

WHAT WORKS TO CURB POLITICAL CORRUPTION? A REVIEW OF THE EVIDENCE BASE

Transparency International is a global movement with one vision: a world in which government, business, civil society and the daily lives of people are free of corruption. Through more than 100 chapters worldwide and an international secretariat in Berlin, we are leading the fight against corruption to turn this vision into reality.

This report reviews the evidence and state of knowledge on what works to fight political corruption, and proposes an evidence framework to present the main anti-corruption approaches and their outcome, identify evidence gaps and further research needs, and draw relevant policy lessons.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the corrupt behaviour of actors involved in the electoral and political processes has come increasingly into the limelight. From outright buying of high-level Brazilian politicians by companies to the more subtle undue influence exerted by Volkswagen to change government policy and regulatory oversight in their own interest, different forms of political corruption capture popular attention. Ultimately, they fuel popular disenchantment with the political process and thereby threaten to undermine democracy and the social contract. Thus, we are dealing with a significant problem for governance systems around the world. But what do we know about how to contain and deal with the problem of political corruption?

This report collates and assesses the evidence base for interventions focused on curbing political corruption. This form of corruption takes place in two separate dimensions of the political process: during the process by which politicians are *elected* and during the process by which public policy is *formulated*. Electoral corruption can involve cheating in campaigns, electoral fraud and vote buying. Corruption in the policy-formulation process refers to corrupt practices found within the legislative and executive branches, such as illicit political financing and cronyism. In focusing on political corruption, other forms of corruption, occurring at the level of policy implementation, or within public bureaucracies and administrative organisations, or across different sectors, fall beyond the scope of this report.

The report is not a “how to” guide with specific guidance on different policies; instead, it aims to present and appraise the evidence base, and point to some preliminary insights into interventions that are seen as promising for curbing political corruption and those interventions that may not be, and where possible, to draw broader policy lessons and contextual factors supporting interventions.

The report builds on similar reviews by the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre (2012), the UK Department for International Development (DFID) (2015) and others, but with a focus on interventions that civil society organisations (CSOs) either can carry out themselves or can be instrumental in enacting and implementing them. In doing so, the report concentrates on the effectiveness of six different types of interventions: social mobilisation, rule-change, enforcement, transparency, organisation and management, and indirect interventions. Insights gained from this review may be helpful to Transparency International’s partners in formulating anti-corruption strategies and evaluating the different policy and programming options available.

As research into anti-corruption policy interventions is relatively new, the review also aims to identify key evidence gaps. This review of the state of the knowledge in this area was extensive: key political databases and institutional websites were trawled through, and in the end a sample of 1,194 relevant studies was cut to 187, then a final definitive cut whittled the evidence base down to 39 studies on corruption within policy formulation and 22 on electoral corruption.¹

The report is divided into five sections. Section 1 provides more detail about the definitions, method and analytical framework used in the report. Section 2 presents the results for corruption in the policy-formulation process, while section 3 presents the results for electoral corruption. Sections 4 and 5 present maps with specific information about the individual studies. The conclusion aims to draw out some relevant insights and lessons.

¹ As we might have missed relevant studies and as new studies on political corruption are published, we treat this review as a “first cut” and encourage readers to contact Transparency International with information on new studies/studies we have missed.

DEFINITIONS, METHODS AND ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

DEFINING POLITICAL CORRUPTION

If corruption is the “abuse of entrusted power for private gain”, then political corruption refers to corruption that occurs within two dimensions of the political process: during the process in which politicians are elected and the process in which policy is formulated (OECD 2015; Amundsen 1999). Political corruption therefore occurs at the highest level of the state and involves elected decision makers and high-level officials. Though in some countries it may be more incidental, political corruption occurs across all political systems.

Political corruption can be distinguished from administrative corruption, sometimes referred to as petty or bureaucratic corruption, by location: administrative corruption involves corrupt practices in the public administration, at the implementation level of the political process (Amundsen 1999). Political and administrative corruption overlap and are interlinked – political corruption can facilitate administrative corruption and vice versa – but generally these different types work through different mechanisms and it is therefore important to separate them analytically.

Political corruption can cause significant problems. Electoral corruption can, for example, lead to violence and social unrest, delegitimise the entire political process and distort the distribution of power in society (Birch 2011b; Collier 2010; Norris 2015). Corrupt practices with the process of policy formulation can undermine a system of rule, leading to institutional decay (Amundsen 1999) and can lead to self-interested politics in which political leaders are more concerned with accruing personal benefits and consolidating power than serving the public good (Kupferschmidt 2009; Kaufmann et al. 2000; OECD 2015).

Structuring the search process

This report is based on the notion that these aspects of political corruption have distinct causes and logic, and so it makes sense to treat them independently of each other. This section aims to give the concept of political corruption some logical order and to provide an effective way to structure the search method report. The report treats the different forms of corruption not as abstractions but identifies the *specific mechanisms* that may lead to or facilitate different types of corruption. The reason why these mechanisms receive priority is because experts stress that interventions cannot only target the vague abstraction of “corruption” but must be focused on the particular mechanisms that lead to a specific type of corruption (Mungiu-Pippidi 2015, p. 174). As a first step, it is therefore important to break the concept of political corruption down to try to understand what facilitates corruption in the electoral and policy-formulation dimensions of the political process.

Corruption in the electoral process

Electoral corruption involves the manipulation of rules and voting processes. The most important mechanisms through which electoral corruption occur are corrupt campaigning and electoral fraud. Corrupt campaigning means the violation of electoral laws, deceptive campaign tactics or vote buying. Electoral fraud involves ballot stuffing, impersonation or misreporting (Transparency International Helpdesk 2014; Birch 2011a).

Corruption in the political decision-making process

Corruption in the policy-formulation or decision-making process mostly occurs within the legislative and executive branches of government and occurs at different levels of government: local, regional and national institutions. It generally involves actors who are closely connected to political power, such as elected representatives, mayors, or high-level civil servants and advisors. This dimension of political corruption can occur through illicit political financing, which involves illicit financial contributions given by private actors to political actors to win illegitimate influence within the decision-making process (Kupfershmidt 2009; Kaufmann et al. 2000). Cronyism and clientelist networks are also important facilitators of corruption in the policy-formulation process. Corruption in this area is also fuelled by the absence of integrity in the very political body which is meant to act as a check on state capture: parliament. Politicians' passivity towards cronyism or illicit financing is another mechanism which leads to political corruption.

The table below summarises the main concepts used in the report, with each analytical level from the bottom upwards representing the conceptual building blocks of political corruption. The approach is to structure the search around the main real-world mechanisms through which political corruption is channelled. The next section explains the analytical framework by which the evidence base was assessed.

Table 1: Concepts constituting political corruption

	Concepts				
1. General framing	Political corruption				
2. Conceptual focus	Corruption in elections		Corruption in policy formulation		
3. Mechanisms	Corrupt campaigning	Electoral fraud	Illicit political finance	Cronyism	Lack of integrity in parliament
4. Specific practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• violation of campaign laws• deceptive campaign tactics• vote buying	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ballot stuffing• impersonation• misreporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• illicit contributions• corrupt lobbying• corrupt conflicts of interests	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• corruption in political parties• political patronage• political clientelist networks• policy favouritism	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• rent-seeking• dereliction of duty• parliamentary vote selling• corruption in parliamentary oversight

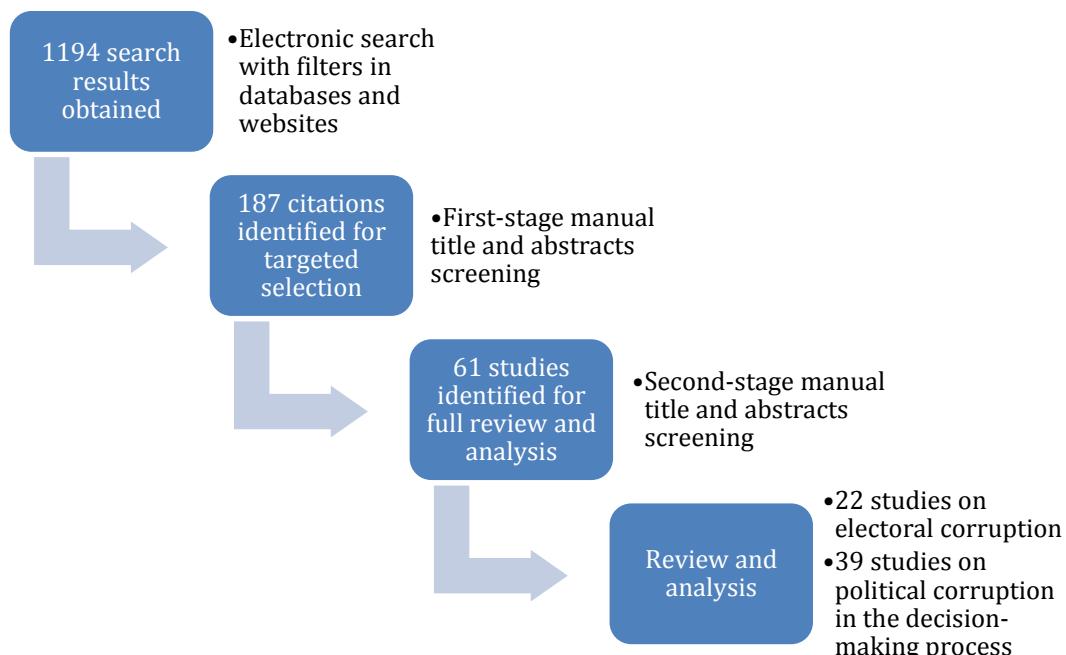
SEARCH METHOD

The search reviewed papers, reports, articles and evaluations from various electronic databases, journals and websites. In particular, the studies were identified from Social Science Citation Index, EconLit (EBSCOhost) and EconBiz databases. Further search was performed through various websites including the World Bank Research, the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the National Bureau of Economic Research, the Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance and the Electoral Integrity Project. Books and edited volumes were also considered.

The initial electronic search was based on strings of keywords derived from our research question and definition of political corruption. These keywords were combined using the Boolean operators OR and AND. The combination within each group of concepts is given by the Boolean operator OR, and between groups by AND.

The search included only studies conducted after 1995, which is unlikely to have much of an impact on the outcome because the study of anti-corruption interventions is rather recent. The review was based on studies written in English. Studies that aim to explain the effects of political corruption, as well as theoretical research on corruption, were not included. Policy papers were excluded if they could not demonstrate actual evidence of causal impact of an intervention but rather relied on inferences about corruption or focused on the nature of the intervention itself (See Annex C for more details).

After the initial electronic search, the titles and abstracts were screened in a two-stage manual process to identify the relevant studies for this review. The first-stage manual screening was performed directly from the search results obtained and retrieved 187 citations for further targeted selection. The second-stage screening identified 61 studies for full review and analysis. This report assessed 22 studies on electoral corruption and 39 studies on political corruption in the decision-making process.



ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

Categorising studies according to types of intervention

The first step was to categorise the studies according to a classification of interventions. This report is written with CSOs in mind. As CSOs are generally limited by size, resources and position within the political process, it is clear that CSOs cannot independently pursue all strategies. CSOs cannot, for example, change the rules or establish public enforcement mechanisms; it is generally only elected representatives who have the ability and authority to do so. However, CSOs often engage with public institutions: they can advocate for the other type of interventions and influence the content of these other interventions through advocacy, expert input and mobilising social pressure. In other words, CSOs can be instrumental in different strategies being enacted and implemented, and so it is beneficial to include all the possible interventions that can be carried out by domestic political actors.

The report concentrates on the interventions that domestic civil society can carry out (or advocate for) and so it does not consider interventions carried out by donor agencies, though there is some overlap between the two.² This report frames six types of strategies distinguished by the mechanism through which the strategy works. Though not all interventions fit neatly into one category in all circumstances, the advantage of this classification is that it provides a conceptually clear and consistent map from which to think about different interventions.

1. Social mobilisation strategies refer to when social actors – CSOs, political pressure groups, social movements, newspapers or religious leaders – undertake action to directly address or alter citizens' attitudes and/or behaviour in relation to political corruption. Specific social mobilisation interventions include advocacy campaigns, education campaigns and investigations.

2. Rule-changing strategies focus on changing formal rules and institutions. These could include specific anti-corruption laws and rules, such as those on lobbying or political finance, or broader institutional changes, such as decentralisation or changes to electoral systems.

3. Enforcement strategies focus on the specific political practices and organisations that enforce and monitor the anti-corruption elements of the law, such as audit institutions, the judiciary and anti-corruption watchdogs.

4. Transparency strategies focus on generating information about politicians' behaviour that would otherwise be unavailable, through various mechanisms, including rules on public disclosure, right to information and statistical analysis to detect electoral fraud.

5. Organisational and managerial strategies focus on the day-to-day practices of political actors. They can change individual behaviour through soft laws, such as a code of conduct, or changes in economic incentives through a new wage structure.

6. Indirect interventions, which do not specifically address political corruption but can have an effect on corruption, are also considered but only when they are shown to be directly associated with curbing political corruption. For example, increasing political competition is an indirect measure that has been cited as having an effect on political corruption in some circumstances.

Framework for evaluating individual studies

The evaluation of the evidence base is structured according to three different areas:

² Donor agencies can be major players in anti-corruption efforts and Transparency International stresses that they may be important partners or actors to influence, but donor activity is beyond the scope of this report. For an excellent review of donor interventions, see Johnsøn et al. 2012.

Type

As a first step, the studies were categorised into a particular type of study depending on the kind of evidence and research design in the study. DFID's (2014) typology was adapted and utilised as follows:

Research type	Research design
Primary (P)	Experimental (EXP): randomised control trial
	Quasi-experimental (QEX): systematic comparative method, regression analysis
	Observational (OBS): evidence documentation and analysis
Secondary (S)	Systematic review (SR): systematic methods to search for literature on a given topic
	Other review (OR): summary or synthesis of a given topic

Strength of the study for understanding what works in political corruption

The overall strength of each individual study was evaluated according to three criteria. As one of the criteria is relevance to the research question, the overall evaluation *does not appraise the quality of the individual study per se* but rather its strength in relation to the overall purpose of the study.

a. The general quality of the methodology

This was evaluated according to four factors.³ According to these criteria, each study was qualitatively graded: strong (S), satisfactory (M) or acceptable/fair (F).

- validity: do indicators capture phenomena?
- transparency: is the author transparent about the data collection process?
- acknowledgement of bias: are biases acknowledged and discussed?
- conceptual: are concepts accurately described and deployed?

b. Study relevance and focus: strength of study for research question

Only studies of empirical relevance were included in the review; hence there are no studies that do not connect with the concepts of political corruption in some way. But to ensure a broad range of insights, an accommodating threshold has been used. This means studies have not been excluded even if they do not directly operationalise a specific aspect of political corruption. For example, a study may examine the effects of an anti-corruption commission in thwarting the corrupt influence of certain actors on the policy-making process, but may use indicators, such as the corruption perception index (CPI), to assess the overall impact of that intervention. These studies are included because the empirical foundation of the study still connects to the concepts associated with political corruption and can therefore provide relevant information to the task at hand.

- strong (S): study directly involves the main concepts or associated practices (i.e. part of the constellation)
- satisfactory (M): study relates to the main concepts but mainly through secondary or broadly defined terms and concepts

³ These criteria for general quality is inspired by the method used by Johnsøn et al. 2012.

c. Type of method for drawing conclusions about effect

This aspect evaluates the strength of the conclusion about the effectiveness of a certain intervention (i.e. research design).

- strong (S): directly observed test/rigorous evaluation
- satisfactory (M): inferred effect based on solid evidence
- weak (W): recommendation backed by some suggestive evidence only

Effectiveness of intervention cited in study

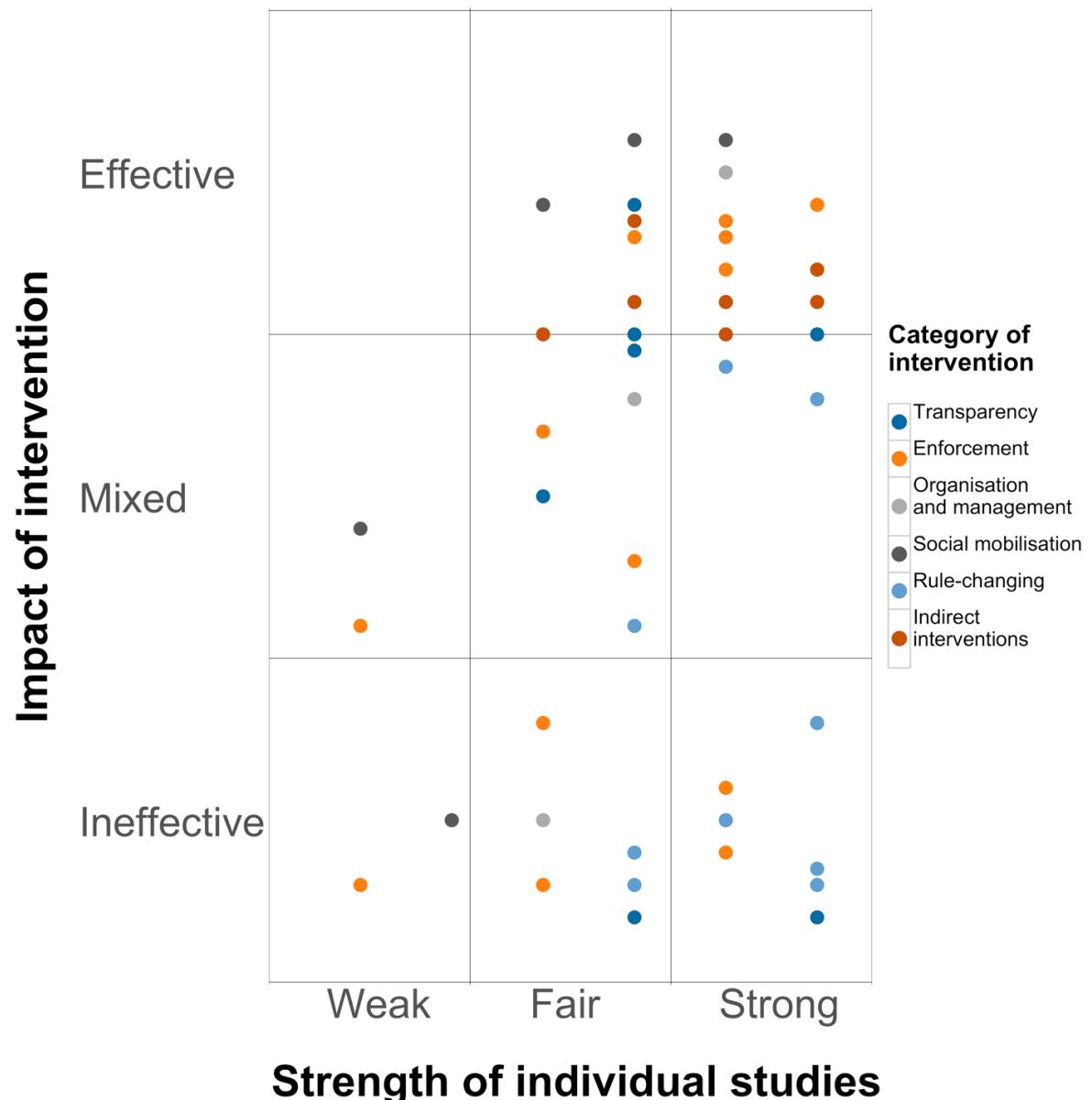
Given the limited scope of this paper, it is not feasible to establish a system that tries to anchor the conclusions of the various studies in an objective measure of effectiveness. Instead effectiveness is established according to approximate qualitative criteria.

- effective: study finds unqualified effect of intervention ranging from a moderate to strong effect (corresponding score between 2 to 3)
- mixed: study finds partial or qualified effect – it worked in some cases but not in others or only partially addressed political corruption (1 to 1.9)
- ineffective: intervention shown to have no effect or barely any effect (0 to 0.9)

CORRUPTION IN THE POLICY-FORMULATION PROCESS

OVERVIEW OF THE EVIDENCE BASE

Figure 1: Distribution of studies within evidence base for corruption within the policy-formulation process



The figure above depicts the individual studies in the evidence base according to what works, and what doesn't, to curb corruption within the policy-formulation dimension of the political process. The studies are categorised by intervention type and are distributed along a horizontal axis which plots the individual strength of the studies in relation to the research question, evaluated according to general quality, conceptual focus and method for drawing conclusions. The vertical axis plots the effectiveness of the intervention identified in the study.⁴

Overall, the evidence base is reasonably sizeable, with 39 relevant studies identified, a number greater than the evidence base for electoral corruption (22).⁵ Most studies are of fair or strong quality – a reasonable basis, but overall it lags behind the quality for electoral corruption. Helpfully, the base provides evidence for interventions that are both effective and ineffective, a distribution that avoids selection bias.

A clear constraint of the evidence base is that while the empirical thrust of many studies relates to political corruption in decision making, few studies actually operationalise the different aspects. Compared to the evidence base for electoral corruption, in which many studies tightly focus on specific aspects, most studies for this evidence base use definitions that may not grasp the specific characteristics of corruption within the decision-making process. The lack of specificity is a general issue within this evidence base. As such, studies that drill deeper to isolate the particular aspects of the corruption problem in the policy-formulation process are needed: '*tighten the focus*' should be an important principle for studies in this area. If the studies focused on one particular aspect of this kind of political corruption, then it was generally illicit financing or cronyism. Strikingly, the review found no studies that specifically examined how political corruption in legislative institutions, such as parliaments, could be curbed, a rather conspicuous evidence gap which should be addressed.

The lack of conceptual focus is in part due to the difficulties in generating data on these specific aspects, with few studies able to generate the kind of systematic data that directly and precisely captures the different aspects of corruption, such as illicit political financing, cronyism and undue influence. Some studies use creative forms of measurements, which offer a constructive way forward. Keefer (2007), for example, offers innovative conceptualisations of cronyism to understand the incentives that explain why governments cater to special interests. Even so, more thinking about ways to operationalise the various concepts that comprise this form of corruption would be welcomed.

Most studies relied on quasi-experimental, comparative or observational research design, with some studies using innovative research designs to draw conclusions, innovations that are to be welcomed because they provide new angles from which to understand what may work. For example, Perla (2016) uses a game-theoretic model to understand why domestic enforcement efforts have failed to reduce the demand for bribes within the context of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption (IACAC). Only a few studies employed an experimental research design. An interesting study from Malesky et al. (2012), for instance, aims to test the effect of greater transparency on the performance of politicians in Vietnam by assigning a transparency intervention to a treatment group of politicians. Further studies employing random control trials that accurately gauge the causal effects of specific interventions on corruption within policy-formulation processes would strengthen the overall evidence base.

EVIDENCE PER CATEGORY OF INTERVENTIONS

As aggregated evidence can obscure the variation for each category of intervention, we do not provide an overall assessment per intervention category but rather analyse interesting findings on what does and does not work for each category of intervention. Sections 4 and 5 provide more specific information on each study.

⁴ This approach is partly modelled on Johnsøn et al. 2012.

⁵ Three studies addressed more than one intervention, which means the overall number of data points is 44

Social mobilisation strategies

Social mobilisation strategies demonstrate a degree of effectiveness. Burt and Amilivia (2013), for instance, demonstrate how civil society action in Uruguay was the key factor in explaining the end to government policies of impunity and has opened new prospects for greater political accountability. Similarly, Jenkins and Goetz (1999) illustrate how a public campaign, waged by a grassroots organisation in rural India to secure the right of ordinary people to gain access to information held by government officials, helped to address rent-seeking and embezzlement by local politicians.

Other studies question the efficacy of social mobilisation. Studies occasionally highlight limitations in civil society potential to mobilise large sections of the population (Sadiku 2010), or question the longer-term effect of social mobilisation strategies. For example, Setiyyono and McLeod (2010) show that social mobilisation may have contributed to the emergence of new laws in Indonesia to reign in high-level corruption but did not induce widespread changes in social behaviour that could lead to a significant decline in corruption.

Experts often point out that sustainable anti-corruption efforts can only emerge through the development of stronger normative constraints against corruption that often develop through social mobilisation strategies, such as education campaigns, investigations or advocacy. Mungiu-Pippidi has highlighted that addressing corruption entails more than the introduction of new governance arrangements or institutions; it is only when a “majority of active public opinion” works against corruption that sustainable anti-corruption reforms can be ensured (Mungiu-Pippidi 2015, p.163).

Yet, as Mungiu-Pippidi (2013, p.48) states in her study: “the empowerment of those who lose from corruption is the most neglected from all the potentially effective and sustainable anti-corruption strategies”. Indeed, this review finds that despite its potential importance in addressing corruption within the policy-formulation process, studies of successful social mobilisation strategies are thin on the ground – the evidence base needs more studies about when and how social mobilisation strategies can be successful against this specific form of political corruption.

Rule-changing strategies

The evidence base suggests strategies to address political corruption that depend on introducing new anti-corruption rules or increase institutional checks may be of limited effectiveness. Mungiu-Pippidi’s (2013) review of corruption control within EU countries concludes that countries that have adopted more anti-corruption legislation do not perform better. Similarly, Perla’s (2016) game-theoretic analysis of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption suggests that these rules have done little to address political corruption in practice because the payoffs that motivated Latin-American governments to ratify the convention are not aligned with the payoffs of the government officials tasked with upholding its obligations.

Broader reforms to political architecture may also not have any effect in reducing political corruption. Keefer’s (2007) analysis suggests the type of political rules and institutions in themselves may not have an independent effect on decision makers’ tendencies to cater for special interests. Likewise, Sadanandan (2012) demonstrates that decentralisation.

Enforcement strategies

Improving enforcement mechanisms may reduce corruption perpetrated by politicians. Muzila (2012) highlights how legal rules against illicit enrichment by politicians are only effective once they are part of a broader enforcement strategy. Likewise, Ulloa (2004) warns that even if a developed legal architecture to constrain political corruption is in place, without an effective system of control there is little incentive to comply with the law. Administrative rules did little to deter rent-seeking in Spanish municipalities too; instead these local integrity systems only functioned well when they were backed by rigorous enforcement activities of the judiciary (Quesada et al. 2013).

Studies that underline the importance of enforcement mechanisms to address political corruption tend to do so where there is a weak application of the rules; other studies suggest that establishing enforcement mechanisms do not always provide anti-corruption gains in practice. Mungiu-Pippidi (2013) demonstrates that countries in the EU with special anti-corruption agencies do not perform significantly better than countries that deal with corruption through normal enforcement channels. The establishment of enforcement systems in the Solomon Islands had a mixed impact with the authors of the study (Larmour and Barcham 2006) finding these enforcement systems often failed to do what they are supposed to do. In the case of Nigeria, Inokoba (2011) finds that the establishment of independent commissions to fight corruption had little impact. Anecharico (2010) demonstrates that national enforcement agencies can work but only if they are embedded in local anti-corruption networks and work closely with local networks.

One particular form of enforcement – external auditing – has been shown to reduce political corruption. Audits are a form of “soft enforcement”: independent and public examinations of political behaviour that can reduce incentives to engage in political corruption. Two studies provide strong evidence on the effectiveness of this kind of intervention. Ferraz and Finan’s (2008) comparative study of the effects of audits of municipality expenditures, which were undertaken and then publicly disseminated by the Brazilian federal government as part of an anti-corruption programme in 2003, demonstrates how auditing can discipline politicians to restrain from corrupt behaviour. Avis et al.’s (2016) elaborated and experimental study of the same intervention in Brazil demonstrates that corruption levels are at least 8 per cent lower among treated municipalities compared to the control municipalities. Auditing can also increase the likelihood of legal action being taken against corrupt politicians by 20 per cent. The authors suggest that channelling resources to anti-corruption agencies who can implement well-executed random audits could represent a significant step forward in curbing political corruption.

Yet, evidence also suggests that audits may have a limited impact. Santiso’s (2008) study of autonomous audit agencies (AAAs) in Argentina reveals these enforcement mechanisms are mostly ineffective at curbing corruption, especially as they can be undermined by informal practices. The author also warns against basing anti-corruption strategies on the import of exogenous institutional models, such as audit agencies.

Transparency strategies

Interventions that aim to increase transparency are shown to have mixed effects. Malesky et al.’s (2012) experimental study found no evidence for a direct effect of their transparency treatment on the performance of politicians in Vietnam. In fact, the transparency treatment seemed to make politicians likely to be less accountable, a finding the authors suggest should make us more cautious in assuming that transparency initiatives work in the same way in authoritarian settings as they do in advanced democracies. Murillo (2015) finds that modern information technology systems in Latin America geared towards increasing transparency often do not meet expectations. He concludes that transparency initiatives are not sufficient to address political corruption because they often fail to shed light on areas where political corruption may be most relevant, especially in the law-making process. Targeted interventions in areas where corruption takes place are critical.

Still, a number of studies emphasised how increasing voter information about the political process can constrain political corruption. Benito et al.’s (2014) analysis of Spanish municipalities suggests that less voter information about local political processes is related to more rent-seeking by politicians. Azfar and Nelson’s (2007) experimental analysis of the causes of corruption found that increasing the difficulty of hiding corrupt gains may reduce political corruption. Djankov et al.’s (2010) analysis of financial and conflict disclosures across 175 countries suggests that the public disclosure by politicians of financial assets and conflicts of interest is associated with lower public corruption, though the authors acknowledge that this does not imply a causal relationship. Overall, transparency initiatives may work to address corruption in the policy-formulation process, but more evidence is needed to understand under what conditions they may be effective.

Organisation and management strategies

There is little research on how managerial and organisational practices may curb political corruption. While Ferraz and Finan (2008) demonstrate that higher salaries in Brazilian municipalities have attracted more educated people to political office, who tend to stay in office longer and increase legislative productivity, in general few, if any, studies consider how introducing new procedures, organisational norms or technology may socialise political actors away from corruption. Currently, we do not know how and whether these strategies can work in a political context.

Indirect strategies

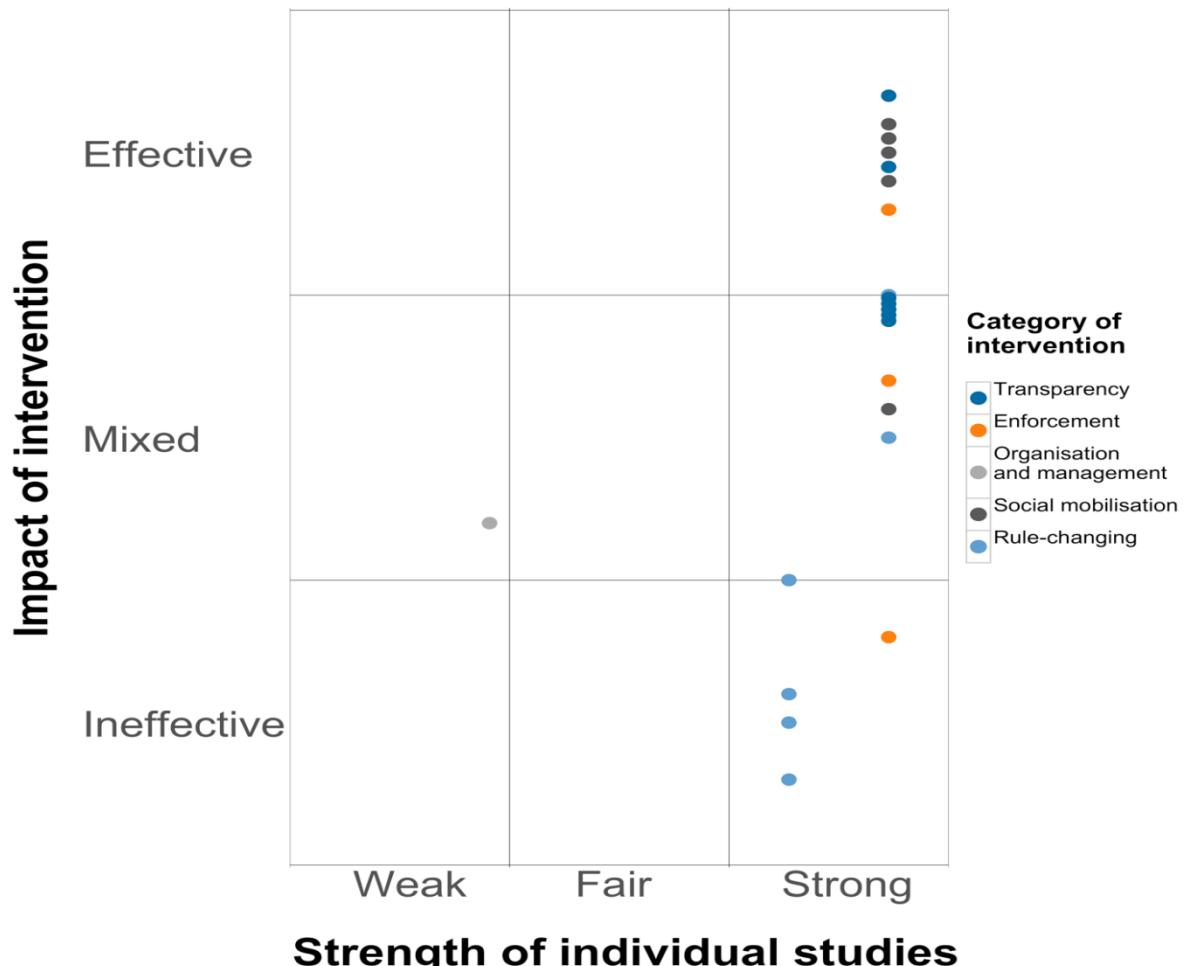
Indirect strategies may yield the most results, but these indirect factors are the hardest to change. Political competition is cited as an important factor in constraining political corruption. Benito et al. (2014) demonstrate that weaker political competition is related to more rent extraction, while Wilson and Damania (2007) suggest that it is related to a reduction in political corruption but not at all levels of government. Interestingly, Keefer (2007) reveals how rule-changing strategies may only work under conditions of electoral competitiveness. Political competition was also identified by Mutebi (2008), whose study of anti-corruption efforts in Thailand concludes that despite the establishment of a comprehensive anti-corruption framework, the absence of political competition renders these mechanisms futile. Bashina's (2013) econometric study suggests that political stability is also important in explaining the effectiveness of anti-corruption rules.

The evidence base also demonstrates that areas indirectly related to corruption could be targeted. Lash and Batavia's (2013) investigation of different forms of economic intervention on corruption across 157 countries found a better regulation of property rights is associated with lower corruption. Meanwhile, Boerner and Hainz (2009) find that reforms that liberalise the economy may, in the short term at least, reduce political corruption.

CORRUPTION IN THE POLICY-FORMULATION PROCESS

OVERVIEW OF THE EVIDENCE BASE

Figure 2: Distribution of studies within the evidence base for electoral corruption



The evidence base is smaller than that for corruption in policy formulation but is generally of higher quality – nearly all the studies are strong. What is striking about the evidence base is the number of experimental studies (10) dedicated to investigating what may curb electoral corruption, which enable the anti-corruption community to clearly grasp the effect of interventions. These experimental research designs assess different aspects of electoral corruption and, in general, the evidence base provides a good mix of focus: all the elements of electoral corruption are covered, including electoral fraud, vote-buying, electoral violence and illicit campaigning. Much more of the same is the general conclusion emanating from this review.

EVIDENCE PER CATEGORY OF INTERVENTIONS

As aggregated evidence can obscure the variation for each category of intervention, we do not provide an overall assessment per intervention category, but rather analyse interesting findings on what does and does not work for each category of intervention. Sections 4 and 5 provide for more specific information on each study.

Social mobilisation strategies

A number of excellent randomised experiments shed light on the effectiveness of social mobilisation strategies, notably education campaigns, on reducing political corruption. Collier and Vicente's (2014) field experiment finds that an anti-violence campaign, based on encouraging electoral participation through town meetings, popular theatres and the door-to-door distribution of materials, had a measurable effect on the level of violence and voter intimidation in an election in Nigeria. Vicente's (2014) field experiment in West Africa demonstrates how an information sensitisation campaign, sponsored by the electoral commission, against vote buying was effective in diminishing electoral malfeasance. Fujiwara and Wantchekon's (2013) experimental study in Benin demonstrates that holding town hall meetings as conduits for informed public deliberation prior to an election reduces the prevalence of clientelist behaviour.

Yet, not all voter education campaigns have a definitive effect. Aker et al. (2012) conducted a field experiment during an election in Mozambique and found that out of three different forms of voter education – an SMS information campaign, an SMS hotline for misconduct and a free newspaper – it was only the distribution of the free newspaper that led to a decrease in electoral problems. Moreover, Chong et al.'s (2015) experimental study shows that a voter education campaign that focuses just on corruption may have the adverse effect of prompting voters to withdraw from the political process.

There is strong evidence therefore to suggest education campaigns can reduce electoral corruption, but this depends on the type of campaign. More research on which types of voter education campaigns are effective and under what circumstances would be welcomed.

Rule-changing strategies

There is little evidence to suggest that introducing anti-corruption rules for electoral financing will have an effect. Indeed, Mungiu-Pippidi's (2013) comprehensive analysis of EU countries finds the correlation that the more restrictions a country has on party funding, the more corrupt it is. Likewise, Milyo and Cordis's (2013) systematic evaluation of the effects of campaign finance laws on the actual corruption rate in the United States finds no strong or convincing evidence that state campaign finance reforms reduce corruption. An analysis of recent elections in Mexico (Serra 2016) suggests electoral reforms have little effect on the integrity of elections, especially as they are often weakly enforced.

A study into “varieties of clientelism” (Gans-Morse et al. 2014) reveals the diverse and sometimes contradictory effects of electoral rules. The study shows the introduction of compulsory voting may increase vote buying while reducing all other types of clientelism, and enhanced ballot secrecy may increase turnout and abstention buying but decrease vote buying; in other words, electoral rules can have varied effects on the different aspects of electoral corruption.

Studies point out how broader institutional changes could curb electoral corruption. Norris's (2016) empirical analysis suggests that proportional representation electoral systems may strengthen electoral integrity more effectively than majoritarian systems. Ferraz and Finan's (2011) comparative study of corruption in Brazilian municipalities suggests that in those municipalities where mayors operate under accountability constraints provided by elections (i.e. if they are able to be re-elected), 27 per cent fewer resources are misappropriated, a finding that suggests rules enhancing political accountability could play a crucial role in constraining politicians' corrupt behaviour.

In sum, strategies that depend on introducing specific electoral regulations may have little effect but broader institutional changes could curb corruption. More research is needed on which rules work and under which circumstances.

Enforcement strategies

Enforcement mechanisms, especially electoral observers, may reduce electoral corruption. Using data from the 2003 presidential election in Armenia, Hyde's (2007) experimental study of international election observers demonstrates that although observers may not eliminate all electoral fraud, they can reduce election-day fraud at the polling stations they visit. Other studies find a more ambiguous impact of external observers. Norris's (2015) extensive cross-national study finds that there is no "significant link" between election aid and observers and the quality of elections. Domestic observers may also not be able to reduce electoral corruption. An experimental study (Ichino and Schündeln 2012) of domestic observers deployed in Ghana suggests that, while irregularities may be reduced in those constituencies under observation, the overall effect is to displace these irregularities to other constituencies rather than a general reduction in electoral corruption. In general, the impact of enforcement mechanisms, especially outside observers, needs further research.

Organisation and management strategies

Few studies consider how changes to election management and organisation could reduce corruption. A review (Smith and Clark 2005) of the potential of internet-voting methods suggests that it could be a way of reducing electoral fraud, but there is still a lack of evidence on its overall effect. More empirical work on organisational interventions should be carried out.

Transparency strategies

Similar to education campaigns, transparency measures could offer quick wins in curbing corruption during elections. Banerjee et al.'s (2011) experimental study demonstrates how new information gained can reduce the incidence of vote buying. In providing slum dwellers with newspapers containing report cards with information on candidate qualifications and legislature performance obtained under India's disclosure laws, the intervention reduced the incidence of cash-based vote buying. Announcing a "photo quick count" measure to election officials – a transparency measure in which provisional vote tally sheets at individual polling centres are photographed before being included in aggregate counts – is demonstrated by Callen and Long's field experiment in Afghanistan (2015) to have an important effect in reducing electoral fraud.

An interesting strand of empirical work demonstrates how new statistical methods can detect electoral regularities. Five studies in the evidence base provide five different ways of demonstrating electoral fraud (Hood and Gillespie 2012; Fukumoto and Horiuchi 2011; Enikolopov et al. 2013; Klimek et al. 2012). These studies generally use large electoral datasets to detect patterns that may imply fraudulent behaviour and produce robust results when applied to empirical data. While these innovative transparency interventions may not automatically reduce corruption, they could be harnessed by CSOs to expose electoral corruption and to configure incentives against electoral fraud.

CONCLUSION: WHAT DO WE KNOW ABOUT CURBING POLITICAL CORRUPTION?

This conclusion draws out some key insights from the evidence base. In general, it is difficult to derive clear-cut prescriptions from this review due to the well-known prominence of context factors and the overall weak and limited evidence base. However, a number of relevant insights can be garnered.

Insights into what works in addressing corruption in the decision-making process

- Transparency interventions present a mixed picture. One key insight from the review is that transparency interventions play out differently in an authoritarian polity compared to a democratic one.
- Social mobilisation interventions show a degree of effectiveness, but more studies are needed in this area.
- Rule-changing strategies also present a mixed picture. Given that this category is very broad and different studies pick up on very different types of rules, the evidence base is very thin. The evidence therefore suggests that rules are essential pieces of the integrity puzzle and often constitute hooks for social mobilisation, but are likely to unfold their full impact only in the context of proper enforcement and a mobilised citizenry.
- A number of studies imply how interventions focusing on encouraging political competition may help to contain this type of corruption, but these types of indirect interventions are difficult to design and implement.

Insights into what works to address electoral corruption

- The review suggests that social mobilisation interventions can be effective against electoral corruption, with a number of studies demonstrating the effectiveness of education campaigns in particular. More research is needed on the contextual factors that may make social mobilisation strategies more or less effective in this area.
- Different transparency initiatives can be effective against electoral corruption. Statistical methods, such as the knowledge discovery in databases (KDD), that can detect electoral fraud, could be harnessed by anti-corruption efforts.
- Enforcement and monitoring strategies have had mixed results. Nevertheless, random auditing represents an interesting intervention that should be explored further.
- Rule-changing strategies may do little to curb electoral corruption. A key insight from the review is that changing rules may have diverse and unintended effects on electoral integrity.
- Organisation and management studies are generally under-represented in this evidence base.

Future research

- Studies that isolate the particular aspects of the corruption problem in the policy-formulation process are needed. Research that focuses on undue influence and cronyism would be very useful. Much more research is needed on curbing corruption in legislative institutions.

- Further studies employing random control trials in corruption in the policy-formulation process would strengthen the overall evidence base.
- The evidence base is smaller for electoral corruption but is generally of higher quality; much more of the same would be welcomed, with a particular focus on developing the research base for social mobilisation and transparency initiatives.

APPENDIX 1: LITERATURE ON CORRUPTION IN THE POLICY-FORMULATION PROCESS

Study author, year, name and source	Description of Intervention SM – social mobilisation R – rule changing E – enforcement T – transparency O – organisational IN – indirect	Empirical location of data	Evaluation of impact	(1) Key broader policy lesson (if any) (2) Key contextual factor cited by study (if any) (3) Other relevant information (if any)	Type of study/ General quality/ Method
Jenkins, Rob; Goetz, Anne Marie. 2010. Accounts and Accountability. Theoretical Implications of the Right-to-Information Movement in India. In <i>Third World Quarterly</i> 20 (3), pp. 603–622.	SM – Assesses the potential of a campaign by the Workers' and Farmers' Power Organisation to secure the right of access to information held by government officials to reduce rent-seeking by local politicians.	Rajasthan	Social mobilisation secured greater information about political process, which provided more accountability to address political corruption.	(1) Demonstrates civil society mobilisation can be successful in even the most socially and economically disadvantaged parts of India.	P/OBS Qual. reasoning
Burt, J.-M.; Fried Amilibia, G.; Lessa, F. 2013. Civil Society and the Resurgent Struggle against Impunity in Uruguay (1986–2012). In <i>International Journal of Transitional Justice</i> 7 (2), pp. 306–327.	SM – Assesses civil society mobilisation strategies against political impunity in Uruguay.	Uruguay	Anti-impunity movement was vital in changing successive governments' policies of impunity.	(1) Incorporation of new groups by civil society important to give renewed strength to the campaign.	P/OBS Qual. reasoning

Setiyo, Budi; McLeod, Ross H. 2010. Civil Society Organisations' Contribution to the Anti-Corruption Movement in Indonesia. In <i>Bulletin of Indonesian Economic Studies</i> 46 (3), pp. 347–370.	SM – Assesses civil society mobilisation's effect on high-level corruption.	Indonesia	CSOs have played a key role in pushing for new laws and institutions that curb high-level corruption, but little evidence to suggest that overall corruption has declined significantly from these efforts.	(1) Further progress depends on CSOs gaining a better understanding of the underlying causes of corruption, and that these are to be found in public sector personnel management practices.	P/OBS Qual. reasoning
Sadiku, Lejla. 2010. Civil Society and Anti-Corruption. Experiences from Albania, Kosovo and Serbia. In <i>Romanian Journal of Political Science</i> 10 (2), pp. 34–62.	SM – Assesses contributions of civil society mobilisation to state capture, public procurement, privatisation and people's perception and experience of corruption.	Albania, Kosovo and Serbia	Across the four impact assessment dimensions – legal impact, media coverage, public awareness and expert opinion – civil society contributed, to a limited extent.	(1) The evidence suggests that civil society in these countries is weak, fragmented and under financial pressure. In terms of individual projects, there have been a number of success stories, but most of the success stories are aimed at government transparency.	P/OBS Qual. reasoning
Perla, Juan. 2016. A Game Theoretic Analysis of the Inter-American Convention Against Corruption. Paper prepared for 2016 OECD Integrity Forum.	R – Assesses impact of the Inter-American Convention against Corruption on corruption.	IACAC signatories in Latin America. Uses data from various corruption indexes including CPI.	IACAC has had little effect on the demand side of corruption because the payoffs that motivate Latin American governments to ratify the convention are not aligned with the payoffs of the government officials tasked with upholding its obligations.	(1) Recommends exogenous and multilateral enforcement strategies, such as leveraging the FCPA's enforcement regime across the region.	P/QEX Quant. modelling
Quesada, M. G.; Jimenez-Sanchez, F.; Villoria, M. 2013. Building Local Integrity Systems in Southern Europe. The Case of Urban Local Corruption in Spain. In <i>International Review of Administrative Sciences</i> 79 (4), pp. 618–637.	R – Assesses effectiveness of ex-ante controls (i.e. formal laws) in preventing political corruption as measured by cases taken to court. E – Assesses effectiveness of ex-post controls (i.e. enforcement and monitoring) in preventing political	Examines two in-depth cases of political corruption in Lanzarote and Marbella using mix of primary and secondary data, 1997 to 2007.	Ex-ante rules were quite ineffective. Ex-post controls provide effective action against political corruption.	(1) The Spanish Local Integrity System came to depend almost exclusively on the deterrent effect of court action. Without deterrent and in a context of large potential financial gains associated with local urban planning, engaging in illegal and criminal activities at the local level were both highly profitable and low risk.	P/QEX Comp. case studies

	corruption as measured by cases taken to court.				
Keefer, Philip. 2007. Elections, Special Interests, and Financial Crisis. In <i>Int. Org.</i> 61 (03).	R – Assess how political institutions affect the tendency of politicians to cater for special interests as measured by fiscal transfers to insolvent banks. IN – Assesses how political competition affects the tendency of politicians to cater for special interests as measured by fiscal transfers to insolvent banks.	41 states undergoing financial crisis, 1980–1997	Rules and institutions do not matter so much. Actual electoral competitiveness is very important.	(1) Electoral competitiveness constrains political decision makers' tendencies to cater to special interests in the context of financial market regulation; political checks and balances do not.	P/QEX Quant. regression
Muzila, Lindy. 2012. On the Take: Criminalizing Illicit Enrichment to Fight Corruption (Stolen Asset Recovery (StAR) Series): The World Bank Group.	R – Assesses to what extent criminalising illicit enrichment contributes to less illicit enrichment by politicians.	Various country case studies.	Study suggests that new laws have limited effectiveness.	(1) Rule changes should be implemented as part of a broader anti-corruption strategy and where systems are in place to facilitate the identification of potential cases and generate the information needed to support investigations.	S/OR Qual. reasoning
Sadanandan, Anoop. 2012. Patronage and Decentralization. The Politics of Poverty in India. In <i>Comp. Politics</i> 44 (2), pp. 211–228.	R – Assesses decentralisation as a tool to fight political patronage.	Indian states and villages. Uses the distribution of below poverty line (BPL) cards.	Decentralisation has not prevented but contributed to a more extensive distribution of patronage in decentralised states.	(1) Incentives at the state and local levels shape the distribution of patronage, not just macro political institutions.	P/QEX Qual. regression

Lindgreen, Adam. 2004. Corruption and Unethical Behavior. Report on a Set of Danish Guidelines. In <i>Journal of Business Ethics</i> 51 (1), pp. 31–39.	R – Assesses how anti-corruption guidelines reduce corruption related to the involvement of companies in the political process.	Denmark	Anti-corruption guidelines have made an impact.	(1) An anti-corruption code for companies in relation to the political process should cover: the company vis-a-vis political parties; gifts and entertainment expenses; political campaign contributions; and policy against small-scale corruption.	S/OR Qual. reasoning
Mutebi, Alex M. 2008. Explaining the Failure of Thailand's Anti-corruption Regime. In <i>Development & Change</i> 39 (1), pp. 147–171.	R – Effectiveness of “good governance” institutional arrangements on political corruption scandals.	Thailand, 2001 to 2006. In-depth case study: mix of primary and secondary data.	Ineffective: corruption can thrive despite the existence of comprehensive anti-corruption rules.	(2) Without political contestability (due, in this case, to a dominant party's near-stranglehold of key political institutions), the country may experience dramatic increases in the levels of state capture.	P/OBS Qual. reasoning
Testa, Cecilia. 2010. Bicameralism and Corruption. In <i>European Economic Review</i> 54 (2), pp. 181–198.	R – Assesses the impact of bicameralism on the level of corruption of elected officials.	Panel of 35 democracies from 1996 to 2004. Uses data from CPI and WBI Control of Corruption.	Bicameralism improves the accountability of legislators.	(2) Bicameralism is only effective when the same party controls the two chambers and party polarisation is high, while it is not effective if the two chambers are controlled by different parties.	P/QEX Quant. regression
Mungiu-Pippidi, Alina. 2013. The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Controlling Corruption in the European Union. Advanced Policy Paper for Discussion in the European Parliament. Berlin.	E – Assesses how specialist anti-corruption agencies affect control of corruption. R – Assesses how specialist anti-corruption institutions affect control of corruption. SM – Assesses how civil society mobilisation affects control of corruption.	EU member states. Corruption data from WBI Control of Corruption Indicator.	Countries with special anti-corruption agencies or specialist institutions do not perform significantly better. Civil society mobilisation is strongly associated with more control of corruption.	(1) The development of civil society should be made a priority in poorly performing EU countries.	P/QEX Quant. regression
Ferraz, Claudio; Finan, Frederico. 2008. Exposing Corrupt Politicians. The Effects of Brazil's Publicly Released Audits on Electoral Outcomes. In <i>Quarterly Journal of</i>	E – Assesses the effects of disclosing audit expenditures of federally transferred funds on electoral outcomes.	Brazilian municipalities – 2003 onwards	The release of the audit outcomes had a significant impact on incumbents' electoral performance, as more corrupt politicians did worse.	(1) Findings highlight the value of having a more informed electorate and the role played by local media in enhancing political selection. (2) Effect more pronounced in municipalities where local radio was present to divulge the information.	P/QEX Quant. regression

<i>Economics 123 (2), pp. 703–745.</i>					
Finan, Frederico; Ferraz, Claudio; Avis, Eric. 2016. Do Government Audits Reduce Corruption? Estimating the Impacts of Exposing Corrupt Politicians. PUC Rio (Working Paper, 652).	E – Assesses the effects of disclosing audit expenditures of federally transferred funds on corruption levels and legal actions taken against corrupt politicians.	Brazilian municipalities – 2003 onwards	Corruption levels are at least 8 per cent lower among treated municipalities compared to the control municipalities. Auditing can also increase the likelihood of legal action being taken against corrupt politicians by 20 per cent.	(1) Channelling resources to anti-corruption agencies who can implement well-executed random audits could represent a significant step forward in curbing political corruption.	P/EXP Quant. regression
Inokoba, PK. 2011. Economic and Financial Crime Commission (EFCC) and Political Corruption: Implication for the Consolidation of Democracy in Nigeria. In <i>Anthropologist</i> 13 (4), pp. 283–291.	E – Assesses effectiveness of anti-corruption commissions, namely the Economic and Financial Crime Commission, in reducing political corruption scandals.	Nigeria during the administration of Olusegun Obasanjo (1999 to 2007).	Ineffective: arrest and prosecution are patchy, selective and discriminatory.	(1) Enforcement commissions are weakened when they become politicised and only selectively enforce the law.	P/OBS Qual. reasoning
Santiso, Carlos. 2008. Eyes wide shut? Reforming and Defusing Checks and Balances in Argentina. In <i>Public Admin. Dev.</i> 28 (1), pp. 67–84. Volume: 28 Issue: 1 Pages: 67–84.	E – Assesses how autonomous audit agencies (AAAs) tasked with scrutinising government finances affects institutional effectiveness and political corruption.	Argentina – 1998 to 2005. In depth case study: mix of primary and secondary data.	AAAs mostly have only a limited impact.	(1) Strengthening external auditing in Argentina would require dampening political interference and informal practices caused by adverse political incentives. This article indicates the limits of radical reform strategies based on the import of exogenous institutional models.	P/OBS Qual. reasoning
Larmour, Peter; Barcham, Manuhuia. 2006. National Integrity Systems in Small Pacific Island States. In <i>Public Admin. Dev.</i> 26 (2), pp. 173–184.	E – Assess the effectiveness of national integrity systems (NIS) in containing political corruption.	12 small island states in the South Pacific. In-depth case studies: mix of primary and secondary data.	NIS systems are of limited effectiveness.	(1) In general, study found failures of the different pillars to police themselves, let alone act as checks on each other.	P/OBS Qualitative reasoning
Damania, Richard; Fredriksson, Per G.; Mani, Muthukumara. 2004. The Persistence of Corruption and Regulatory Compliance Failures. Theory and	E – Assesses the role of enforcement mechanisms in reducing political corruption.	Cross-country comparison. Uses data from CPI and WBI Control of Corruption.	The absence of proper enforcement mechanisms is a factor in the persistence of corruption.	(2) Weak enforcement is especially problematic in politically unstable regimes.	P/QEX Quant. regression

Evidence. In <i>Public Choice</i> 121 (3-4), pp. 363–390.					
Reuter, Peter (Ed.) 2012. Draining Development? Controlling Flows of Illicit Funds from Developing Countries. Washington, DC: World Bank.	E – Assesses enforcements efforts made by various actors to recover illicitly acquired funds by politicians.	Five corruption case studies relating to politically exposed persons (PEPs) from Indonesia, Kenya, Nigeria (two cases), and Zambia.	Enforcement matters: study emphasises the importance of utilising civil asset recovery powers in conjunction with the compulsion powers of criminal law enforcement agencies.	(1) Aside from domestic enforcement mechanisms, international mutual assistance is vital to successful recoveries in this area, but is by no means a given in cases that are, by their nature, politically high profile.	P/OBS Qual. reasoning
Ulloa, Felix: 'Political Finance: Control Organs and Sanction Regimes'. In Griner, Streven; Zovatto, Daniel (eds.): From Norms to Best Practices. The Challenge of Political Finance in Latin America. OAS/ IDEA.	E – Assesses how enforcements and sanctions affect corruption in political finance.	18 Latin American countries. In-depth case studies: mix of primary and secondary data.	Enforcement is very important for ensuring compliance with political finance frameworks.	(1) Without an effective system of control, there is little incentive to comply with the law.	P/OBS Qual. reasoning

Anecharico, Frank. 2010. Protecting Integrity at the Local Level: The Role of Anti-Corruption and Public Management Networks. In <i>Crime, Law & Social Change</i> . 53 (1), pp. 79–95.	E – Assesses overall effectiveness of enforcement agencies in anti-corruption.	Evidence from different countries	Effectiveness of enforcement agencies is generally mixed, but enforcement becomes more effective when it is organisationally embedded at the local level.	(1) Corruption control is most effective when the central public integrity agency is part of both a local anti-corruption network and a local public management network.	S/OR Qual. reasoning
Fombad, Charles Manga. 2002. Curbing Corruption in Africa. Some Lessons from Botswana's Experience. In <i>International Social Science Journal</i> .	E – Assesses effectiveness of the Directorate of Corruption and Economic Crime (DCEC) in curbing corruption.	Botswana, 1994 to 2000	Limited effect on corruption.	(1) The Botswana DCEC can only operate effectively to check corruption provided it is allowed the necessary financial, political and functional independence.	P/OBS Qual. reasoning
Heilbrunn, John R. 2004. Anti-Corruption Commissions. Panacea or Real Medicine. World Bank. Washington, DC.	E – Assesses effectiveness of anti-corruption commissions on corruption.	Hong Kong, US, Singapore and New South Wales	Anti-corruption commissions fail to reduce corruption in state institutions in all but a few special circumstances.	(1) Those governments that have established successful anti-corruption commissions have done so in response to demands for reform from a broad base of domestic constituents.	P/OBS Qual. reasoning
van der Vleuten, Anna; Verloo, Mieke. 2012. Ranking and Benchmarking. the Political Logic of New Regulatory Instruments in the Fields of Gender Equality and Anti-Corruption. In <i>policy polit</i> 40 (1), pp. 71–86.	O – Assesses extent to which organisational ranking and benchmarking affect accountability. Study examines Transparency International's CPI effect on states' performance and accountability.	Performance of states around the world.	Study argues that underlying the construction of ranking is power-based logic. Study doubts the ranking element of the CPI in terms of improving performance and accountability.	(1) Despite their aim to improve performance through the potential consequences of ranking for states' reputations, ranking may hinder the improvement of the quality of performance and impede the attainment of policy goals or the increase of the transparency and legitimacy of the political process.	S/OR Qual. synthesis

Voliotis, Seraphim. 2011. Abuse of Ministerial Authority, Systemic Perjury, and Obstruction of Justice. Corruption in the Shadows of Organizational Practice. In <i>J Bus Ethics</i> 102 (4), pp. 537–562.	O – Assesses how organisational structures configure opportunity, motivation, and justification for different forms of political corruption.	Case studies in EU member states: a) minister (b) financial misreporting within an agency (c) abuse of due process by civil servants.	Organisational structure matters for likelihood of political corruption but can work in different ways.	(1) Organisations should offer ethical training to have their members comply with the organisation's normative standards.	P/OBS Qual. reasoning
Ferraz, Claudio; Finan, Frederico. 2008. Motivating Politicians. The Impacts of Monetary Incentives on Quality and Performance. IZA (IZA DP, 3411).	O – Assesses how wages affects politicians' performance.	Brazilian municipalities	Main findings show that increases in salaries not only attract more candidates, but more educated ones that stay in office longer.	(3) Higher salaries also increase legislative productivity as measured by the number of bills submitted and approved, and the provision of public goods.	P/QEX Quant. regression
Ferreira Rubio, Delia. 2004. Political Finance: Accountability and Disclosure. In Griner, Streven; Zovatto, Daniel (eds.): <i>From Norms to Best Practices. The Challenge of Political Finance in Latin America.</i> OAS/ IDEA.	T – Assesses how disclosure can affect the financial transactions of parties and candidates.	18 Latin American countries. In-depth case studies: mix of primary and secondary data.	Disclosure can be a highly effective instrument for controlling the financial transactions of parties and candidates.	(1) Rules on disclosure can have a positive general effect on the credibility of political institutions.	P/OBS Qual. reasoning

Malesky, Edmund; Schuler, Paul; Tran, A. N.H. 2012. The Adverse Effects of Sunshine. A Field Experiment on Legislative Transparency in an Authoritarian Assembly. In <i>Am Polit Sci Rev</i> 106 (04), pp. 762–786.	T – Assesses how increasing voter information about delegates affects delegate performance in authoritarian parliaments. Study developed individual websites for 144 randomly selected delegates, where it posted legislative debates, query transcripts and scorecards, updating them in real time throughout the sixth legislative session.	Test group was 144 delegates. Total 463 delegates in the National Assembly of the single-party state of Vietnam.	No evidence found for a direct effect of the transparency treatment on delegate performance; however, delegates subjected to high treatment intensity curtailed activity in the query sessions, avoiding participating in legislative activities that could embarrass regime leaders. No evidence of voter responsiveness to the transparency treatment.	(1) Transparency initiatives play a fundamentally different role in an authoritarian context. The logic that transparency initiatives can travel to authoritarian settings assumes that legislators in authoritarian systems serve the same role as those in electoral democracies and have analogous incentives.	P/EXP Quant. regression
Djankov, Simeon; La Porta, Rafael; Lopez-de-Silanes, Florencio; Shleifer, Andrei. 2010. Disclosure by Politicians. In <i>American Economic Journal: Applied Economics</i> 2 (2), pp. 179–209.	T – Assesses how rules and practices of financial and conflict disclosure by members of parliament affects corruption as measured by CPI.	175 countries	Public disclosure, but not internal disclosure to parliament, is positively related (correlated only) to government quality, including lower corruption.	(2) Countries that are richer, more democratic and have a free press have more disclosure. (3) Although two-thirds of the countries have some disclosure laws, less than one-third make disclosures available to the public, and less than one-sixth of potentially useful information is publicly available in practice, on average.	P/QEX Quant. regression

Azfar, Omar; Nelson, William Robert. 2007. Transparency, Wages, and the Separation of Powers. An Experimental Analysis of Corruption. In <i>Public Choice</i> 130 (3-4), pp. 471–493.	T – Assesses experimentally how the ease of hiding corrupt gains, officials' wages and the method of choosing the law enforcement officer affects corrupt practice.	Game-theoretic model (using undergraduate students as the players).	Increasing the difficulty of hiding corrupt gains reduces corruption.	(3) Directly elected law enforcement officers work more vigilantly to expose corruption than those who are appointed. Increasing government wages may also reduce corruption.	P/EXP Quant. modelling
Dokeniya, Anupama. 2013. Implementing the Right to Information. World Bank. Washington, DC.	T – Assesses how right to information (RTI) policies affects improving accountability.	Albania, India, Mexico, Moldova, Peru, Romania, Uganda and the United Kingdom.	RTI policies have had a mixed impact in the cases studied.	(2) The effectiveness of RTI has been more challenging in countries weaker on the rule of law, government effectiveness, accountability, civil liberties and political rights. Countries that ranked better on these governance dimensions have more effective RTI policies.	P/OBS Qual. reasoning
Murillo, M. J. 2015. Evaluating the Role of Online Data Availability. the Case of Economic and Institutional Transparency in Sixteen Latin American Nations. In <i>International Political Science Review</i> 36 (1), pp. 42–59.	T – Assesses effect of information technology to provide online data availability on corruption and inefficiency in the policy process.	16 Latin American countries	Transparency initiatives via ICTs do not always live up to expectations.	(1) The importance of policy that explicitly mandates that data corresponding to specific areas where corruption and inefficiency take place be shared over the internet.	P/QEX Quant. regression

Benito, Bernardino; Bastida, Francisco; Ríos, Ana-María; Vicente, Cristina. 2014. The Causes of Legal Rents Extraction. Evidence from Spanish municipalities. In <i>Public Choice</i> 161 (3-4), pp. 367–383.	T – Assesses how increased voter information about the political process could reduce legal rent extraction (i.e. wage setting by politicians). IN – Assesses how increased political competition could reduce legal rent extraction (i.e. wage setting by politicians).	Sample of the largest Spanish municipalities from 2008 to 2010.	Increasing voter information and political competition would be effective in curbing legal rent extraction.	(3) Higher wages do not ensure better financial management. These findings confirm that when politicians can set their own salaries, higher wages do not mean better management, but they are simply political rents.	P/QEX Quant. regression
Claessens, Stijn; Feijen, Erik; Laeven, Luc. 2008. Political Connections and Preferential Access to Finance. the Role of Campaign Contributions. In <i>Journal of Financial Economics</i> 88 (3), pp. 554–580.	IN – Assesses how regulation in an indirect area, finance, can restrict political favouritism as measured by bank financing.	Study of Brazilian firms that provided contributions to (elected) federal deputies in 1998 and 2002 elections.	Politically connected firms substantially increased their bank financing, indicating that access to bank finance is an important channel through which political connections operate with politicians.	(1) The financial sector is an important channel through which contributing firms benefit from political connections.	P/EXP Quant. regression
Wilson, John K.; Damania, Richard. 2005. Corruption, Political Competition and Environmental Policy. In <i>Journal of Environmental Economics and Management</i> 49 (3), pp. 516–535.	IN – Assesses role of political competition in reducing grand and petty corruption.	Theoretical model	Study suggests that higher levels of political competition will lead to less political corruption, but may not eliminate all forms of petty corruption.	(1) The model suggests political competition to be important to achieving a reduction in corruption and associated environmental damage.	P/QEX Quantitative modelling
Lash, Nicholas A.; Batavia, Bala. 2013. Government Economic Intervention and Corruption. In <i>The Journal of Developing Areas</i> 47 (2), pp. 1–15.	IN – Assesses potential of robust property rights on corruption.	157 countries grouped either by per-capita income or by region, for the period 2000 to 2006.	The evidence shows that property rights were consistently the most important source of corruption,	(1) Anti-corruption efforts should start with reforming the legal system to institute property rights. (3) Government spending and taxation were negatively associated with corruption.	P/QEX Qual. regression

Bashina, Alexandra. 2013. Factors Related to Informal Payments in Public Procurement in Russia. In <i>IJEPEE</i> 6 (4), pp. 403–30.	IN – Assesses how political stability affects informal payments to political office holders and state employees.	Russia: Data from the Institute for Industrial and Market Studies at the Higher School of Economics and the Business Environment and Enterprise Performance Survey.	Demonstrates the probability of bribery of political office holders increases if unpredictable government regulation and political instability heavily influence enterprise performance.	(1) Political instability is an important background condition for the effectiveness of rules.	P/QEX Quant. regression
Boerner, Kira; Hainz, Christa. 2009. The Political Economy of Corruption and the Role of Economic Opportunities 1. In <i>Economics of Transition</i> 17 (2), pp. 213–240.	IN – Assesses how liberalisation of economic sector affects entry fees for rent-seeking positions.	Theoretical model	Economic and financial liberalisation could contribute to the political success of anti-corruption policies.	(1) Reforms that allow entrepreneurship and increase the return to productive activities are desirable.	P/QEX Qual. modelling

APPENDIX 2: LITERATURE ON CORRUPTION IN THE ELECTORAL PROCESS

Study author, year, name and source	Description of Intervention SM – social mobilisation R – rule changing E – enforcement T – transparency O – organisational IN – indirect	Empirical location of data	Evaluation of impact	(1) Key broader policy lesson (if any) (2) Key contextual factor cited by study (if any) (3) Other relevant information (if any)	Type of study/ General quality/ Method
Vicente, Pedro C. 2014. Is Vote Buying Effective? Evidence from a Field Experiment in West Africa. In <i>Econ J</i> 124 (574).	SM – Assesses effects of a voter-education campaign against vote buying sponsored by the electoral commission on perceptions of vote buying.	Sao Tome – 2006 presidential elections.	The campaign decreased the reported perception that voting decisions were affected by the money offered by candidates, and increased the reported perception that the voting was conducted in good conscience.	(1) Voter education can work – campaign was effective in diminishing the impact of electoral malfeasance.	P/EXP Quant. regression
Fujiwara, Thomas; Wantchekon, Leonard. 2013. Can Informed Public Deliberation Overcome Clientelism? Experimental Evidence from Benin. In <i>American Economic Journal: Applied Economics</i> 5 (4), pp. 241–255.	SM – Assesses effects of holding town hall meetings based on programmatic, non-clientelist platforms with candidates on subsequent vote buying behaviour in elections.	Benin – 2006 presidential elections.	Town hall meetings reduce the prevalence of clientelism and does not affect turnout.	(1) Treatment also lowers the vote shares for the candidate with a political stronghold in the village. (2) Treatment is more effective in garnering votes in regions where a candidate does not have a political stronghold.	P/EXP Quant. regression
Aker, J.C., Collier, P; Vicente, P. C. 2012. Is information power? Using Cell Phones and Free Newspapers During an Election in Mozambique.	SM – Assesses three interventions providing electoral information to voters and calling for their participation: an information campaign using SMS, an SMS hotline for	Mozambique – 2009 national election	Only the distribution of the free newspaper led to more accountability based participation and to a decrease in electoral problems.	(1) In general, there was a positive effect of all treatments on voter turnout.	P/EXP Quant. regression

Universidade Nova (Working Paper).	electoral misconduct and the distribution of a free newspaper on vote buying and electoral integrity.				
Chong, Alberto; La O, Ana L. de; Karlan, Dean; Wantchekon, Leonard. 2015. Does Corruption Information Inspire the Fight or Quash the Hope? A Field Experiment in Mexico on Voter Turnout, Choice, and Party Identification. In <i>The Journal of Politics</i> 77 (1), pp. 55–71.	SM – Assesses whether information about incumbent corruption translates into electoral accountability as measured by higher political participation and increased support for challengers during elections.	Mexico – 2009 local election, 12 municipalities	Experimental evidence suggests a mixed effect: such information decreases incumbent party support in local elections in Mexico, but also decreases voter turnout and support for the challenger party and erodes partisan attachments.	(1) While information clearly is necessary to improve accountability, corruption information is not sufficient because voters may respond to it by withdrawing from the political process.	P/EXP Quant. regression
Collier, Paul; Vicente, Pedro C. 2014. Votes and Violence. Evidence from a Field Experiment in Nigeria. In <i>Econ J</i> 124 (574), F327-F355.	SM – Assesses effects of anti-violence campaigning, which appealed to collective action through electoral participation, and worked through town meetings, popular theatres and door-to-door distribution of materials, on electoral intimidation and violence.	Nigeria – national elections 2007	Treatment led to a rise in voter turnout and less intimidation by incumbents inferred.	(3) The effects of the campaign are accompanied by a reduction in the intensity of actual violence, as measured by journalists and increased empowerment to counteract violence.	P/EXP Quant. regression
Milyo, Jeffrey; Cordis, Adriana. 2013: Do State Campaign Finance Reforms Reduce Public Corruption? In Department of Economics, University of Missouri, Working Papers: 1301	R – Assesses the effects of campaign finance laws on actual corruption rates as measured by convictions and filings in public corruption.	United States – 1985 to 2010	No strong evidence that state campaign finance reforms reduces political corruption.	(1) The results call into question the legal rationale for campaign finance regulations.	P/QEX Quant. regression
Malbin, Michael J. 2008. Rethinking the Campaign Finance Agenda. In <i>The Forum</i> 6 (1).	R – Assesses the two major sections of the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA) or “McCain-Feingold” on campaign corruption.	United States. In-depth case study: mix of primary and secondary data.	The review of electioneering provisions in law demonstrates the limits of reform.		P/OBS Qual. reasoning

Gans-Morse, Jordan; Mazzuca, Sebastián; Nichter, Simeon. 2014. Varieties of Clientelism. Machine Politics during Elections. In <i>American Journal of Political Science</i> 58 (2), pp. 415–432.	R – Assesses the impact of electoral rules, namely compulsory vote buying and ballot secrecy, on electoral clientelism.	Theoretical	New rules have a mixed effect: the study shows the introduction of compulsory voting may increase vote buying while reduce all other types of clientelism, and enhanced ballot secrecy may increase turnout and abstention buying but decrease vote buying.	(1) Study demonstrates the diverse and sometimes contradictory effects of electoral rules.	P/QEX Theo. model
Serra, Gilles. 2016. Vote Buying with Illegal Resources. Manifestation of a Weak Rule of Law in Mexico. In <i>Journal of Politics in Latin America</i> 8 (1), pp. 129–150.	R – Assesses a series of electoral reforms aimed to provide a level playing field in elections on campaign corruption and vote buying.	Mexico – 2012 presidential election; 2015 outcomes of mid-term elections	Electoral rules, while initially successful, have failed to address political corruption in the electoral arena.	(1) No legal reform will be effective while these laws are only being weakly enforced. A more comprehensive package of measures strengthening the rule of law would help Mexico transition from electoral democracy to liberal democracy.	P/OBS Qual. reasoning
Mungiu-Pippidi, Alina. 2013. The Good, the Bad and the Ugly: Controlling Corruption in the European Union. Advanced Policy Paper for Discussion in the European Parliament. Berlin.	R – Assesses how rules that provide restrictions on party funding may affect control of corruption.	EU member states	More restrictions on party funding is correlated with more corruption.	(1) Rules restricting funding may not work.	P/QEX Quant. regression
Norris, Pippa. 2016. Electoral Integrity and Electoral Systems. Harvard (Working Paper, 5(3)). Oxford Handbook of Electoral Systems, edited by Erik S. Herron, Robert J. Pekkanen, and Matthew S. Shugart. New York: Oxford University Press.	R – Assesses how formal electoral systems matter for standards of electoral integrity.	Global sample of states.	Evidence to suggest proportional representation (PR) electoral systems can strengthen electoral integrity more effectively than majoritarian rules.	(1) The design of electoral institutions can matter for electoral integrity.	P/QEX Quant. regression
Norris, Pippa. 2015. Why Elections Fail. University of Sydney. Sydney (Working Paper, 4(4)).	E – Assesses effects of election aid and international observers on electoral integrity.	Cross national data	No evidence of a significant link between these interventions and the contemporary quality of elections around the world.	(3) Study suggests more research is needed on these international enforcement mechanisms.	P/QEX Quant. regression

Hyde, Susan D. 2007. The Observer Effect in International Politics. Evidence from a Natural Experiment. In <i>World Pol.</i> 60 (01), pp. 37-63.	E – Assess the effects of international election observation on electoral fraud.	2003 presidential elections in Armenia.	Observers may not eliminate election fraud, they can reduce election-day fraud at the polling stations they visit.	(1) Study offers causal evidence that international actors can have direct, measurable effects on the level of election-day fraud and, by extension, on the democratisation process.	P/EXP Quant. regression
Ichino, Nahomi; Schündeln, Matthias. 2012. Deterring or Displacing Electoral Irregularities? Spillover Effects of Observers in a Randomized Field Experiment in Ghana. In <i>The Journal of Politics</i> 74 (1), pp. 292-307.	E – Assesses the effect of domestic observers on irregularities in voter registration.	Elections in Ghana in 2008.	Effect is limited: electoral fraud is reduced in those constituencies under observation, but fraud is then displaced to unobserved constituencies.	(1) The finding of displacement of fraud has implications for the measurement of electoral irregularities or analysis of data collected by the observer.	P/EXP Quant. regression
Smith, Alan D.; Clark, John S. 2005. Revolutionising the Voting Process Through Online Strategies. In <i>Online Information Review</i> 29 (5), Pp. 513-530.	O – Assesses potential of electronically enhanced voting methods via the internet (I-voting) for addressing electoral fraud.	Theoretical	Mixed potential: I-voting could limit electoral manipulation but may be years, if ever, before a truly secure, relatively risk-free internet service, such as I-voting, is developed.	(1) The numerous current voting systems suffer from the same problems associated with online informational exchanges.	S/OR Qual. reasoning

Banerjee, A.V., Kumar, S., Pande, R; Su, F. 2011. Do Informed Voters Make Better Choices? Experimental Evidence from Urban India. Harvard University (Working Paper).	T – Assesses whether providing slum dwellers with newspapers containing report cards with information on candidate qualifications and legislator performance obtained under India's disclosure laws affects electoral integrity and vote buying.	2008 state elections in Delhi.	Treatment led to striking changes along three dimensions. Access to report cards increased voter turnout, reduced the incidence of cash-based vote buying and caused electoral gains for better performing incumbents.	(2) The turnout effects are more pronounced in more competitive jurisdictions and when the incumbent is a worse performer.	P/EXP Quant. regression
Callen, Michael; Long, James D. 2015. Institutional Corruption and Election Fraud. Evidence from a Field Experiment in Afghanistan †. In <i>American Economic Review</i> 105 (1), pp. 354-381.	T – Assesses whether announcing a “photo quick count” measure to election officials, a transparency measure in which provisional vote tally sheets at individual polling centres are photography before being included in aggregate counts, affects electoral fraud.	2010 parliamentary election Afghanistan.	The announcement of a new monitoring technology reduced theft of election materials by about 60 per cent and vote counts for connected candidates by about 25 per cent.	(1) Results provide promise for “photo quick count” as a means of both precisely measuring and of reducing aggregation fraud. The technology is also highly compatible with implementation via information communications technology.	P/EXP Quant. regression
Klimek, Peter; Yegorov, Yuri; Hanel, Rudolf; Thurner, Stefan. 2012. Statistical Detection of Systematic Election Irregularities. In <i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America</i> 109 (41), pp.16469-16473.	T – Assesses potential of a parametric statistical model quantifying the extent to which fraudulent mechanisms are present in elections.	Russian elections 2003 to 12	The large number of samples in elections implies statistical consequences for the polling results, which can be used to identify election irregularities.	(1) The technique produces robust outcomes with respect to the resolution of the data and therefore and allows for cross-country comparisons.	P/QEX Quant. regression
Enikolopov, Ruben; Korovkin, Vasily; Petrova, Maria; Sonin, Konstantin; Zakharov, Alexei. 2013. Field Experiment	T – Assesses the potential of a statistical model to estimate size of electoral fraud in non-observed constituencies.	Russian parliamentary elections 2011.	Test produces results which suggest the extent of the fraud was sufficient to have	(1) More transparency and the presence of observers is an important factor in ensuring the integrity of the procedure.	P/EXP Quant. regression

Estimate of Electoral Fraud in Russian Parliamentary Elections. In <i>Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America</i> 110 (2), pp. 448–452.			had a substantial impact on the outcome of the elections.		
Fukumoto, Kentaro; Horiuchi, Yusaku. 2011. Making Outsiders' Votes Count. Detecting Electoral Fraud through a Natural Experiment. In <i>Am Polit Sci Rev</i> 105 (03), pp. 586–603.	T – Assesses statistical model to detect electoral fraud.	Japanese municipal elections 2003	Model demonstrates existence of fraud that was decisive enough to change the electoral results when the election is competitive.	(1) Approach can be applied to investigate not only this type of electoral fraud but also electoral connections in other countries.	P/EXP Quant. regression
Hood, M. V.; Gillespie, William. 2012. They Just Do Not Vote Like They Used To. A Methodology to Empirically Assess Election Fraud. In <i>Social Science Quarterly</i> 93 (1), pp. 76–94.	T – Assess potential of knowledge discovery in databases (KDD), a method using algorithms to identify valid, novel, useful and understandable patterns from large and complex datasets – in this case, election fraud.	2006 general election in Georgia	No evidence that election fraud was committed under the auspices of deceased registrants.	(1) Provides social science researchers with the ability to actively search for fraudulent or questionable registrants and/or voters – which in turn could be used as an anti-corruption intervention.	P/QEX Quant. regression
Leemann, Lucas; Bochsler, Daniel. 2014. A systematic approach to study electoral fraud. In <i>Electoral Studies</i> 35, pp. 33–47.	T – Assesses a statistical approach to detect fraud and electoral regularities.	Swiss referendum 2011	Application of test to empirical case suggests robust potential to detect fraud.	Demonstrates potential of statistical tests to detect fraud in the absence of other monitoring mechanisms.	P/QEX Quant. regression

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