success or failure? Moreover, across countries, ACAs have vastly different resources, powers, and mandates, complicating assessments about whether creating an ACA is an effective means of combatting corruption, and little consensus exists about which types of powers or mandates make ACAs more or less effective. Kuris (2015), for instance, notes that while many observers blame limited law enforcement powers for recently created ACAs’ failures, some “watchdog” agencies that focus primarily on the collection and dissemination of information outperform their “guard dog” counterparts that possess extensive investigative or prosecutorial powers. Perhaps most importantly, establishing a causal link between the creation of an ACA and reduced corruption is extremely challenging given the numerous factors that contribute to national corruption levels.

¹³ Beath *et al.* (2013) begin to address this topic, finding in a field experiment conducted in Afghanistan that mandating women’s involvement in management of food aid distribution actually increases embezzlement. However, the experiment was focused on a number of considerations other than gender differences, which complicates interpretation of the results.

The more promising attempts to evaluate the effectiveness of ACAs consist of comparative case studies. Quah (2004) investigates the anti-corruption strategies of six Asian countries and suggests that the relative success of Singapore, Hong Kong, and South Korea compared to India, the Philippines, and Mongolia can be attributed to reliance on a centralized ACA, rather than on multiple agencies with overlapping authority to combat corruption. In later work, Quah (2007) seeks to establish why ACAs in Singapore and Hong Kong proved more effective than their counterparts in South Korea and Thailand, emphasizing six conditions necessary for ACAs' success, including: 1) the incorruptibility of the ACA itself; 2) independence from politics and other law enforcement bodies; 3) embeddedness in comprehensive anti-corruption legislation; 4) adequate staffing and funding; 5) the capability to impartially enforce laws; and 6) support—or “political will”—from the country's top leaders (see also Choi 2009, Quah 2011, Quah 2013). However, these studies rarely offer clear criteria for what constitutes “success” in fighting corruption, and often it appears as though the existence of the aforementioned preconditions is itself considered evidence of success.¹⁴ Moreover, it would seem that any country that possesses the ability to impartially enforce laws, political will to address societal ills, and adequate resources is more likely to successfully implement an anti-corruption strategy—regardless of whether or not they create an ACA.

Even advocates of ACAs such as Quah often urge caution about the feasibility of transplanting the Hong Kong or Singapore model, noting what they refer to as the propitious “policy context” of these cases: a small population, relatively high levels of economic development, and institutions largely imported from Great Britain. While the limited number of systematic studies and challenges entailed in evaluating ACAs' success hinder definitive conclusions, the existing literature indicates that the dramatic success stories of Singapore and Hong Kong have yet to be replicated, with the possible exception of a subnational ACA in the Australian province of New South Wales. Indeed, Doig *et al.* (2006) find that international consultants' explicit emphasis on the Hong Kong model often has detrimental effects, leading to unrealistically outsized expectations or encouraging ACAs to take on mandates well beyond the capacity of their limited resources. Although some analysts suggest that—once expectations are set realistically for lower income countries—some ACAs, such as the Indonesian Corruption Eradication Commission, perform “good enough” (Schutte 2012), the one cross-national quantitative study to evaluate ACAs shows that, on average, countries with ACAs have higher levels of corruption than those without, even taking into account a country's level of corruption at the time of its ACA's founding (Mingui-Pippidi 2015, ch. 4). It is also worth noting that recent success stories outside of Asia—identified by scholars such as Mingui-Pippidi (2015, ch. 5) and including Estonia and Georgia—do not have a centralized ACA but rather have employed a decentralized anti-corruption strategy.

In summary, the limited amount of rigorous scholarship on ACAs stands in marked contrast to the widespread adoption of such agencies. That said, the literature is sufficient to establish that clear-cut success stories other than the first-generation of ACAs are lacking.

¹⁴ Lack of clarity about what constitutes success similarly plagues other comparative studies. For example, Doig *et al.* (2006) suggest that ACAs in Ghana have outperformed ACAs in Uganda, attributing this relative success to the more hands-off approach of international donors. But Abdulai (2009) considers Ghana's ACA to be a relative failure compared to the Hong Kong and Singapore cases.

F. Educational Campaigns

Informational anti-corruption interventions have a long pedigree, gaining prominence after Hong Kong's Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) employed educational campaigns with great success in the 1970s (Klitgaard 1988, ch. 4). Following in the ICAC's mold, ACAs throughout the world, as well as organizations such as Transparency International, have developed anti-corruption modules. However, few efforts have been made to rigorously assess such interventions' effectiveness.

Some ethnographers and qualitative researchers have detailed the anti-corruption educational campaigns employed in specific cases, or emphasized the importance of shifting attitudes about corruption. Muñoz (2014), in an ethnography on anti-corruption policies in Cameroon, notes that not only does the National Commission Against Anti-Corruption underscore the importance of workshops and trainings for public officials "in order to strengthen civic-mindedness and a change of mentalities" (p186), but also that anti-corruption bodies take a pedagogical rather than punitive approach to those who violate newly imposed laws, allowing violators a period of amnesty and helping them to avoid breaking laws in the future. Werner (2000) offers an ethnographic approach focusing on the distinction between gifts and bribes in contemporary Kazakhstan, and suggests the fruitfulness of linking anti-corruption education campaigns to values such as patriotism, nationalism, and social justice. Hira and Shiao (2016) conduct a comparative historical case study comparing the successful anti-corruption drives of Chile, Hong Kong, and Singapore to the unsuccessful policies of Nigeria and Paraguay. They conclude that a critical similarity among the three success cases was the use of education and media to reach a "cultural inflection point" after which a critical mass of public officials developed a low tolerance for corruption.

In line with these findings, Gong and Wang (2012) provide evidence of a low-tolerance equilibrium using surveys of university students in Hong Kong. The surveys demonstrate overwhelming antipathy for corruption among Hong Kong's youth. Interestingly, they find that participation in ICAC programs or other formal anti-corruption activities is not associated with lower levels of tolerance for corruption. Rather, the current generation of students—who are far too young to remember the period of corruption prior to the ICAC's success—appears to have absorbed anti-corruption values more broadly from society and from parental influences, as indicated by the lower levels of tolerance for corruption among students who had lived longer in Hong Kong rather than immigrating more recently from mainland China.

These studies have offered important insights into the potential for information campaigns to reduce corruption. However, experimental approaches to the question have been almost nonexistent, despite their suitability for the question. The lone exception of which we are aware is Denisova-Schmidt *et al.*'s (2016) study conducted with Ukrainian students, which randomly assigned participants in the study either a "treatment" folder with information about the extent and consequences of corruption or a control group folder with information about local demographic trends. Via a survey, they then assessed participants' willingness to participate in anti-corruption efforts (based on whether participants agreed to hand out flyers) and attitudes toward corruption. Strikingly, they found that such interventions might *increase* some students' tolerance of corruption, perhaps because they come to realize the extent to which other members of society engage in corruption.

In summary, case study evidence indicates that anti-corruption educational campaigns deserve more attention, but the limited existing experimental evidence points to the importance of carefully crafting and formulating such campaigns.

G. International Agreements

Despite the fanfare related to implementation of the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention at the turn of the century, the creation of numerous transnational anti-corruption agreements at the regional level, and a growing number of convictions under the US FCPA (see Rose Ackerman and Palifka 2016, ch. 14), analysis of whether these laws and conventions have an impact on corruption is all but missing.

With respect to cross-national quantitative approaches, scholars have focused primarily on whether the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention and/or the FCPA have made signatory countries' investors less willing to invest in corrupt countries. Although earlier studies were skeptical of the FCPA's effects on investment trends (Wei 2000), more recent studies suggest that both the OECD Convention and the FCPA have redirected investment flows (Cuervo-Cazurra 2008, D'Souza 2012), with Cuervo-Cazurra (2008) emphasizing that the FCPA began to have a greater effect after the OECD Convention placed restrictions on bribery by European countries, thereby assuring US companies that their reduced investment in corrupt countries would not merely be replaced by that of European competitors.

None of these studies, however, directly assesses the effect of international anti-corruption conventions and laws on corruption levels in developing countries. Moreover, Gilbert and Sharman (2016), using a qualitative "most-likely" case approach, detail how two signatories of the OECD Convention that usually are perceived to have low levels of corruption—Great Britain and Australia—failed to fully prosecute offenders in three, high-profile, foreign bribery scandals, due to concerns about their government's image or about the economic impact of prosecuting prominent domestic companies. Meanwhile, using data from Transparency International's Bribe Payers Index—a measure based on local business interests' assessment of foreign firms' conduct in their countries—Batzilis (2015) shows that companies from OECD Convention signatory countries bribe less when conducting business abroad. However, he notes that these results most likely do not reflect the efficacy of the OECD Convention but rather more general factors that influence firms in countries that chose to sign the Convention, given that firms from signatory countries are less likely to engage not only in types of corruption that are clearly forbidden—such as bribes to politicians—but also in types of corruption that are legal under the OECD Convention, such as facilitating payments to public officials seeking to hold up permits to which a firm is legally entitled. Moreover, beyond the OECD Convention, he finds no evidence that firms from countries with domestic laws prohibiting bribery when operating abroad are less likely to engage in corruption.

In summary, there is a glaring discrepancy between the prominent role of international anti-corruption conventions in the global effort to reduce corruption and the lack of rigorous empirical knowledge about these conventions' effectiveness.

Overall, Part I suggests that scholars and policymakers have yet to rigorously assess the majority of commonly prescribed anti-corruption strategies. The partial exception concerns anti-corruption audits and e-governance, which, based on existing evidence, appear to hold promise. An emerging skepticism regarding the effectiveness of ACAs also is apparent. In the next part of this report, we turn to broader lessons in an effort to shed light on why so many anti-corruption reforms prove ineffective.

Overview of Findings from Part I

Bold = particularly robust evidence *Italics* = particularly weak evidence NA = lack of evidence

	Ethnographic/ Qualitative	Macro Quantitative*	Micro Quantitative*	Lab Experiments	Field/Natural Experiments
A. Rewards and Penalties					
i. Extrinsic: Wage increase	Necessary but insufficient	Contested	Effective	Effective	NA
ii. Extrinsic: Pay-for-perform.	NA	NA	Effective	NA	NA
iii. Intrinsic motivations	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
iv. Penalties	Ineffective	NA	NA	Effective	NA
B. Monitoring					
i. Top-down audits	Effective	NA	Effective	Contested	Effective
ii. Bottom-up monitoring	Ineffective	NA	NA	<i>Effective</i>	Ineffective
iii. Transparency: Free press	Effective	Effective	Effective	NA	NA
iii. Transparency: FOI laws	NA	Contested	NA	NA	NA
iii. Transparency: Disclosure	NA	<i>Effective</i>	NA	NA	NA
iv. E-governance	Contested	Effective	NA	NA	Effective
C. Restructuring Bureaucracies					
i. Decentralization	NA	Contested	Ineffective	NA	<i>Ineffective</i>
ii. Bureaucratic discretion	NA	NA	Effective	NA	NA
iii. Bureaucratic competition	NA	NA	NA	<i>Effective</i>	NA
iv. Staff rotation	NA	NA	NA	<i>Effective</i>	NA
v. Whistleblowing	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
vi. Streamline regulation	NA	Contested	NA	NA	NA
vii. Electoral incentives	Ineffective	Contested	NA	Effective	Contested
D. Screening and Recruiting					
i. Meritocratic recruitment	<i>Contested</i>	<i>Effective</i>	NA	NA	NA
ii. Integrity screening	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
E. Anti-Corruption Agencies					
	Ineffective	NA	NA	NA	NA
F. Educational Campaigns					
	Effective	NA	NA	NA	<i>Ineffective</i>
G. Intl. Agreements					
	NA	<i>Ineffective</i>	<i>Ineffective</i>	NA	NA

* “Macro-quantitative” refers to cross-national and cross-regional (*i.e.*, across states or provinces within a single country) regression analyses. “Micro-quantitative” refers to regression analyses or related quantitative tools applied to micro-level data such as household surveys or surveys of firms.

PART II: BROADER LESSONS

In this part of the report, we turn to examining the broader lessons learned from 20 years of attempted anti-corruption reforms.

Why have there been so few success stories? The scholarship that we will review in this section suggests one clear answer: corruption reforms fail in the long term when they are focused only on cases of individual deviance—the “bad apples” who need to be rewarded for good behavior and punished for bad behavior. While cases of this kind of individual deviance certainly do exist, and Part I of our report has shown that some strategies can be successful in addressing this kind of problem, in many developing country contexts the problem is that corruption represents not deviance from a social order, but an alternative social order. Programs to reward good behavior or punish bad behavior eventually fail because the monitors doing the rewarding and punishing are themselves corruptible. Programs of monitoring are only as corruption-free as the monitors themselves.

Given the systemic nature of the problem, we turn first to historical studies that examine not individual policies (as in Part I), but rather, how corruption has been overcome at a country-wide level. We survey historical studies that have investigated how countries that have overcome corruption have managed to move from a social order in which corruption is sanctioned, to one in which it is not. The overarching lesson of this section is that successful, long-term corruption reform requires that there be endogenous demand for corruption reform and, specifically, that some group or set of individuals develop a stake in fighting corruption. Although the historical cases of successful corruption reform differ in which groups played the crucial role, they all identify an endogenous group that benefited from control of corruption. For example, as discussed further below, in 19th century Britain it was businesspeople who developed a material interest in controlling corruption; in the 20th century US it was the presidential administration that stood to gain from control of corruption. The general pattern is of historical circumstances changing (often because of war or economic crisis) such that one group emerges to benefit from, and champion, control of corruption.

In the next subsection, we then examine a puzzle. The historical studies show that endogenous demand is necessary. And, as we will discuss below, anthropological evidence shows that corruption is universally deployed. But, if this is the case, why is there not always endogenous demand for corruption reform, and why are anti-corruption efforts not more successful? We examine the factors that sustain corrupt practices despite universal condemnation of corruption in the abstract.

Finally, we conclude Part II with a discussion of how to develop anti-corruption strategies and reforms that keep these observations in mind. Because the anti-corruption agenda of the last several decades has been focused on individual-level rather than system-level policies, these suggestions are necessarily speculative, but they are informed by both historical and ethnographic evidence.

A. The Importance of Endogenous Demand for Anti-Corruption Reform

Mungiu-Pippidi (2015) gives an overarching framework to understand the failure of the anti-corruption reforms of the 1990s and 2000s: she argues that anti-corruption interventions have failed because they proceed from the assumption that corruption is deviance and should be treated like crime, *i.e.*, with individual rewards and punishment. She argues—as do many other authors (*e.g.*, Persson, Rothstein,

Teorell 2013; Rothstein 2011)—that, in many societies, corruption is an alternative political order, which means reforms that focus on the individual level (such as rewards for good behavior and punishment for bad behavior) will fail, because those tasked with enforcing the rewards and punishments are themselves likely to be corrupt. (For supporting empirical scholarship on this point see, *e.g.*, Persson, Rothstein, and Teorell 2013 on Kenya and Uganda; Dlakwa 1992 who argues that civil service reforms in 1988 in Nigeria were largely ineffective as the new provisions were simply absorbed by the existing corrupt system; and Heilman and Ndubaro 2002 on anti-corruption efforts in Tanzania.)

Mungiu-Pippidi (2015) suggests that where corruption is an alternative political order, anti-corruption reform has to identify a plausible principal, some political actor or group that stands to gain from control of corruption—for example professional groups or business groups—and work with them to build an endogenous demand for anti-corruption reform. Empirical scholarship also supports this point (see, *e.g.*, Wallis, Fishback, and Kantor 2007, discussed below). Mungiu-Pippidi further suggests looking for a specific moment of opportunity, such as a crisis, or when a country is joining a free trade agreement. In contexts where these conditions are not present, anti-corruption reforms are unlikely to succeed, and donors should seek to build civil society instead. This argument about the need for endogenous demand for control of corruption is echoed by others in the scholarship (Skowronek 1982; North, Wallis, and Weingast 2009; Collier 2000; Kernell and McDonald 1999), and there is strong historical and ethnographic evidence in support of the point.

We see this first in historical works examining how developed countries have overcome corruption. Parrillo (2013) asks how salaries arose in the US civil service system in the early 20th century, and argues that this was possible only because there was demand for reform from civil society. It was not a top-down process of bureaucratization, but a bottom-up response to citizens seeing non-salary payments as illegitimate. Skowronek (1982) examines how corruption in the civil service was reduced in the US in the 19th century, and notes that businesses that had interests in overcoming the spoils system played a supportive role, while the actual leaders of the effort were groups such as lawyers, professors, journalists, and the clergy. Popa (2015) agrees with the argument that endogenous support for anti-corruption reform is necessary, but he finds different agents to be central in 19th century England: he finds independent economics agents—businesspeople not dependent on the state—were the most supportive of anti-corruption reform. The background context was a war that had made corruption more expensive for businesspeople. Kernell and McDonald's (1999) study of the US during the 1890s shows that when an administrative reform allows politicians' interests and citizens to converge, civil service reforms can be quite successful. As rural constituents were dissatisfied with the former postal system that served only the political interests of Congressmen, career-minded politicians were able to use the reform to replace their dependency on postmasters of the former system with a policy appeal to gather constituents' support. Similarly, Wallis, Fishback, and Kantor (2007) ask how New Deal relief was so surprisingly free of corruption in the US, given that relief agencies had been rife with corruption prior to the New Deal. Their answer is that President Franklin D. Roosevelt had a strong incentive to ensure absence of corruption, because he would reap enormous political credit for the corruption-free administration of relief. His administration therefore took many steps to ensure relatively corruption-free disbursement of relief, including trying to control how welfare funds were spent at local levels, taking complaints of corruption seriously and setting up offices to investigate them, and eventually setting up a bureaucratic agency to disburse funds that could not dispense patronage. The president was the

principal with a strong interest in reduction of corruption, and therefore corruption was reduced in dramatic fashion.

Scholarship also supports the argument for the importance of endogenous demand in the contemporary world. Chalfin (2008) observed a specific example of a successful anti-corruption reform in Ghana's customs service and argues that reform was achieved mainly through public critique in various media outlets, and explicit investigative journalism regarding vehicle seizures. Langseth (2006) asks what lessons we can learn from civil service reform in Uganda, and concludes that there has to be internalization of the problems to be resolved and broad agreement on a vision of what to do, as well as sustained support for reform by the leadership and good coordination. This work suggests that citizens (from the village level on up) should be personally involved in identifying problems to be addressed, and that support from political elites is crucial, as well as consensus on reforms. Schuster (2014) examines civil service reform in the Dominican Republic and argues that a broad set of allies, incremental and achievable short-term goals, and societal consensus around the reform objectives are necessary. Panizza and Philip (2005) examine reform efforts in Latin America and note the importance of building consensus. Quah (2011) conducts a comparative historical study of ten Asian countries and argues that the most successful anti-corruption reform has been the ACA; however, ACAs have only been successful in situations where there is political will to reduce corruption, and a favorable policy context. Where they have been tried without those conditions, they have failed. And ethnographic and historical research done by Hansen (1998), among Yucatán peasant farmers in the 1990s, found that Catholic-leaning civic groups drew on their strong support in local communities, and their human rights approach, in order to publicly critique the performance of official representatives. The solidarity and civic action of these groups became the foundation of federal policy reforms.

Although these works differ on *which* group was the central agent in cases of successful anti-corruption reform, they all agree that successful cases of control of corruption feature indigenous groups that stand to benefit from the control of corruption and endogenous demand for control of corruption.

B. The Puzzle: How Demand for Anti-Corruption Reform Can Be Undermined Even While Corruption is Condemned

We have suggested that the anti-corruption reforms of the 1990s and 2000s were frequently unsuccessful, and one reason for this is the absence of internal demand for anti-corruption reform. But this leads to a puzzle. We have good evidence that corruption is condemned in nearly all countries. A massive effort by Rothstein and Torsello (2014) tackles the question of cultural relativism on the issue of corruption; using data from 258 world cultures from the Human Relations Area Files, the authors conclude that there exists what appears to be a universal and cross cultural condemnation of corruption. Survey research has shown that ordinary people in places like sub-Saharan Africa, **including in cultures insulated from globalization and industrialization**, take a very clear stand against corruption and understand the problem in the same manner as organizations such as the World Bank do. Even in societies in which a Western type of state does not exist, indigenous people refer to notions of corruption since notions of public goods already exist. In several cases, citizens of countries where corruption is rampant see it as reproducing inequality (and scholars often agree, *e.g.*, You 2014, Jeffrey 2002).

If this is the case, however, it leads to the question of why reformers struggle so much with anti-corruption reforms: if endogenous demand is necessary for successful anti-corruption reform, and if corruption is despised everywhere, then why is there not endogenous demand for anti-corruption reform everywhere?

Upon closer investigation, several factors are at play:

- 1) In some contexts, corruption is necessary for everyday survival and, given this, the ability to successfully execute a corrupt act is seen as a skill and a source of pride, even while corruption is condemned in the abstract.
- 2) Although corruption is deplored, there is uncertainty over which exchanges qualify as corrupt; some are seen as parts of gift-giving rituals, and there is often no clear distinction between public and private in civil service jobs.
- 3) Despite general condemnation of corruption, there may be pressure to redistribute within ethnic and kin networks. (See de Sardan 1999 and Blundo and de Sardan 2006 for an attempt at a comprehensive categorization of the alternative logics that can compete with the condemnation of corruption.)

These factors can work to undermine the demand for anti-corruption reform. However, if properly addressed, these factors also can lead to more empirically informed anti-corruption reforms.

i. Corruption as Necessary, Corruption as Skill

First, even if corruption is universally condemned, it may nevertheless serve functional purposes. For example, several authors argue that corruption helps citizens and civil servants navigate political or economic troubles.

In developing country contexts, patronage can help to stabilize political situations that have been unstabilized by colonialism and primitive industrialization (Uberti 2016). Based on ethnographic research in South Asia, Das (2015) argues that mundane everyday acts of corruption are what allow individuals to procure electricity and water and to send their children to school. In his study of the politics of measuring water leakages in Mumbai, Anand (2015) makes a similar argument: negotiating illegal water connections with local politicians, municipal water engineers, and community members—through bribes and promises of political support—is an everyday tactic for people to keep water flowing to their communities. Managing leakages allows marginalized citizens to access water without having to riot for it. In his ethnographic fieldwork in Lào Cai City, Vietnam, Endres (2014) shows how local state border officials decide not to enforce the law by making an exception (through bribes) to small-scale traders crossing the border. These exceptions ended up being morally legitimate, given the recognition by state officials that if the law were implemented, an entire class of individuals would be put out of business—especially the small-scale petty traders along the Vietnam-China border, who are already a marginalized group of people. Hanlon (2004) makes a similar argument for Mozambique, and Anders (2010) for Malawi, adding that focusing on “good governance” and corruption excuses donor communities from responsibility for addressing more fundamental problems that give rise to corruption. Sundell (2014) argues that, in such situations, it may be impossible to reduce corruption, and a better option would be to formalize and legalize it to reduce arbitrariness and uncertainty. He argues that especially when tax revenue is insufficient and monitoring ineffective, informal payments can serve a useful function in reimbursing civil servants.

The need to participate in corrupt exchanges is exacerbated by the weakness of the state in places such as Africa, or in post-Communist societies. Given the consistent incapacity of the state to provide adequate services, a range of informal practices is created to circumvent the official (and inefficient) rules of the public services to the extent that these informal practices become the routine management of the state. Ledeneva (2009) shows—through a historical study of *blat* (the use of personal networks for obtaining goods and services in short supply and for circumventing formal procedures) from the Soviet period to contemporary Russia—that corruption was functional in granting individuals access to goods and services in shortage. In an earlier study, Ledeneva (1998) suggests that *blat* as a cultural system cannot be eliminated, and should therefore be identified and incorporated into the official government system, and regulated. In Russia, Reeves (2003) shows how bribe payments by migrant workers to officers are seen by many Kyrgyz workers as “socially acceptable” as these officers are one of the few class of state employees whose salaries are actually lower than that of migrants who procure factory work. Also in Russia, Rivkin-Fish (2005) shows how unofficially paying a doctor was perceived as a bribe in the past but now is perceived as more appropriate and ethical than adhering to official institutional regulations, since the formal system is not able to provide for users’ needs nor to properly compensate doctors for their work; to unofficially pay a doctor thus becomes a positive act that represents respect for the doctor’s effort and expertise. Polese (2008) argues that bribes in Ukraine are not a choice but a necessity as public officials are not able to survive on their wages; indeed, to fight these transactions is actually counterproductive as they are the very mechanism that allows individuals such as doctors and teachers to survive in Ukraine and not flee the country in search of better living conditions. Once the state fails to respect its obligations, there is a wide spectrum of “acceptable” reactions by the public worker. McMullan’s (1961) ethnographic research in West Africa argues that corruption often emerges as a result of the divergence between “a literate government and an illiterate society.” He argues that illiterate people are more vulnerable to corrupt civil servants as they may not be certain what the rules are, or whether they did in fact pay the fees that were required of them, and in general are in no position to resist paying bribes from literate professional people asking for them.

A few authors emphasize that attacking corruption can undermine the effectiveness of a bureaucracy, even in developed-country contexts. Anechiarico and Jacobs (1994) suggest, through an examination of corruption control efforts in New York City, that anti-corruption strategies can alter bureaucracies so much that efficiency is significantly sacrificed, and Shore (2005) similarly finds that EU bureaucrats engage in corruption (despite their high salaries) partly because it is seen to be necessary to do so to accommodate the divergent interests of different countries to get things done; the politicization of the EU commission makes it more corrupt but also makes it work. Mathur (2012) notes that, in India, transparency initiatives created more bureaucracy, which has actually led to more corruption.

Given these structural impediments that make corruption necessary, the ability to successfully participate in corruption becomes seen as a kind of skill, and is sometimes publicly or privately celebrated by actors as a way to display their connections and to reaffirm their social identity. In Bucharest, Romania, instead of shame, former property owners talked proudly about their ability to engage efficiently with bribes as this ability displayed both their social capital (connections with judges) as well as their economic capital (with bribes) and reaffirmed their identity as owners (Zerilli 2005). In rural western Uttar Pradesh, rich farmers, despite publicly participating in protests against corruption, celebrated in private the corrupt local practices that guaranteed their privileges in the sugar cane market (Jeffrey 2002).

The celebration of corruption as a display of power is not unique to elites. Many works in the ethnographic tradition show that the poor accept corruption because they see their own ability to engage in it as a form of agency. In Nigeria, corruption is perceived as a way to get rich (Smith 2010). In rural western Uttar Pradesh, Jeffrey (2002) argues that when the poor were able to purchase influence within cane societies, it was celebrated as an ability to “stand on their own feet.” In the same token, Ruud (2000) describes how in West Bengal the process of negotiating with the bureaucracy (by using network ties) is perceived as a social skill, at which some people are better than others, and which is therefore seen as a source of pride. Examining corrupt practices in contemporary African states, de Sardan (1999) also emphasizes how petty corruption is such a part of everyday experience when dealing with bureaucracy that it becomes a part of the social landscape, a know-how that is considered indispensable for survival. In his ethnographic and interview-based study of lower caste empowerment politics in Bihar, India, Witsoe (2011) argues that the continuous support of the poor for lower caste leaders who are widely known to be corrupt reflects the popular acceptance of corruption as a means to caste empowerment. In this context, corruption becomes a means to appropriate the state by the poor and, as such, a means of leveling inequalities in Indian society. Within this context, people supported politicians not only despite perceptions that they were corrupt but also precisely because they were perceived as corrupt and therefore capable of using their positions to provide support. The ability to employ practices of corruption was an affirmation of this empowerment. In a similar vein, during his fieldwork with lower levels of the bureaucracy in a small village in North India, Gupta (1995) links individuals’ frustration with corruption to the fact that not only are they exploited, but they also lack social capital required to negotiate the services. In a similar analysis but in a very different context, Vries (2007) argues that the corrupt but popular rule of the politician Lopez in the city of El Grullo, Mexico, was rooted in his ability to talk with pride about his ability to transgress the rules. For Vries, Lopez and his clients’ spectacle of enjoyment and their proud talk about their ability to arrange things outside the law was a form of performing the cultural representation of power.

The ability to play the game is perceived, then, not as a source of embarrassment, but rather as a source of pride and a measure of competence. Blundo and de Sardan (2006) even note that refusing to engage in corruption in these contexts can be perceived as a lack of propriety or a break with normal solidarity, particularly given how corruption permeates state institutions to which individuals are closely related in their daily lives, such as hospitals, day care, education, and military registration. For all these problems, individuals have to interact with state agents, and informal practices of circumventing official procedures are so widespread that they have become social norms.

This complex of attitudes can serve to make citizens ambivalent about anti-corruption reform. Where corruption is necessary for survival, widespread condemnation of corrupt practices within society is not enough to reduce such practices if individuals are not given other ways to ensure their survival and deal with the state.

ii. Corruption vs. Gift-Giving, Public vs. Private

Universal condemnation of corruption also coexists with ambivalence for particular practices because the very same act can be interpreted in different ways, for example either as a gift or as a bribe. Several authors call attention to how the cultural competence of some actors enables them to manage these perceptions by making their acts appear to be something other than an outright bribe.

Smart and Hsu (2007) argue that perception of corruption in China is intrinsically related to political power and its abuse. Despite the rhetorical distinction between corruption or bribe and *guanxi*, the behaviors are the same: exchange of gifts for instrumental purposes. However, bribery violates the basic foundation of *guanxi* (warm personal relations) by making instrumental gain its sole purpose. The difference between reasonable *guanxi* practice and an act of corruption hinges on managing perceptions. The style and specifics of the interaction will affect how it will be perceived by those involved; therefore, it is of utmost importance that actors are willing to tactfully behave as though the transactions were primarily about “human” sentiment and/or the collective good. Avenarius and Zhao (2012) highlight how the combination of traditional convictions about gift giving with more modern values, such as meritocracy, varies from urban to rural citizens and from older to younger Chinese. In a similar vein, Caplan (1971) argues that the perception of West Nepal villagers’ exchanges with bureaucrats tends to be perceived as exploitive given how the villagers are positioned in regard to bureaucrats. By studying cases of property restitution in Bucharest, Romania, Zerilli (2005) shows how the attitudes toward corrupt behavior shift according to personal experience, circumstance, and collective histories. Farmers seeking restoration of property rights, while blaming corruption *per se*, justified their use of corruption (bribing judges) as a way to repair injustices perpetrated by the old regime. In the same token, Werner (2000) argues that the distinction between gift and bribe in Kazakhstan is difficult and at times impossible to distinguish, and takes high levels of cultural competency to do so. Individuals’ views on the morality of bribery depend on multiple elements: personality and generosity of the official, their regular salary, how the bribe compares relationally to others in the same career position, and whether or not the bribe was presented voluntarily. Jeffrey (2002) discerned, from long-term fieldwork in Uttar Pradesh state in northern India, several key findings regarding social perception of corruption. First, perception of whether a monetary gift is a bribe or not is strongly tied to class. If the bribe is initiated by the rich toward the poor, it is understood as a gift; if the roles are reversed, and the poor are the initiators, it is understood as a bribe. Second, the poor are much less likely to build the necessary social relationships with government officials and civil servants in order for their monetary gifts to be understood as gifts and not bribes. And Jusionyte (2015) discusses the ability of civil servants to function at the border of what is illegal and illegal, and legitimate and illegitimate.

Another concern is that condemnation of corruption is undermined when there is no clear distinction between public and private. Rothstein and Torsello’s (2014) work on the Human Relations Area Files data suggests that even though corruption—the use of public office for private gain—is uniformly condemned, what counts as public and private varies in different cultures. In general, a higher number of occurrences of bribery instances is correlated to societies where there is no clear cut distinction between private and public goods. In the West, avoidance of corruption was rooted in a carefully established distinction between processes of social and political exchange, and also between political and economic exchange, but other social and cultural contexts throughout the world have a quite different evolution of public vs. private (Heidenheimer 1996).

Munoz’s (2014) long-term ethnographic fieldwork with civil servants in Cameroon reveals that the emergence of corruption and the anti-corruption apparatus are new policy challenges for how civil service reforms are negotiated in Cameroon, as rewarding individuals and organizations with contracts was an established mechanism of awarding favors and redistributing wealth—blurring the boundaries of public and private. Gupta’s (2005) analysis of corruption in northern India shows how bureaucrats

collapse their role of public and private servants. Those blurred boundaries, instead of being an anomaly, are part of the normal and routine conditions in which states operate through local officials. Schatzberg (2001) employs an analysis of textual sources including newspapers, government communiqués, and literary sources to analyze discourses around political life from eight African countries. Schatzberg finds that the Western discourse of legitimacy of the state, based on a sharp distinction between the state and civil society, is unable to capture how many African citizens understand the state. Instead, Schatzberg finds a familial understanding of state offices and the redistribution of public goods; and if the nation is a family guided by a paternal leader, as father-chiefs, political leaders are expected to eat, and eat well during prosperous periods. Bukuluki's (2013) qualitative study explores how within collectivist contexts such as Uganda, certain practices qualified as corrupt might be interpreted otherwise if the act is perceived to benefit not only one individual but also a group or a community. Therefore, widespread corruption in Uganda cannot be understood without reference to the socio-cultural context of collectivism. Within contexts of collectivism, acceptance and rejection of corruption depends on the interpretation of these meanings.

Policy makers should be aware of the challenges in imposing a radically new understanding of public and private, particularly one that implements legal punishment for engaging in formerly sanctioned practices such as nepotism and redistributing public goods to certain groups. Following Rothstein and Torsello (2014), Gupta (2005) argues that, to change how any given bureaucracy operates, it is necessary first to foster a vision of the state on the ground that emphasizes the distinction between the public and the private.

iii. Kinship-Based Moralities and Other Moralities

Even though corruption is generally seen as immoral, in practice other dimensions of morality can pressure civil servants into corrupt behavior, particularly the morality of taking care of one's kin networks. Ruud (2000), Smith (2010), and Bukuluki (2012) all make reference to the existence of a social pressure to provide for relatives and friends as one of the reasons why bending the rules for private gain might be more acceptable in contexts as distinct as India, Nigeria, and Uganda. In a similar vein, Smith (2010) also notes in Nigeria the social pressure to redistribute to kin as a strategy of survival of the poor. Not all forms of bending the rules are equal. The morality of certain practices that could be classified as corrupt depends on the motivations for such practices. Some forms of corruption are undertaken based on positive values (kinship, reciprocity) whereas others are negatively labeled. (However, this pressure can also work in the other direction: Nagavarapu and Sekhri's 2016 study, based on micro-level regressions of survey data, found increased social monitoring amongst in-group [Scheduled Caste] persons, making those individuals less inclined to cheat within a social network. But Isaksson 2015, drawing from the Afrobarometer data, suggests that individual corruption experiences vary systematically along ethnic lines, since belonging to influential ethnic groups—in terms of group size or economic/political standing—is associated with a greater probability of having experienced corruption.)

Wihantoro, Lowe, Cooper, and Manochin (2015) study an attempt at reform of the Indonesian tax administration. Because these reforms aimed to increase "impersonality," they conflicted with Javanese values of familial organization and cohesion, where employees treat the organization as one big family and help with colleagues' financial and family matters. Reforms geared toward employee evaluation by supervisors, and systems of employee praise to encourage healthy workplace competition such as Employee of the Month programs, proved particularly difficult to enforce due to their incompatibility

with Javanese cultural values of harmony, respect, and hierarchy. Refusals of gifts from clients were often taken as insults. Managers were reluctant to praise productive employees and were excessively compassionate to poor performers. In this and other ways, the authors argue that Western bureaucratic models clashed with Javanese cultural values.

Von Holdt (2010) draws on participant observation in public hospitals and health departments to argue that nationalism undermines bureaucratization efforts in South Africa. The project of nationalism leads to a set of practices that directly undermine bureaucratic functioning; for example, the wish to promote the hitherto oppressed can lead to unskilled actors in bureaucracies, rigid hierarchy combined with this absence of meritocracy can lead managers to care more about pleasing higher-ups (*e.g.*, in controlling costs) than solving the problems of the rank and file, and lack of respect for authority as a legacy of apartheid struggles can lead to corruption.

In sum, civil servants and ordinary people engage in everyday corrupt practices to navigate a broken system and avoid state neglect, or in response to pressure from ethnic and/or kin groups, or simply because the distinction between a corrupt act and a non-corrupt act is unclear in a given context. The need to participate in corruption and the ubiquity of corruption can undermine endogenous demand for anti-corruption reform.

The most important lesson to take from this literature is that **anti-corruption reform can be disastrous if it does not take local context into account**. Das (2015), for example, argues that the poor are actually in positions of greatest risk in the political agendas of anti-corruption in India, as the possibilities for political participation for the poor and their abilities to secure the very elements needed for survival—including water and electricity—can easily be represented as corruption. Werner (2000) argues that anti-corruption laws that target gift-giving are likely to implicate the wrong individuals—those in more desperate or marginal situations who resort to bribing public officials—rather than targeting officials who routinely benefit from bribes, as the latter typically possess the resources and connections to escape identification by national anti-corruption legislation. The poor are much less likely to have the resources and connections that allow them to portray their monetary gifts as gifts and not bribes. Furthermore, anti-corruption legislation may be used as a political tool by public officials against their enemies. Torsello (2012) argues that policymakers should be wary of corruption narratives as “truth telling” or “revealing” moments by individuals or civic groups, and consider the political goals of these narratives. This highlights the need for policymakers to consider, contextually, the motivations and aims of various forms of corruption narratives and accusations. Znoy (2007) argues that when public outrage against corruption is more abstract, it becomes a major obstacle to more efficient forms of critique of corruption.

But if the ambivalence toward corruption points to the difficulty of controlling corruption, it also suggests more fruitful ways to organize the public discourse against corruption. Recognizing the existence of these other social logics, Hasty (2005) suggests that anti-corruption efforts must align with the dominant local discourse to be effective. It is necessary not only to promote a public debate about corruption but to promote a debate that focuses clearly on specific practices of corruption that are experienced on the ground by ordinary citizens and civil servants. And, as the works of Gupta (1995, 2012), Verkaaik (2001), Nuijten (2003), and Hansen (1998) point out, popular narratives of corruption enable citizens and civil servants to *imagine* the state as a sphere of legitimate power and justice free of

corruption; imagining the ideal of a non-corrupt state is a first step in working to bring such a state about.

C. Addressing the Social Problem of Corruption

The discussion to this point has suggested that, despite universal condemnation of corruption, corruption persists because it is a social problem, that is, a problem that transcends the preferences of individuals. As such, it must be addressed at the social level, not merely at the individual level.

In this section we outline three anti-corruption strategies that take into account the social nature of corruption, although the first seems less practicable than the second and third.

i. Big Bangs

Some scholars suggest that if there is a collective action problem regarding corruption—that is, a problem that transcends individual actors—then strategies that focus on individuals will not work, and only a “big bang” approach can work, that is, an approach in which multiple changes occur at the same time. For example, Collier (2000) argues that corrupt states end up in a corrupt equilibrium as multiple elements—like the moral legitimation of corruption, reduced risks of punishment, and self-fulfilling expectations—reinforce one another. Corbacho *et al.* (2016) show in an experimental framework that corruption indeed is a “self-fulfilling prophecy,” in that leading participants to believe that others are corruptible increases participants’ own willingness to engage in corruption. Authors making this argument suggest that once this self-fulfilling prophecy has been realized and a high-corruption equilibrium has been established, a “big push” or “big bang” strategy is the only way to accomplish a lasting shift to a lower corruption equilibrium.

Some national-level case study evidence exists that such a big push or big bang strategy is a possible path to lasting change. However, in instances where a big push approach has worked, it has often been rendered possible by historical circumstances beyond the control of any particular group of policymakers. For instance, Rothstein (2011) shows that Sweden achieved dramatic and lasting improvements within a short period, and that this occurred in conjunction with wide-ranging reform, but Teorell and Rothstein (2015) emphasize that dramatic change was possible only because the loss of a war to Russia in the early 19th century led to a sense of urgency that overcame collective action problems. Similar situations have been found in other contexts as well. Light (2014) describes a highly successful anti-corruption drive within Georgia’s police force, but also shows that such drastic policy measures were only possible because it occurred during a “revolutionary moment,” *i.e.*, a popular uprising that removed an increasingly autocratic president. A larger strand of research from within the developmental states literature similarly attributes the renowned success of bureaucratic reforms in several East Asian countries (Hong Kong, Korea, Singapore, and Taiwan) to dramatic “big bang” type changes that in turn were possible as a result of a tense geopolitical environment (*e.g.*, Cheng *et al.* 1998, Chibber 1999). Beyond the fact that they may only be possible in exceptional circumstances, these approaches also require spreading resources more thinly, leading to “shopping list” approaches that can be overambitious or incoherent (Flanary and Watt 1999). There are some historical studies of cases where a “big bang” approach was not necessary, including the US, but unfortunately the historical scholarship is not well-developed on these cases (Skowronek 1982; Hira and Shiao 2016; Gong and Wang 2012; Wallis, Fishback, and Kantor 2007).

Because of the difficulty of implementing this sort of big bang approach, historical legacies have proved durable. There is now a huge body of econometric, qualitative, and comparative-historical literature that shows the lasting effects of various historical legacies, perhaps most commonly associated with colonialism, on the durability of corruption (Becker *et al.* 2016 on Habsburg vs. non-Habsburg regions; Pande 2010 on landlord and non-landlord regimes in north India; Obydenkova and Libman 2015 on areas in Russia that had a larger share of Communist Party officials; see particularly Uslaner and Rothstein 2016 who show that average years of education in countries in 1870 was significantly associated with scores on the 2010 Corruption Perception Index; Serra 2006 finds colonial heritage to be one of several factors that is robustly associated with variation in corruption; for qualitative case studies see Quah *et al.* 2013, Flanary and Watt 1999, and the essays in Tiihonen 2003).

Historical scholarship on the experience of the developed countries helps to make the important point that corruption was widespread in the West until very recently, suggesting that nations currently witnessing corruption are not condemned to it eternally (see, *e.g.*, Rubinstein 1983 on Britain, Rothstein 1998 on Sweden, Glaeser and Goldin 2006 on the US). However, it also seems clear that although some countries have been lucky enough to be able to implement “big bang” approaches, such approaches only seem possible in the wake of moments of crisis such as major wars, and do not therefore provide a replicable strategy for overcoming corruption today.

ii. Help Engaging the State

An important insight of the ethnographic literature in particular is that citizens often need help navigating the bureaucracies of the state. In this vein, a nascent literature has emerged that investigates the role of intermediaries who structure the practice of corruption. The category of intermediaries most often refers to brokers who negotiate particular actions for civilians *vis-à-vis* civil servants or government officers. Ethnographic and qualitative work has shown that brokers help accelerate procedures; navigate complex bureaucratic systems; and ensure proper networks, formalities, or etiquette is followed. The need for intermediaries is often related to the desires of citizens to avoid additional requests for bribes, to bypass or speed up certain bureaucratic formalities, or to help penetrate bureaucratic protocols that they feel incompetent to address.

Blundo and de Sardan (2006)—in an extensive qualitative comparative study of Benin, Niger, and Senegal from 1999 – 2000—find that administrative brokers help to accelerate procedures and bureaucratic requirements. In Kazakhstan, intermediaries are considered essential by many in order to navigate challenging bureaucratic systems, and also help to mediate necessary etiquette around practices of *blat* (Oka 2013). Smith (2010) shows that in Nigeria it can be impossible to navigate without someone who understands the implicit rules and has personal ties. Mexican peasants, in their calls for land redistribution, rely on intermediaries to take their cases up the bureaucratic ladder (Nuitjen 2003).

Each of these studies highlights the role of intermediaries and the perception of citizens regarding the benefits or necessity of using intermediaries. However, the outcomes are not necessarily positive, as brokers and intermediaries often prey on their clients as much as they provide honest access to bureaucracies, and increase the overall level of corruption. Drawing on long-term ethnographic fieldwork in rural Mexico, Nuitjen (2003) shows that brokers rarely deliver on their promises of an adjudicated land redistribution case, yet peasants—fully aware of such a likelihood—continue to take their cases to intermediaries and remain committed to following the bureaucratic state legal

procedures. And experimental lab studies of the impact of intermediaries find that the presence of intermediaries significantly increases chances of corruption: the “bribery experiment,” simulating a one-shot interaction between a briber and an official, finds that the presence of the intermediary reduces the moral or psychological costs on both the citizen and the public officials—distancing both parties from the act of corruption, and therefore making it significantly more likely (Drugov 2014).

In this situation, an effective anti-corruption strategy needs to focus on *citizens’ need for help in navigating state bureaucracies*. The kind of intermediaries that currently exist could be replaced with a corps of civic advocates who facilitate citizens’ access to the state (the danger here would be in ensuring that these civic advocates are not themselves corrupt, and do not facilitate corruption) or with strategies such as websites that are easy for citizens to navigate. A strategy of helping the marginalized approach government through other means could obviate citizens’ need to turn to private markets of intermediation that facilitate corruption. The structural problems that make corruption a necessity for many poor people suggest that they need other ways to engage the state.

iii. Organizational-Level Strategies

Finally, a third area of scholarship focuses on the possibility of attacking cultures of corruption at the level of specific organizations. Noting both the need to address multiple issues at once as in the “big bang” arguments, and the difficulty of doing so at the level of whole nations, Mungiu-Pippidi (2013) suggests trying to control corruption at the level of organizations. This has the benefit of addressing the problem on multiple fronts as the “big bang” scholars argue, but on a more manageable scale. Mungiu-Pippidi observes that some of the most successful cases of corruption control have been small islands. She then asks if we can create metaphorical small islands of corruption control inside larger contexts where corruption is rampant, such as organizations with strong cultural proscriptions against corruption.

McDonnell (2012), Zaloznaya (2012), and Mistree (2015) examine this possibility more carefully. They both begin from the observation that even within countries known for widespread corruption, certain organizations exist that are known to be free of corruption.

McDonnell (2012) examines a bureaucracy in Ghana that is known for being free of corruption. One of her main conclusions is that bureaucratic culture is produced when enough agents acquire contact with bureaucratic culture—for example, by spending time abroad in settings relatively free of corruption. (However, Babül (2012) tell us how *not* to structure a program of sending bureaucrats abroad: if bureaucrats are to be sent abroad, they should not be sent abroad in groups for remedial instruction, which creates a dynamic of resentment and nationalist backlash. Rather, a program in which individual bureaucrats are sent for a stretch of several months for immersion in a corruption-free organizational context, without explicit signals that the bureaucrat is deficient, seems a better approach. Describing such a program as a reward for the best workers, rather than a punishment for deficiency, may have better effects.) Zaloznaya (2012) examines variation in corruption in universities in Ukraine, and concludes that organizational culture drives levels of variation in degree of corruption. Mistree (2015) likewise examines a corruption-free bureaucracy in India. He argues that the relevant factor is a strong professional identity, and corruption is controlled by lateral accountability to the professional network rather than esprit de corps in a particular organization.

The observation that corruption-free bureaucracies exist even in countries where corruption is widespread turns the question of controlling corruption from one of the creation of non-corrupt bureaucracies to the diffusion of non-corrupt bureaucracies. Despite the promise of such an approach, the scholarship on an organizational approach to corruption remains at a nascent stage.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We find the scholarly evidence to be strongest regarding audits and digitization of government services (“e-governance”): these are the individual policies that have been shown to be the most successful at controlling corruption, although the latter is new and deserves more study. In addition, adequate civil service wages seem to be a necessary but not a sufficient condition for control of corruption, as does a free press. There are several strategies that seem promising, but on which there is insufficient evidence to reach a conclusion: educational campaigns, organizational-level strategies, and helping citizens find alternative means of engaging the state. The scholarship is less clear on other reforms, and in some areas contradictory.

Beyond this, the clearest message from the literature is that anti-corruption reforms are most likely to work in contexts where there is a strong intrinsic demand for anti-corruption reforms. This helps to explain why no single policy emerges as having been successful across contexts over a long period of time. Some anti-corruption reforms imposed by outside donors have even backfired and led to negative consequences. Scholarship on successful cases suggests that corruption reform works best when a “principal” can be identified or developed—a local group or sector that stands to benefit from the control of corruption, and is strong enough to fight for control of corruption. Without this, even the best auditing or monitoring scheme may run into trouble if the auditors or monitors are themselves corrupt.

There are several areas of scholarship that are promising but under-studied, and therefore constitute areas in need of further research. In addition to more research on e-governance, educational campaigns, organizational-level strategies, and ways to help citizens navigate the state without resorting to intermediaries, we see a need for more research on strategies of simplification of bureaucracies, on what counts as public or private in different countries, on intrinsic motivation, on recruitment and screening, on the measurement of corruption (*e.g.*, using new methods of big data), on historical cases where corruption was controlled without a “big bang” (such as the US), and on how specific anti-corruption policies work in particular contexts. We particularly see a need for scholarship that draws on multiple research traditions.

Finally, the scholarship from several disciplines—economics (Collier 2000; North, Wallis, and Weingast 2009), political science (Mungiu-Pippidi 2015; Persson, Rothstein, and Teorell 2013), anthropology (Blundo and de Sardan 2006, Anand 2015), and sociology (McMullan 1961, Uberti 2016)—is converging on the consensus that corruption cannot be successfully controlled if it is treated as an individual-level problem. Rather, corruption is a systemic problem and strategies to combat it must be pitched at the systemic level.

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APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGICAL APPENDIX

In this appendix, we briefly describe our four-stage process for conducting this literature review.

Stage 1: We began with a general set of inclusion criteria. We limited our search to studies that 1) focused partially if not exclusively on civil service/bureaucratic corruption, 2) offered insights into combatting corruption, and 3) primarily consisted of an empirical study. Additionally, we sought to include only peer-reviewed studies or high-quality working papers deemed by team members likely to be published in a peer-reviewed format in the near future.

In the first stage, the eight-member research team was divided into pairs. Two pairs—two economists and two political scientists—conducted a comprehensive search using Google Scholar and the Web of Science for articles in the impact evaluation tradition (as described in the report’s introduction). A third pair, consisting of two sociologists, simultaneously conducted a search for studies in the comparative-historical tradition, while the final pair, consisting of an anthropologist and political scientist, conducted a search for studies in the ethnographic tradition. During this first stage, assessments were based off a study’s title; abstract; and, where possible, a quick reading of the study’s first pages. Approximately 500 studies were collected during Stage 1.

Stage 2: Team members then divided up the list of studies and, still working in pairs, checked each study more thoroughly to decide whether it fit our inclusion criteria and whether it was of sufficiently high quality to merit further attention. This process resulted in a condensed sample of approximately 200 studies.

Stage 3: Each team member was assigned approximately 25 to 30 studies to carefully read and summarize, from which an annotated bibliography was produced. Based on a reading of all annotations, the team then identified several key themes. For each theme, a team member drafted a 3 – 5 page memo for further discussion.

Stage 4: Based on the memos, readings of the annotations, and team discussions, the team leaders compiled the current report.

Throughout the process, as additional sources of interest became known, they were added to the annotated bibliography and included, where relevant, in the report.