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Civil Society Against Corruption in Ukraine: Pathways to Impact

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Abstract
The 2013–2014 Revolution in Ukraine has spurred a boom in civic anti-corruption initiatives across Ukraine. There is as yet little consolidated understanding of how effective these initiatives are and what explains variation in effectiveness. Insights from academic and practitioner literature suggest that factors associated with success in anti-corruption activism fall under three broad categories: environmental factors, advocacy strategies of civil society organizations, and their organizational characteristics. Drawing on a comprehensive study of anti-corruption activism in the regions of Ukraine, this article asks how these insights relate to anti-corruption activism in the regions of Ukraine. We find that anti-corruption initiatives generally face two key dilemmas: insufficient capacity in terms and financial and human resources, and the absence of a credible base of support. Anti-Corruption organizations that are most effective tend to be those that convincingly solve either one of these two dilemmas. In addition, we find that political will among local authorities is an important conducive factor to the effectiveness of anti-corruption activism. The article also discusses the implications of our findings for practitioners of international assistance.

Key Words: corruption; Ukraine; civil society; international assistance; regional anti-corruption civil society organizations

Introduction

There are perhaps few places where the debilitating impact of corruption is felt as acutely as in Ukraine. While its GDP was similar to that of Poland when it became an independent state in 1991, it is now around five times smaller. Since the turn of the century, the country has experienced two instances of regime change driven at least in part by the perception that the political class is made up of rent-seeking elites. Ukrainians attribute the country's economic and political woes to corruption, which in surveys is consistently identified as one of the biggest issues holding back development.[1]

Since the 2013–2014 Euromaidan Revolution successive governments have launched a range of anti-corruption reforms with a varying degree of success. Civil society organizations working on anti-corruption have often played a central role in initiating and promoting these reforms. Most of these civil society organizations are a select number of Kyiv-based NGOs with strong professional capacity and extensive ties to the country's international partners. At the same time, hundreds of civic initiatives aimed at fighting corruption have emerged across the country in recent years. Outside Kyiv, civic anti-corruption activism is highly diverse and ranges from small NGOs that rely on external funding to improvised grassroots initiatives; from organizations embracing European integration to nationalist militias; and from organizations involved in 'traditional' NGO activities such as awareness-raising and advocacy to organizations employing coercive methods.

There is little consolidated understanding of how effective these initiatives are and what explains their variation in effectiveness. In existing academic and practitioner literature, a number of factors associated with success in anti-corruption activism are identified related to variation in environmental factors such as the political, institutional, and legislative context in which anti-corruption activists operate; the advocacy strategies of activists including choices of timing, focus, and adoption of a cooperative or confrontational stance; and organizational characteristics such as financial and personnel capacity and the existence of a grassroots base. Our findings highlight in particular the significance of organizational characteristics in explaining the effectiveness of anti-corruption activism in Ukraine. Many organizations lack a credible support base and sufficient capacity to be effective, and organizations that have proven to be effective tend to be those that convincingly close either one of these two deficits. Besides organizational characteristics, we find that the environmental factor of political will among local authorities is clearly conducive to the effectiveness

1 "Opportunities and Challenges Facing Ukraine's Democratic Transition," National Democratic Institute, accessed December 22, 2019, https://www.ndi.org/publications/opportunities-and-challenges-facing-ukraine-s-democratic-transition; "Otsinka Problematiki Koruptsii v Hromadskii Dumtsi," Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, accessed December 22, 2019, https://dif.org.ua/article/otsinka-problematiki-koruptsii-v-gromads.

of anti-corruption activism as it creates more opportunities for impact and enables different forms of cooperation with the authorities.

The article draws from a comprehensive study of anti-corruption activism outside the capital city. For the purposes of the study, we have conducted semi-structured interviews with representatives of anti-corruption civic initiatives in cities or towns in all regions of Ukraine that are under the control of the government of Kyiv. In addition, we have analyzed social media reports from these initiatives and media reports about these initiatives. The article contributes to insights into the effectiveness of anti-corruption activism, especially in relation to Ukraine. Our findings also have implications for practitioners of international assistance. The fight against corruption attracts great interest among Ukraine's international partners, who view its success as vital to the country's stability, democratization, and economic development in the years ahead. Across Ukraine, practitioners of assistance support civil society-led anti-corruption initiatives, but they lack evidence-based knowledge about the effectiveness of such initiatives.

The first section of the article discusses the significance of civil society for the fight against corruption and lists the main types of activities and instruments that anti-corruption activists employ. While there is little established knowledge on determinants of effectiveness in anti-corruption activism, existing academic and practitioner literature nonetheless identifies a range of variables that are associated with effectiveness. The second section contains an overview of these variables, grouped in three broad categories: environmental factors, advocacy strategies, and organizational characteristics. The third section introduces our dataset of anti-corruption organizations in the regions of Ukraine with a focus on the types of activities that these organizations are involved in and on the types of impact that they generate. In the fourth and main section of the articlewe relate the factors associated in academic and practitioner literature with success in anti-corruption activism to current anti-corruption activism in the regions of Ukraine.

Civil Society and Anti-Corruption

Civil society organizations are widely recognized as actors which can play a vital role in fighting corruption. Article 13 of the United Nations Convention against Corruption, for instance, stipulates that "[e]ach State Party shall take appropriate measures, within its means and in accordance with fundamental principles of its domestic law, to promote the active participation of individuals and groups outside the public sector, such as civil society, non-governmental organizations and community-based organizations, in the prevention of and the fight against corruption and to raise public awareness regarding the existence, causes and gravity of and the threat posed by corruption."[2]

2 Article 13, United Nations Convention against Corruption, General Assembly Resolution 58/4 of October 31, 2003, https://www.unodc.org/documents/brussels/UN_Convention_Against_Corruption.pdf.

Why are civil society organizations important in anti-corruption efforts? In early research on the subject, corruption was usually conceptualized as a principal-agent problem.[3] According to the principal-agent model, principals such as politicians and high-level bureaucrats are expected to monitor and if necessary, sanction the actions of agents to whom they delegate tasks. In reality this often proves unrealistic because the principals have incomplete information about the agents and the agents can benefit from this information asymmetry to engage in corrupt behavior. The natural solution to corruption in this conceptualization is to strengthen mechanisms of horizontal accountability by giving principals the tools with which corruption in the public sector can be prevented.[4]

There has been a growing realization, however, that introducing or strengthening mechanisms of horizontal accountability such as specialized anti-corruption agencies, legislative investigative commissions, and administrative courts, is often ineffective in environments where corruption is endemic. Inspired by pessimism about the systemic nature of corruption in many polities, the idea that the agents of corruption must be directly held accountable by citizens has become more influential. This type of accountability by citizens outside elections is often referred to as 'social accountability,' which has been defined as 'an approach toward building accountability that relies on civic engagement, i. e., in which it is ordinary citizens and/or civil society organizations that participate directly or indirectly in exacting accountability.'[5] The concept of social accountability can be seen as coming from two ideological streams. The first of these is New Public Management, which emphasizes downwards accountability to 'service users as individual consumers who could choose to use these mechanisms or, alternatively, exit in favor of other providers.'[6] The other stream is the idea of deepening democracy, which calls for the direct involvement of citizens in democratic processes, often at low administrative levels.[7]

Civil society organizations arguably have benefits vis-à-vis other types of organizations, which makes them particularly effective at enforcing social

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3 Robert Klitgaard, *Controlling Corruption.* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, CA: University of California Press, 1988); Susan Rose-Ackerman, *Corruption and Government: Causes, Consequences, and Refo*rm. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

4 Guillemo O'Donnell, "Horizontal accountability in new democracies," in *The Self-Restraining State: Power and Accountability in New Democracies*, eds. Andreas Schedler, Larry Diamond, and Marc F. Plattner. (Boulder: Lynne Reinner, 1999), 29–51.

5 Camen Malena, Reiner Forster, and Jammejay Singh, *Social Accountability: An Introduction to the Concept and Emerging Practice*. (The World Bank Social Development Paper no. 76, 2004).

6 A. Joshi, 2011. "Review of Impact and Effectiveness of Transparency and Accountability Initiatives: Annex 1 Service Delivery," Transparency International, accessed October, 2010. http://www. transparency-initiative.org/workstream/impact-learning.

7 Jonathan Fox,"The Uncertain Relationship between Transparency and Accountability," *Development in Practice* 17, no. 4–5 (2007): 663–71.

accountability.[8] Some may possess advanced skills in, for example, monitoring of government performance. Other civil society organizations may have extensive experience with mobilizing people for public protest. Unlike international organizations, domestic civil society organizations may have the type of in-depth knowledge of local corruption necessary for devising effective anti-corruption strategies. Domestic civil society organizations, especially those with deep roots in society, may also benefit from forms of social capital and trust that foreign agencies and international actors lack. Because of these benefits and the positive connotations of social accountability civil society organizations have been widely championed by development practitioners.

The positive image of civil society organizations engaged in anti-corruption, however, has also been challenged on several fronts. The role of civil society organizations in holding government accountable is arguably at odds with democratic principles. Representatives of civil society organizations are not elected by the public and formally do not represent a defined constituency. Furthermore, if civil society organizations are successful in their efforts, citizens may become less interested in defending their rights through the regular democratic process.[9] Another potential shortcoming of anti-corruption organizations is that, while they seek to enforce accountability from state authorities, they fall short in terms of 'moral accountability,' which refers to accountability towards the beneficiaries of the anti-corruption activism, and 'procedural accountability,' which refers to internal management practices and the responsibility of civil society organizations in handling resources.[10] Civil society organizations may also not be particularly effective in fighting corruption. In some countries, the fight against corruption is led by long-standing community-based organizations which draw on a large base of supporters. In other countries, such as in parts of the post-communist world, by contrast, society tends to be fragmented, with few people being actively involved in civil society organizations.[11] Opponents, including sometimes government actors, often seek to discredit the activity of civil society organizations in such countries on account of their dependence on external funding and the absence

8 Richard Holloway,"NGO Corruption Fighters' Resource Book—How NGOs Can Use Monitoring and Advocacy to Fight Corruption,"accessed December 22, 2019, https://www.ndi.org/files/NGO-Corruption-Fighters-Resource-Book-ENG.pdf.

9 E. A. Brett, "Participation and Accountability in Development Management,"*Journal of Development Studies* 40, no. 2 (2003): 1–29; S. Hickey and G. Mohan. "The Politics of Establishing Pro-Poor Accountability: What can Poverty Reduction Strategies Achieve?"*Review of International Political Economy* 15, no. 2 (2008): 234–58.

10 Michael Edwards, David Hulme, "Too Close for Comfort? The Impact of Official Aid on Nongovernmental Organizations." *World Development* 24, no. 6 (1996): 961–73; Mustaq H. Khan, "The Role of Civil Society and Patron-Client Networks in the Analysis of Corruption," in *Corruption and Integrity Improvement Initiatives in Developing Countries*, ed. OECD/UNDP. (New York: UNDP, Management Development and Governance Division, 1998).

11 M. Bernhard and E. Karakoç, "Civil Society and Legacies of Dictatorship,"*World Politics* 59, no. 4 (2007): 539–67; Marc Morjé Howard, "The Weakness of Postcommunist Civil Society," *Journal of Democracy* 13, no. 1 (2002): 157–69.

of a strong base of support. Even when they manage to organize, anti-corruption civil society organizations typically operate outside the sphere of formal political authority: they have 'a voice, not a vote.'[12] The effectiveness of civil society organizations moreover is constrained by the fact that they lack coercive and sanctioning power.[13]

Instruments and activities

Civil society organizations engaged in fighting corruption can choose from a wide array of different types of activities.[14] A review of empirical studies suggests that the activities of anti-corruption civil society organizations fall under six categories: monitoring and reporting, awareness-raising, advocacy, direct action, capacity-building, and co-governance.[15]

Many civil society organizations monitor the operations of individuals or institutions that are known to be corrupt or that are at risk of becoming corrupted.[16] Common areas of monitoring include public procurement, where activists may find conflicts of interest or discrepancies between the prices of procurement purchases and market prices; asset declarations of politicians and officials, where they may identify discrepancies between declared assets and actual assets; and public expenditure, where they may discover 'leakage' of public funds to private pockets. Civil society organizations also monitor the performance of service providers in terms of transparency and integrity using instruments such as report cards and social audits. New technologies have in recent decades expanded the possibilities for monitoring and reporting corruption, for instance through crowdsourcing.[17]

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12 MichaelEdwards, *NGO Rights and Responsibilities: A New Deal for Global Governance.* (London: The Foreign Policy Centre in Association with NCVO, 2000), 29.

13 Scott Mainwaring, "Introduction," in *Democratic Accountability in Latin America*, eds. S. Mainwaring, and C. Welna. (Oxford: Oxford University Press.2003).

14 Holloway, "NGO Corruption Fighters."

15 Indira Carr and Opi Outhwaite,"The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Combating Corruption: Theory and Practice." *Suffolk University Law Review* 44 (2011): 615; Jesper Johnsøn, Nils Taxell, and Dominik Zaum, "Mapping Evidence Gaps," in *Anti-Corruption: Assessing the State of the Operationally Relevant Evidence on Donors' Actions and Approaches to Reducing Corruption*. 7. U 4 (2012).

16 Badru Bukenya, Sam Hickey, and Sophie King, *Understanding the Role of Context in Shaping Social Accountability Interventions: Towards an Evidence-Based Approach.* (New York: The World Bank Social Accountability and Demand for Good Governance Team, 2012); Benjamin A. Olken, "Monitoring Corruption: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia," *Journal of Political Economy* 115, no. 2 (2007):200–49; RitvaReinikka and Jakob Svensson, "Fighting Corruption to Improve Schooling: Evidence from a Newspaper Campaign in Uganda," *Journal of the European Economic Association* 3, no. 2-3 (2005): 259–67.

17 Yuen Yuen Ang, "Authoritarian Restraints on Online Activism Revisited: Why "I-Paid-A-Bribe" Worked in India but Failed in China," *Comparative Politics* 47, no. 1 (2014): 21–40; Dieter Zinnbauer, "Crowdsourced Corruption Reporting: What Petrified Forests, Street Music, Bath

Civil society organizations engage in awareness-raising to alert the public to corruption and to increase knowledge about corruption to a broader circle of people. In their awareness-raising efforts they may draw on existing reports or conduct their own monitoring or investigations and then report the findings through friendly media outlets or through social media. Another distinction among awareness-raising efforts is between those that are about sounding 'fire alarms' on specific cases of abuse and those that are part of concerted campaigns.[18] A notable example of a sustained awareness-raising campaign is Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index.

Civil society organizations engage in advocacy for legislative changes and for public sector reforms. They can do so through quiet lobbying efforts, but often the advocacy takes the form of public campaigns and is carried out by coalitions consisting of like-minded organizations. To maximize effect, activists may also enlist the help of other types of actors such as the media or international partners.

There are several ways in which civil society organizations can use direct action. Organizations with sufficient weight and resources can file lawsuits against corrupt actors when there is at least some degree of trust in the independence of the legal system.[19] They can also put pressure on authorities or other actors by organizing demonstrations or other types of public events for which they mobilize their supporters.[20] While such protests are peaceful most of the time, activists can also apply confrontational and coercive methods, for instance by blocking roads or by physically confronting corrupt actors.

Rather than directly confronting corruption, civil society organizations can also strengthen their own capacity and that of others in order to become more effective at fighting corruption. Education and training are one such type of capacity-strengthening. Anti-Corruption education can be aimed at other activists to train them in skills such as monitoring; at officials, to educate them on integrity norms; or at the general public with the goal of increasing knowledge about corruption.[21] Another form of capacity-strengthening entails building coalitions with, for instance, government actors, businesses, and international actors. A benefit of this type of capacity-strengthening is that it increases the number of stakeholders with an interest in fighting corruption and with the capacity to do so.[22]

Towels, and the Taxman Can Tell Us About the Prospects for Its Future," *Policy & Internet* 7, no. 1 (2015): 1–24.

18 Catalina Smulovitz and Enrique Peruzzotti, "Societal Accountability in Latin America," *Journal of Democracy* 11, no. 4 (2000): 147–58.

19 Jamie S. Davidson, "Politics-as-Usual on Trial: Regional Anti-Corruption Campaigns in Indonesia," *Pacific Review* 20, no. 1 (2007): 75–99.

20 MarciaGrimes, "The Contingencies of Societal Accountability: Examining the Link Between Civil Society and Good Government," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 48 (2013): 380–402.

21 DaniloVukovic, "Civil Society, Accountable Government and the Rule of Law." *SSRN Electronic Journal*(December. 2014): 14.

22 Jonathan A. Fox, "Social Accountability: What Does the Evidence Really Say?" *World Development* 72 (2015): 346–61; Martin Tisné and Daniel Smilov, *From the Ground up: Assessing*

Finally, activists can contribute to anti-corruption through co-governance, in which they become directly involved in public governance alongside state authorities. The most extensively studied form of co-governance is participatory budgeting, in which ordinary people, typically at the municipal level, decide how to allocate public funds.[23] Activists can also be invited by the government to provide advice on a more or less permanent basis, for instance by joining expert councils or public oversight boards.[24]

Determinants of Effectiveness

There is little established knowledge on what works in civil society-driven anti-corruption initiatives. This is in part because it is difficult to measure the impact of such initiatives due to methodological challenges.[25] In part this is also because the reasons for impact of such initiatives can be highly context-specific.[26] Nonetheless, in scholarly and practitioner literature a range of factors are identified that are associated with success, at least under certain conditions, in anti-corruption activism. The relevant scholarly and practitioner literature mostly concerns case studies of anti-corruption initiatives and reviews of civil society activities under the label of social accountability initiatives or transparency initiatives. The factors that are associated with success fall under three broad categories: environmental factors, the advocacy strategies of civil society organizations, and their organizational characteristics.

Environmental factors

Environmental factors, in this context, are outside the direct control of civil society organizations, and they are in most cases related to the political, institutional, and

the Record of Anticorruption Assistance in Southeastern Europe. Policy Paper. Policy Studies Series. (Budapest: Center for Policy Studies, CEU, 2004).

23 Rebecca Abers. "From Clientelism to Cooperation: Local Government, Participatory Policy, and Civic Organizing in Porto Alegre, Brazil." *Politics & Society* 26, no. 4 (1998): 511–37; Brian Wampler, "When Does Participatory Democracy Deepen the Quality of Democracy? Lessons from Brazil." *Comparative Politics* 41, no. 1 (2008):61–81.

24 Tisné and Smilov, *Assessing the Record of Anticorruption Assistance*, 19.

25 Marie Chêne, The Impact of Strengthening Citizen Demand for Anti-Corruption Reform. U 4 Expert Answer. Transparency International and CMI Chr. Michelsen Institute. (2008): 1; Jose MariaMarin, *Evidence of Citizen Engagement Impact in Promoting Good Governance and Anti-Corruption Efforts*. U 4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre. Transparency International/Chr. Michelsen Institute Bergen (2016): 5.

26 Rosemary McGee and John Gaventa. *Synthesis Report—Review of Impact and Effectiveness of Transparency and Accountability Initiatives*. Open Society Foundation. Transparency & Accountability Initiative (2010); Rema Hanna, Sarah Bishop, Sara Nadel, Gabe Scheffler, and Katherine Durlacher. The Effectiveness of Anti-Corruption Policy: What Has Worked, What Hasn't, and What We Don't Know—a Systemic Review. EPPI–Centre, Social Science Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London (2011).

legislative context in which anti-corruption activists operate. A diverse set of such environmental factors are highlighted in the literature. A widely shared view, for instance, is that anti-corruption activism is on average more effective in democracies and in polities undergoing democratization.[27] Some authors emphasize the importance of specific attributes of democracy for the effectiveness of anti-corruption activism, such as political competition,[28] rule of law,[29] respect for civil and political liberties,[30] and media freedom.[31] Yet other scholars and experts focus on the importance of a favorable legislative environment. One important element of the legislative environment is that civil society organizations should operate without undue legal restrictions. McGee and Gaventa[32] echo the conventional wisdom when they state that 'in a regime in which there are not the essential freedoms of association, voice, media, etc., it is unreasonable to expect that citizen-led ATIs [Accountability and Transparency Initiatives] will have the same impact as in societies where these conditions exist'. Another important element of the legislative environment, in specific cases, is that the existence of appropriate legislation related to public access to information.[33] Regarding the institutional context of anti-corruption activism, a factor that is sometimes linked to impact is decentralization. Hanna et al.[34] argue that decentralization is 'a promising intervention' among anti-corruption strategies when coupled with community participation. Nuancing this view, Véron et al.[35] warn that civic activists can become accomplices of corrupt actors at the local level when vertical accountabilities are weak.

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27 Nicholas Benequista and John Gaventa, "What We Now Know about Citizen Action and Development Outcomes," In *Gouvernance en révolution(s). Chroniques de la gouvernance 2012*. Institute for Research and Debate on Governance. Paris: Charles Léopold Mayer Publishing House, 2012); Bukenya, *Context*, 25; Anne Marie Goetz and Rob Jenkins, "Hybrid Forms of Accountability: Citizen Engagement in Institutions of Public-Sector Oversight in India," *Public Management Review* 3, no. 3 (2001):363–83.

28 Marcia Grimes, "The Contingencies of Societal Accountability: Examining the Link Between Civil Society and Good Government," *Studies in Comparative International Development* 48 (2013):380–402.

29 Bukenya, *Context*, 25.

30 Marin, *Evidence*.

31 Nuno Themudo, "Reassessing the Impact of Civil Society: Nonprofit Sector, Press Freedom, and Corruption." *Governance* 26, no. 1 (2013).

32 McGee and Gaventa, *Synthesis*, 44.

33 VinayBhargava, Strategies for Empowering Communities to Demand Good Governance and Seek Increased Effectiveness of Public Service. Partnership for Transparency Fund Working Papers Series no.4/2012 (2012); Transparency International. *Corruption Fighters' tool Kit: Civil Society Experiences and Emerging Strategies*. (Berlin: 2001).

34 Hanna et. al., *Effectiveness*, 48.

35 René Véron, Glyn Williams, Stuart Corbridge, and Manoj Srivastava. "Decentralized Corruption or Corrupt Decentralization? Community Monitoring of Poverty-Alleviation Schemes in Eastern India." *World Development* 34, no. 11 (2006):1937.

The environmental factor that is most commonly mentioned in studies of the effectiveness of anti-corruption activism, however, is the existence of political will among relevant political authorities. Johnston and Kpundeh, for instance, argue that '[p]olitical will — credible, demonstrated, and sustained commitment to reform — is essential to overcoming apathy and outright opposition, to setting clear priorities, and to mobilizing people and resources.'[36] Similarly, Benequista and Gaventa observe that '[t]he presence of influential officials who are committed to holding open the door for citizens significantly expands what can be accomplished through citizen engagement — and further still when those officials have a background in activism.'[37] Others, however, warn against the risks of overreliance on a small number of officials who exhibit political will in an otherwise volatile political environment. Fox and Aceron, for instance, note that '[s]ome scholars have pointed at the potential risks associated with overreliance on single high-ranking officials exhibiting political will in relatively unstable and volatile political environments, in which such figures are highly vulnerable, and have instead suggested that the support of middle-managers involved in the process in a less symbolic way might be a more effective strategy ensuring the support of state structures.'[38] While political will is often mentioned as an important factor in anti-corruption efforts, it is notoriously difficult to operationalize and therefore has not received broad scholarly attention.[39]

Beyond the political, institutional, and legislative environment, further environmental factors which are noted in studies of anti-corruption activism include the involvement of international actors and the nature of the civil society in which individual civil society organizations operate. Some have argued that strong donor commitment and support for anti-corruption action, especially in the context of European integration, can be used to apply pressure on authorities who might otherwise be reluctant to cooperate.[40] It is argued in particular that when international actors

36 Michael Johnston and Sahr Kpundeh. "Building a Clean Machine: Anti-Corruption Coalitions and Sustainable Development." The World Bank, accessed December 22, 2018 http://siteresources.worldbank.org/WBI/Resources/wbi37208.pdf.

37 Benequista, *Citizen Action*, 11.

38 Jonathan Fox and Joy Aceron. Doing Accountability Differently: A Proposal for the Vertical Integration of Civil Society Monitoring and Advocacy. U 4 Issue 4. (Chr. Michelsen Institute Bergen — Norway, 2016).

39 Marcia Grimes. *The Conditions of Successful Civil Society Involvement in Combating Corruption: A Survey of Case Study Evidence*. QoG Working Paper Series 22. (Gothenburg: The QoG Institute, 2008); Anna Persson and Martin Sjöstedt, "Responsive and Responsible Leaders: A Matter of Political Will?" *Perspectives on Politics* 10, no. 0 (2012): 617–32.

40 Alexandru Grigorescu, "The Corruption Eruption in East-Central Europe: The Increased Salience of Corruption and the Role of Intergovernmental Organizations." *East European Politics and Societies* 20, no. 3 (2006): 516–49; Milada Vachudova, "Corruption and Compliance in the EU's Post-Communist Members and Candidates," *Journal of Common Market Studies* 47 (Annual Review, 2009): 43–62.

support and reinforce the advocacy efforts of civil society organizations, it becomes harder for the government to ignore those advocacy efforts.[41] Others take a less sanguine view of the role of international actors, arguing that heavy dependence on donor assistance can be detrimental to the success of civil society-driven anti-corruption initiatives.[42] Considerable external influence can weaken the bonds between civil society organizations and citizens and result in the application of overly technocratic or unrealistic strategies that do not take into account realities on the ground.[43] One such reality on the ground refers to the capacity of target groups and society at large to engage with anti-corruption initiatives in a productive way.[44] If, for instance, civil society successfully lobbies the adoption of legislation on public access to information, but few citizens know how to use access to information tools, the impact of the reform remains limited. Finally, the nature of civil society itself is thought to be related to the success of its anti-corruption activism. It is argued in particular that anti-corruption activism is likely to be less effective where civil society is fragmented and engaged in competition over resources and influence.[45] Where civil society is fragmented it is more difficult for civil society organizations to enforce social accountability from authorities, who in turn will find it easier to portray civil society organizations as feckless and irrelevant.

Advocacy strategies

A second set of insights regarding the effectiveness of anti-corruption activism concerns advocacy strategies. Some of these insights are hardly controversial. Several authors, for instance, highlight the importance of timing. Bukenya et al., for example, observe that '[E]ven if social accountability initiatives are properly executed, if the timing is not right they may not translate into desired outcomes.'[46] Illustrating how activists are aware of the importance of timing, Mungiu-Pippidi observes that in Eastern European countries anti-corruption campaigns were often timed during election campaigns in order to maximize their impact.[47] A further insight that is hardly controversial is that anti-corruption initiatives tend be more effective when they are sustained over a

41 Silviya Nitsova, Grigore Pop-Eleches, and Graeme Robertson. *Revolution and Reform in Ukraine. Evaluating Four Years of Reform*. (PONARS Eurasia, July, 2018).

42 Donald Bowser, *Corruption; Trust and the Danger to Democratization in the Former Soviet Union*. Berlin, accessed December, 22, 2019. http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.529.7140&rep=rep1&type=pdf; Vukovic, *Civil Society*, 24.

43 Richard Heeks and Harald Mathisen, "Understanding Success and Failure of Anti-Corruption Initiatives." *Crime, Law and Social Change* 58, no. 5 (2012):542.

44 Goetz, *Accountability*, 12.

45 Bukenya, *Context*, 25; Khan, *Civil Society*, 12.

46 Bukenya, *Context,* 27.

47 Alina Mungiu-Pippidi. Civil Society as an Anti-Corruption Actor in East Central Europe. (European Research Centre for Anti-Corruption and State-Building. Working Papers, 2010): 22.

longer period.[48] In an overview of social accountability interventions, Bukenya et al., for instance, note that, in the case of a number of such interventions, there is reason to believe that results emerged due to the fact that the initiatives were implemented over a longer period.[49] A range of authors emphasize the importance of formulating concrete objectives.[50] In an extensive study of anti-corruption projects in Eastern Europe, Tisné and Smilov, for instance, argue that such projects should move away from awareness-raising about corruption in general to focusing on specific governance reforms.[51] Jenkins along the same line notes that in India anti-corruption activism became more effective when a new strategy was adopted to expose specific acts of corruption rather than to condemn general misrule.[52]

There is less agreement over whether a more cooperative or a more confrontational stance towards authorities is more likely to create impact. Some authors argue that there is substantial evidence suggesting that partnerships between civil society and state authorities produce beneficial outcomes.[53] Others explicitly recommend civil society actors to seek constructive engagement with government officials in order to increase the likelihood of impact.[54] While not necessarily disagreeing with this advice, a range of authors argue that cooperation with state authorities is sometimes not feasible and may not be the optimal strategy in some contexts. Eaton, for instance, observes that 'collaboration [...] does not always work when there are few or unwilling reform-minded actors in government. This then necessitates a more confrontational strategy which aims to "expose and oppose" those in power.'[55] And Chêne and Dell point to the possibility that 'better cooperation with the government [...] could also be counterproductive as it could compromise initiatives in the eyes of the general public as has been the case with anti-corruption coalitions formed with the participation of government, which often failed to gain public backing.'[56]

Finally, cooperation among anti-corruption organizations has been identified by some authors as a factor that can help increase the impact of their work. Mungiu-

48 Goetz, *Accountability*, 57.

49 Bukenya, *Context*, 57.

50 Aisha Ghaus-Pasha, *Role of Civil Society Organzations in Governance*. 6th Global Forum on Reinventing Government Towards Participatory and Transparent Governance, May 24–27, 2005, Seoul, Republic of Korea: 27; Mingiu-Pippidi, *Civil Society*, 21.

51 Tisné and Smilov, *Record*, 6.

52 Rob Jenkins, "Civil Society versus Corruption." *Journal of Democracy* 18, no. 2 (2007): 55–69.

53 Derick W. Brinkerhoff, "Exploring State—CivilSociety Collaboration: Policy Partnerships in Developing Countries." *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (1999): 59–86; Bukenya, *Context*, 21.

54 Maria Gonzales De Asis. Reducing Corruption: Lessons from Venezuela. The World Bank. PREM Notes (2000). Fox and Aceron, Accountability, 39.

55 Eaton, Kent, "Restoration or Transformation? Trapos versus NGOs in the Democratization of the Philippines," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 62, no. 2: 469–96.

56 Chêne, *Impact*, 6.

Pippidi, for instance, notes that successful anti-corruption initiatives are often based on cohesive coalitions which also involve journalists and the media as active partners.[57] In a review of social accountability interventions, Bukenya et al. find that, for half of the successful interventions, 'in particular the depth, extensiveness and character of the relationships amongst CSOs, plays a critical role.'[58] By extension, divisions among anti-corruption civil society organizations can hamper the effectiveness of their work, as Jenkins finds in a study of anti-corruption activism in India.[59]

Organizational characteristics

The third set of factors associated with the success of anti-corruption activism, finally, relates to their organizational characteristics, including capacity, understood here as human and financial resources, and the extent of a support base. Some authors point to the importance of civil society activists possessing certain capabilities such as specialized professional skills and knowledge of legislation and the workings of government. McNeil and Mumvana, for instance, in a review of social accountability initiatives in Africa note that the effectiveness of such initiatives was impaired by a lack of technical expertise in financial management and budget analysis.[60] Goetz and Jenkins observe that representatives of civil society organizations often lack the necessary skills to carry out monitoring activities.[61] Grimes in the same vein argues that community-based organizations tend to be less effective than professionalized NGOs 'that doggedly seek and compile information, file claims and put pressure on institutions of horizontal accountability.'[62]

A range of authors point out that anti-corruption initiatives are often ineffective simply because they are not backed up by sufficient financial resources.[63] A particular problem for many anti-corruption organizations is that the grants which they receive are for relatively short periods which makes it difficult for them to engage in long-term planning, and which in practice often means that they cease their activities as soon as the grant runs out.[64] Mungiu-Pippidi for this reason argues that many anti-corruption programs need a longer lifespan in order to create impact.[65]

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57 Mungiu-Pippidi, *Civil Society*, 21.

58 Bukenya, *Context*, 25.

59 Jenkins, *Civil Society*, 62.

60 Mary McNeil and Terry Mumvama. *A Stocktaking of Social Accountability Initiatives by Civil Society in Anglophone Africa*. World Bank Institute, Community Empowerment and Social Inclusion Learning Program (2006).

61 Goetz, *Accountability*.

62 Grimes, *Conditions*, 13.

63 McNeil, *Accountability*; Ghaus-Pasha, *Governance*.

64 Tisné and Smilov, *Record.*

65 Mungiu-Pippidi, *Civil Society*, 25.

Another organizational characteristic that may help explain effectiveness of activism concerns the support base of anti-corruption organizations. Several authors argue that locally originating grassroots initiatives, building on existing social capital, tend to have higher success rates than externally generated ones.[66] Goetz and Gaventa argue that socially excluded groups are more effective demanding better service delivery when they have broad and physically concentrated membership, and through this type of membership demonstrate the legitimacy and relevance of their cause.[67] Bukenya et al. argue that it is important that the lead actors in the anti-corruption initiatives command authority and credibility, which is only possible if they are perceived as being autonomous from the state.[68] Receiving external funding entails the risk that they lose credibility as it may create a perception that they answer to donors rather than to a domestic constituency. As Tisné and Smilov observe in relation to anti-corruption projects in Eastern Europe, civic actors receiving external funding can also lose credibility when there is a mismatch between the priorities of donors and those of the public.[69]

Anti-Corruption Activism in Ukraine

For the purposes of this study, we have constructed a dataset containing publicly available information of anti-corruption organizations that are based outsideKyiv. In addition, we have conducted 242 semi-structured, confidential interviews of on average one to one and a half hours with representatives of these organizations between June 2018 and April 2019. Organizations were identified based on the criteria that they explicitly, or according to their records, confront corruption, understood here, in accordance with the definition of the World Bank, as abuse of public or corporate office for private gain.[70] The organizations in our dataset cover a wide spectrum. They include formally registered organizations and non-registered grassroots initiatives; organizations with diverse ideological positions including liberalism and nationalism; organizations involved in 'traditional' NGO activities such as awareness-raising and advocacy, but also organizations employing coercive methods. Of the organizations with whom we have conducted interviews, 182 are located in an oblast capital and 60 are located outside the oblast capital. Most of the organizations interviewed are concerned with corruption

66 Samuel Siebie Ankamah and S. M. Manzoor E. Khoda, "Political Will and Government Anti-Corruption Efforts: What Does the Evidence Say?" *Public Administration and Development* 38, no. 1 (2018): 8; AlanDoig, David Watt, and Robert Williams, "Hands-on or Hands-off? Anti-Corruption Agencies in Action, Donor Expectations, and a Good Enough Reality," *Public Administration and Development* 26, no. 2 (2006): 163–72.

67 Goetz, *Accountability*.

68 Bukenya, *Context*, 21.

69 Tisné and Smilov, *Record.*

70 Bhargava, *Strategies*.

related to the authorities of the city in which they are based. Many organizations in addition address corruption related to authorities at the oblast level.

Some of the organizations in our dataset work only on corruption (and 47 of these have 'corruption' in the name of the organization). For other organizations, anti-corruption is just one of the areas of their activity. Organizations in this latter group may not explicitly state that they are engaged in anti-corruption activity, in some cases because of the risks associated with anti-corruption activism in Ukraine. 188 of the organizations we have interviewed address corruption in general or multiple types of corruption, while 53 organizations focus on corruption related to one particular public service or corruption in one particular policy area. Among the latter category, eight organizations focus on schools and education, seven on small and medium enterprises, seven on corruption related to environmental policies, five on road construction or road safety, four on healthcare, four on the operation of courts, and four on public transport. It should be noted that it is not obvious that all organizations in our dataset are primarily driven by a desire to fight corruption in the public interest. Activists from anti-corruption organizations often accuse activists from other organizations of, for instance, being loyal to corrupt authorities or serving the interests of private actors, and such accusations may be justified in some cases.

Instruments and activities

According to existing academic and practitioner literature on the topic, anti-corruption civil society organizations, as noted above, are primarily involved in six types of activities: monitoring and reporting, awareness-raising, advocacy, direct action, capacity-building, and co-governance alongside state authorities. Each of these types of activities can be found among anti-corruption civil society organizations in Ukraine.

108 organizations in our dataset conduct some type of monitoring in at least one policy area. Most common (55 organizations) is monitoring of decision-making by legislative councils and executive authorities. According to our interlocutors, the purpose of this type of monitoring is usually to reveal either potential conflicts of interest or whether a certain regulation is prone to abuse for corrupt ends. Conducting monitoring of decision-making by legislative councils and executive authorities is possible because of the existence of an important law on access to public information, adopted in 2011. According to this law, anyone is entitled to request and obtain public information, defined as 'information that is reflected and documented by any means and information medium and which was received or created in the process of performance by subjects of public authority of their duties [...],' such as legislative council decisions or information on the disbursement of budget funds.[71]The second most common (47 organizations) type of monitoring is monitoring of public procurement. This type of monitoring has become easier to conduct due to the introduction in 2015 of ProZorro,

71 Zakon Ukrayiny "Pro dostup do publichnoyi informatsiyi." http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/laws/show/2939–17.

an electronic procurement system that is now used for all purchases representing a value above a certain threshold. A number of organizations from Kyiv and outside Kyiv use the platform DoZorro to track their progress.[72] This platform shows, among other things, how many instances of procurement have been monitored, how many violations have been uncovered, and what the result has been of the action undertaken after the violations were uncovered. Also common (34 organizations) is the monitoring of electronic asset declarations of public officials, typically with the aim to identify inconsistencies between the stated income and assets of officials and their actual income and assets. An organization from Dnipro, for instance, monitors the asset declarations of the leadership of the oblast branch of the State Agency of Motor Roads of Ukraine. After the organization found a number of inconsistencies in declarations, the relevant officials were forced to enter corrections.[73] The systematic monitoring of asset declarations has become possible due to the launch in 2016 of an open registry of asset declarations for all public officials. If they find evidence of corruption in decision-making, public procurement, or asset declarations, civil society organizations can file an appeal to relevant authorities including public prosecutor's offices and the country's specialized anti-corruption bodies who may use the information to initiate a criminal investigation or proceeding. 99 of the organizations in our dataset have explicitly indicated that they have filed this type of appeal at least once.

117 organizations in our dataset engage in activities that fall under the broad umbrella of awareness-raising. For some of these organizations awareness-raising is just one of their activities. For other organizations, in particular information agencies specializing in corruption, awareness-raising is their core activity. Some organizations use data and information generated by others in their awareness-raising efforts. Other organizations conduct their own investigations or monitoring and then disseminate the results. One organization from Rivne, for instance, has investigated corruption in obtaining drivers' licenses and then brought the issue to the attention of the public through friendly media outlets, after which the public prosecutor opened a criminal investigation.[74] For a majority of organizations, Facebook is the main platform through which they raise awareness about cases of corruption and communicate with their audience. Besides Facebook, the anti-corruption organizations often cultivate relationships with media outlets through which they can publish information.

44 organizations are regularly involved in advocacy efforts. These efforts are usually aimed at the adoption by relevant authorities of policies that in majority are related to increasing transparency in public administration or the introduction of integrity mechanisms. An organization from Kropyvnytskyi, for instance, developed an entire set of anti-corruption regulations that were adopted by the city council.[75] In another

72 Dozorro. https://dozorro.org/.

73 Interview with representative of civil society organization, September 4, 2018, Dnipro.

74 Interview with representative of civil society organization, September 29, 2018, Rivne.

75 Interview with representative of civil society organization, December 14, 2018, Kropyvnytskyi.

example, an organization from Chernihiv has successfully lobbied for amendments to existing regulations aimed at making the regulations less prone to abuse.[76]

70 organizations employ different forms of direct action in their fight against corruption. The most common forms of direct action by these organizations are filing lawsuits (49 organizations) against corrupt individuals and firms and organizing demonstrations (25 organizations). An organization from Khmelnytskyi, for instance, has filed and (then won) a lawsuit over illegal payments in the city's schools.[77] Demonstrations organized by anti-corruption activists most commonly take place in front of the city administration or the city council. While such demonstrations are usually peaceful gatherings, some groups, often led by (radical) nationalists or veterans from the conflict in the country's East, employ coercive methods to achieve their goals. In KryvyiRih, for example, activists have seized and destroyed illegal alcohol sold in stores that were protected by local authorities.[78] In another example, activists in Kharkiv directly confronted the proprietors of an illegal gas station in the city forcing them to close their business.[79]

Anti-Corruption organizations in Ukraine engage in two types of capacity-building: creating coalitions with other civil society organizations and conducting trainings. At the national level, the Reanimation Package of Reforms coalition of civil society organizations and experts has served as an effective mechanism through which civic actors, including anti-corruption activists, have become involved in processes of deliberation with policymakers. Anti-Corruption activists in a range of cities attempt or have attempted to emulate the example of RPR, sometimes with the assistance of international partners. 52 organizations conduct trainings on issues related to anti-corruption. A common type of anti-corruption training is to members of municipal councils and to public servants in state administrations on, for instance, conflicts of interest or filling out asset declarations. Anti-Corruption organizations also organize trainings for other activists on, for example, how to monitor procurement and asset declarations or on how to conduct anti-corruption investigations.

Finally, six anti-corruption organizations have, upon invitation, been involved in some type of co-governance alongside state authorities. One such example of co-governance is that of an organization from Cherkasy which took part in an attestation commission that hired new police officers.[80] Another example is that of an organization from Drohobych which was tasked with the introduction of e-government mechanisms aimed at reducing opportunities for corruption.[81]

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76 Interview with representative of civil society organization, December 10, 2018, Chernihiv.

77 Interview with representative of civil society organization, November 26, 2018, Khmelnytskyi.

78 Interview with representative of civil society organization, May 27, 2019, Kryvyi Rih.

79 Interview with representative of civil society organization, June 13, 2018, Kharkiv.

80 Interview with representative of civil society organization, October 3, 2018, Cherkasy.

81 Interview with representative of civil society organization, November 21, 2018, Drohobych.

Impact

A majority of interlocutors from regional anti-corruption organizations emphasize that they have difficulty creating substantial impact. Among the reasons for their limited effectiveness they most often mention a lack of financial and human resources, passivity among the public, and intimidation from the side of the authorities or others. Of the 87 organizations whose representatives mention a lack of financial resources as a reason for their limited effectiveness, many work without grant funding. Representatives of organizations which do receive grants, however, note that those are generally small and short-term. Other substantial sources of income, such as membership fees and contributions by sympathizers, are rare. Representatives of 60 organizations explicitly mention a lack of human capacity as an impediment to effectiveness. The main reason why it is hard for the anti-corruption organizations to attract qualified people is that they have limited opportunities to offer competitive salaries. Another reason that is often mentioned is that talented activists often move to Kyiv or abroad. Representatives of thirty organizations attribute their lack of effectiveness in part or in full to the passivity of the general population in their area. They argue that people are uninformed and disinterested in corruption, and that many have grown disillusioned with civic activism and with the lack of progress in the fight against corruption in the years since the Euromaidan Revolution. Finally, representatives of 25 organizations mention intimidation as a factor that limits the effectiveness of their work. Activists in cities such as Kharkiv, Mykolaiv and Kherson, for instance, have recounted how they have been physically attacked by unknown or known assailants. More common than physical violence are verbal threats. While the impact of these forms of intimidation cannot be measured, it is likely that it keeps some people away from working on anti-corruption, and that many of those who do work on anti-corruption take fewer risks than they would otherwise.

Some interlocutors do not point to concrete success stories of their work but claim nonetheless that their work has an impact. They argue that raising awareness about corruption has made corrupt behavior more costly because of the greater risk of getting named and shamed and that, consequently, officials have become more reluctant to engage in corrupt behavior.[82] If this is correct, then anti-corruption activists to some degree can engender good governance among local and oblast authorities just by carrying out a watchdog function. Besides immeasurable impact, many activists can point to concrete examples of impact despite the difficulties that they face in their work. An organization from Mykolaiv, for instance, has been successful in cancelling payments for certain forms of treatment in the city's hospitals.[83] An organization from

82 Interview with representative of civil society organization, October 3, 2018, Cherkasy; interview with representative of civil society organization, October 4, 2018, Mariupol.

83 Interview with representative of civil society organization, November 8, 2018.

Dnipro has prevented the illegal cutting of trees.[84] And activists from Drohobych have been instrumental in imposing fines on stores which sold alcohol illegally.[85]

Positive impact from the work of anti-corruption activists can be separated into counteracting corruption as it occurs (ex post anti-corruption) and preventing corruption from occurring in the first place (ex ante anti-corruption). During interviews, our interlocutors have presented 193 examples of impact, including 134 examples of ex post anti-corruption and 59 examples of ex ante anti-corruption. The most common type of ex post anti-corruption effect (52 cases) concerns the initiation of criminal investigations or prosecution of corrupt individuals or firms based on information provided by activists. Another common type of ex post effect (22 cases) is the annulment of a public procurement following a publication or an official appeal by activists. Interlocutors have also presented 16 examples of corrupt or corruption-prone decisions of local or oblast authorities having be rolled back thanks to their efforts. An organization from Odesa, for instance, has successfully challenged the city's annual budget on grounds that it was prone to corruption.[86] In another example, an organization from Marhanets has accomplished that assets that were illegally privatized by the city's authorities were returned to the state.[87] A final type of ex post anti-corruption effect resulting from the work of civil society organizations in the regions of Ukraine that is common (27 cases) is the dismissal of corrupt officials. In Kropyvnytskyi, for instance, anti-corruption activists have been successful in forcing the dismissal of local officials in charge of public utilities.[88] And in the cities of Ukrayinka and Sviatohirsk, activists have taken credit for leading anti-corruption campaigns that forced the mayor of the city out of office.[89]

Less common are examples of ex ante anti-corruption effects. Interlocutors have mentioned 59 cases in which legislation or regulations have been adopted or amended with the goal to prevent corruption and as a result of their efforts. In seven municipalities in the Ivano-Frankivsk region, for instance, anti-corruption instruments were adopted following trainings on integrity in public administration conducted by an organization from Ivano-Frankivsk.[90] In a similar example, an advocacy effort by an organization from Khmelnytskyi resulted in the adoption by the city council of a new regulation on conflicts of interest.[91] An organization from Kherson successfully lobbied the introduction of more transparency in tenders by universities in the city.[92] And

84 Interview with representative of civil society organization, September 3 2018, Dnipro.

85 Interview with representative of civil society organization, November 21, 2018, Drohobych.

86 Interview with representative of civil society organization, September 18, 2018, Odesa.

87 Telephone interview with representative of civil society organization, November 26, 2018.

88 Interview with representative of civil society organization, December 14, 2018, Kropyvnytskyi.

89 Telephone interview with representative of civil society organization, November 17 2018; telephone interview with representative of civil society organization, November 27, 2018.

90 Interview with representative of civil society organization, October 16, 2018, Ivano-Frankivsk.

91 Interview with representative of civil society organization, October 27, 2018, Khmelnytskyi.

92 Interview with representative of civil society organization, November 7, 2018, Kherson.

in several cities, including Chuhuiv, Kharkiv, Kherson, Khmilnyk, and Severodonetsk, activists have been successful in persuading the local authorities to lower the threshold for the use of the electronic procurement system ProZorro.[93]

Pathways to Impact

Insights from academic and practitioner literature suggest that factors associated with success in anti-corruption activism fall under three broad categories: environmental factors, advocacy strategies of civil society organizations, and their organizational characteristics. This section asks how these insights relate to anti-corruption activism in the regions of Ukraine. We have gauged the effectiveness of the anti-corruption organizations in our dataset using different types of evidence, including examples of impact presented by the organizations, media reports on the activities of the organizations, and their social media activity. During the interviews with anti-corruption civil society organizations, they were requested to name examples of concrete impact from their work, and these examples of impact have served as the primary indicator of effectiveness. The examples of impact were triangulated with other types of evidence including media reports and assessments from other organizations. In each region we have additionally monitored local media outlets to find reports about the activities of the civil society organizations and about the impact of these activities. The anti-corruption organizations often liaise with local and sometimes national media outlets in order to generate publicity about their activities and their accomplishments. In other cases, media outlets reach out to the anti-corruption organizations to publish a story about their work. The extent to which the media report about the anti-corruption organizations and their work is an indicator of the organization's overall effectiveness. Finally, we have monitored the social media activity of the anti-corruption organizations. The social media platform of choice for most anti-corruption civil society organizations is Facebook. A small number of organizations in addition publish videos on Youtube. Our monitoring of the Facebook sites of the anti-corruption organizations has especially focused on the number of subscribers, frequency of posts on (anti-)corruption, and extent of interaction with other Facebook users in those posts. It should be noted that some effective anti-corruption civil society organizations choose to keep a low profile on social media and are not interested in attracting attention from the media.

Environmental factors

Environmental factors are outside the direct control of civil society organizations and are generally related to the political, institutional, and legislative context in which they operate. The legislative and institutional environment for civil society organizations

93 Telephone interviews with representative of civil society organization, June 13, 2018; Interview with representative of civil society organization, November 6, 2018, Kherson, Interview with representative of civil society organization, September 18, 2018, Khmilnyk.

is largely similar across Ukraine as they are subject to the same national legislation and interact with the same types of subnational state institutions and institutions of self-government. There is, however, great variation across Ukraine in the extent of political will on the part of local and oblast authorities to address corruption. Most anti-corruption civil society organizations in Ukraine primarily confront corruption involving officials from the executive authorities and the legislative council of the city or town in which they are based. Some organizations in addition also confront corruption involving officials from the oblast state administration. Our interlocutors indicate that there are substantial differences in political will among authorities at the municipal and oblast level. Oblast capitals with a relatively high degree of political will among the local authorities include Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lutsk, Kropyvnytskyi, and Rivne. In cities such as Kharkiv, Odesa, Ternopil, Uzhhorod, and Zaporizhzhia, by contrast, political will to address corruption, according to interlocutors among anti-corruption activists, is mostly absent. Political will, of course, can fluctuate over time and sharply decrease or increase with the arrival of new leaders. The existence of political will can also be scattered, with some agencies of the government demonstrating a greater extent of political will than other agencies.

While there is not one factor that explains all variation in the extent of political will to fight corruption in Ukraine, one variable that is important is political and economic pluralism. The extent of pluralism in turn is often related to local political economies and political cultures. Political will tends to be especially lacking where the local economy is dominated by one single enterprise or a conglomerate of enterprises, such as in Zaporizhzhia, or where politics has been dominated by one group for a considerable period, such as in Kharkiv. When political will is in short supply among the political class in a city or town, it may yet be present to a greater extent at the oblast level. An often-observed pattern in Ukraine is that political will is more lacking among city authorities than among oblast authorities. Possible explanations for this pattern include the fact that governors are appointed by the president and therefore are less beholden to local elites, and that oblast authorities control smaller budgets than city authorities. In regions where political will is lacking, engagement by international actors can yet persuade authorities to adopt a more cooperative stance. An interlocutor from an anti-corruption organization in Odesa, for instance, noted that local authorities participated in round table meetings and anti-corruption initiatives only when European Union representatives were involved.[94]

The extent of political will among authorities to initiate and sustain reforms to a great degree shapes their attitudes towards anti-corruption activism, and these attitudes in turn have major implications for the advocacy strategies that activists pursue.[95] The existence of political will among local authorities in particular allows for the application of non-confrontational methods such as advocacy, which relies

94 Interview with representative of civil society organization, September 18, 2018, Odesa.

95 Oksana Huss, Max Bader, Andriy Meleshevych, and Oksana Nesterenko. *Analysing Contextual Factors for Anti-Corruption Activism in the Regions of Ukraine*. ACREC, National University

on successful persuasion and eventual consent. Altogether our interlocutors have mentioned 59 examples of concrete impact through advocacy. Especially impressive examples of such successful advocacy include the adoption by city councils in Kropyvnytskyi and Dnipro of a set of anti-corruption regulations that were drafted and proposed by activists and the creation of an integrity bureau at the city council in Lutsk.[96] More modest examples of impact through advocacy include the adoption by the city council of Khmelnytskyi of proposals for rules about conflicts of interest that were lobbied by activists, and the contribution of one anti-corruption organization to new regulations about public information in Kremenchuk.[97]

The presence of political will to address corruption also enables certain forms of cooperation between anti-corruption organizations and authorities. The most substantial of such forms of cooperation are examples of co-governance, in which the anti-corruption organization is engaged to fulfill a specific task alongside state authorities. In Chernihiv, for instance, activists have been included in a working group that has drafted a new set of anti-corruption regulations.[98] And in Drohobych and Lviv, anti-corruption organizations have worked with the city authorities to introduce e-government instruments which were intended to reduce opportunities for corruption.[99]

In some cities anti-corruption organizations have signed memorandums of understanding or cooperation with local authorities, but there is little evidence that these memorandums have generated substantial impact. In Chernihiv, an anti-corruption organization has signed a memorandum of understanding with the oblast branch of the State Fiscal Service.[100] In Kharkiv, an anti-corruption organization has found it difficult to find an understanding with city authorities but has been able to conclude a memorandum of cooperation with the Kharkiv oblast council.[101] And in Zaporizhzhia, city authorities signaled political will to fight corruption when they signed a memorandum of cooperation with an anti-corruption commission which included a range of civil society organizations. The anti-corruption commission, however, was subsequently disbanded because, according to our interlocutors, it was seen as a threat to the interests of local political elites.[102] In several cities including Drohobych,

of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, Accessed December 23, 2019: https://acrec.org.ua/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/Working_paper_2_25062019-blue.pdf.

96 Interview with representative of civil society organization, December 14, 2018, Kropyvnytskyi; interview with representative of civil society organization, September 4, 2018, Dnipro; interview with representative of civil society organization, October 8, 2018, Lviv.

97 Interview with representative of civil society organization, October 27, 2018, Khmelnitskyi; interview with representative of civil society organization, May 29, 2018.

98 Interview with representative of civil society organization, November 1, 2018, Chernihiv.

99 Interview with representative of civil society organization, October 9, 2018, Lviv; interview with representative of civil society organization, November 21, 2018, Drohobych.

100 Interview with representative of civil society organization, December 10, 2018, Chernihiv.

101 Interview with representative of civil society organization, June 13, 2018, Kharkiv.

102 Interview with representative of civil society organization, October 1, 2018, Zaporizhzhia.

Khmelnitskyi, Mykolaiv, and Zhytomyr, anti-corruption activists also serve as unpaid advisors to the mayor or governor. While the actual impact of having this position may vary, it provides the activists with a direct channel to the political leadership of the city or region. Finally, in a range of cities including Odesa, Mykolayiv, and Nikopol, anti-corruption organizations participate in public councils. These public councils have been set up around the country over the past decade to facilitate deliberation between civic actors and state authorities. The utility of such councils, according to our interlocutors, is limited, but they create an opportunity to directly interact with officials.

Advocacy strategies

Choices in advocacy strategies that may help explain variation in effectiveness of anti-corruption organizations in Ukraine relate to the concreteness of their goals, the difference between a confrontational and non-confrontational approach, and cooperation with other civil society activists. Among the anti-corruption organizations in our dataset, 53 have a clear focus in the sense that they work on corruption related to one particular public service or corruption in one particular policy area. 188 organizations, by contrast, work on several issues at once or address corruption in general. There is some evidence that a clear focus can create significant impact. One organization from Chernivtsi, for instance, focuses purely on the issue of public procurement and has filed 86 appeals to relevant authorities about tenders worth billions of hryvnias.[103] Another example is an organization from Cherkasy with a focus on corruption in law enforcement whose activism has led to the resignation of several law enforcement officers.[104] There are as many anti-corruption organizations in our dataset, however, that have created substantial impact without choosing a specific focus.

Academic and practitioner literature on anti-corruption activism is divided over the question whether a confrontational or a non-confrontational approach is on average more effective. As we saw, where there is political will among local authorities and where cooperation is possible, more opportunities are available for anti-corruption organizations to create impact. An organization from Vinnytsia, for instance, successfully lobbied the adoption by the oblast legislative council of a decision introducing more transparency in the public utilities companies of the region.[105] In another example, cooperation of an anti-corruption group from Bila Tserkva with local authorities has resulted in the introduction of an electronic voting system in the city's legislative council with the objective to combat political corruption.[106] Where cooperation with local authorities is not possible because of a lack of political will, anti-corruption organizations have little choice but to employ confrontational methods such as monitoring of (potentially) corrupt actors, awareness-raising about corruption, and direct action including the filing of lawsuits and the organization of demonstrations.

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103 Interview with representative of civil society organization, October 22, 2018.

104 Interview with representative of civil society organization, October 3, 2018, Cherkasy.

105 Telephone interview with representative of civil society organization, December 20, 2018.

106 Telephone interview with representative of civil society organization, December 14, 2018.

Through such confrontational methods, anti-corruption organizations in the regions of Ukraine have sometimes achieved considerable impact. An organization from Mykolaiv, for instance, has won a court case as a result of which the authorities were forced to return to public property a plot of land that had been illegally sold.[107] In Ternopil, an anti-corruption organization held a demonstration against a price increase of public transport tickets with, according to the organization, three thousand participants, after which the authorities reversed the price increase.[108] Overall, however, while it is possible for anti-corruption organizations to create effect while relying exclusively on confrontational methods, non-confrontational methods, made possible through the presence of political will, generate certain types of results that can only be achieved with cooperation and that are often both substantial and sustainable. Cooperation where it is possible therefore is clearly related to impact.

Finally, cooperation among anti-corruption activists has been identified by some authors as a factor that can help increase the effectiveness of their work. There are well-known examples of civil society cooperation at the national level in Ukraine, especially in the form of the Reanimation Reform Package coalition. This coalition, which includes a broad range of civil society organizations among which anti-corruption organizations, has been involved by the government in the reform process since the Euromaidan Revolution, and several important laws have been adopted as a result of its successful advocacy efforts.[109] While many anti-corruption organizations interact in one way or another with other anti-corruption organizations at the subnational level, there is sustained cooperation in only few cases. In several cities, such as Dnipro and Ternopil, coalitions have been formed after the example of the Reanimation Reform Package coalition. There is little evidence to suggest that these coalitions have led to close cooperation or greater effectiveness of anti-corruption organizations. Besides coalitions consisting of different organizations, there are several anti-corruption organizations, such as Journalists against Corruption and Stop Corruption, working across Ukraine with regional or local branches and a central office in Kyiv. These network organizations, however, have little central coordination and control insufficient resources to help their regional and local offices become more effective.

Organizational characteristics

Among the organizational characteristics of anti-corruption organizations that can help explain variation in effectiveness are capacity in terms of their human and financial resources and the existence of grassroots support. As noted in Freedom

107 Interview with representative of civil society organization, November 9, 2018, Mykolaiv.

108 Interview with representative of civil society organization, November 20, 2018, Ternopil.

109 Lutsevych, Orysia,"Civil Society versus Captured State: aWinning Strategy for Sustainable Change." *Development in Practice* 26, no. 5 (2016): 646–56; Iryna Solonenko,"Ukrainian Civil Society from the Orange Revolution to Euromaidan: Striving for a new social contract." In *OSCE Yearbook 2014*. Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft mbH& Co (2015): 219–36.

House's 2018 Nations in Transit report for Ukraine, there is a large discrepancy in the country between the capacity of civil society organizations at the national and local level.[110] Anti-Corruption organizations working outside Kyiv invariably rely on a small group of activists and in a significant number of cases on the dedication of one individual. Some organizations have a few, and rarely more than five people on the payroll, often in short-term or part-time employment. The personnel composition of organizations with hired employees tends to frequently change and is typically dependent on the obtainment of grants from Western donors. Organizations that are formally registered as non-governmental organizations have members, but membership is usually only a formal element of their status as a registered organization and does not have practical significance. Many organizations boast having a number of volunteers, in most cases between one dozen and several dozen, but the extent to which these volunteers are substantially active for the organizations seems limited. These findings seem to corroborate the long-established diagnosis of low levels of activity in civil society organizations in post-Soviet Ukraine. According to recent sociological research, 60% of citizens argue that civic organizations have an important role to play in their communities, but only 7% of people are involved in civic activism.[111] Because they rely on a small number of hired employees, active members, and volunteers, the anti-corruption organizations often lack certain knowledge and professional skills required for effective activism. Sixty organizations explicitly mention a lack of human resources as a reason for why they are not more effective.

While anti-corruption organizations operating outside Kyiv are similar in that they rely on a small number of activists and volunteers, they are diverse in the amount of funding with which they carry out their work. Many organizations lack any financial resources besides voluntary contributions of core activists. A small number of organizations reports receiving contributions from sympathizers outside the organization. Membership fees apply to few organizations and are insignificant where they do apply. 87 organizations explicitly mention insufficient funding as a reason for why they do not work more effectively. The problem of insufficient funding reaches beyond anti-corruption organizations, and is noted in the 2018 USAID Civil Society Sustainability Index as the weakest point in the sustainability of civil society organizations in Ukraine.[112] Of the anti-corruption organizations in our dataset which

110 Freedom House's 2018 Nations in Transit report for Ukraine, accessed November 20, 2018 https://freedomhouse.org/report/nations-transit/2018/ukraine.

111 Ilko Kucheriv Democratic Initiatives Foundation, "Hromadyanske suspilstvo v Ukrayini: vyklyky I zavdannya," retrieved at https://dif.org.ua/article/gromadyanske-suspilstvo-v-ukraini-vikliki-i-zavdannya. By comparison, the percentage of people involved in civil society organizations in Poland, for instance, is 20%. See "2016 Report on the State of Civil Society in the EU and Russia", p. 80, retrieved at https://eu-russia-csf.org/fileadmin/State_of_Civil_Society_Report/18_05_2017_RU-EU_Report_spaudai_Hyperlink_Spread.pdf.

112 The Index also notes that the that the amount of external funding for civil society organizations working on issues such as citizen engagement, regional development, and the

have sources of funding beyond contributions of their own activists, almost all funding comes in the form of grants from international organizations and Western governments such as UNDP, the Renaissance Fund, USAID, and grant programs of national embassies in Ukraine. 103 organizations (43%) have indicated in interviews conducted for this study that they currently receive one or more grants or have received one or more grants in the recent past. Most such grants, however, are small and short-term and therefore do not allow to hire a core staff and compete with salaries in other sectors. The lack of alternative sources of funding moreover has negative implications for the sustainability of anti-corruption activism: once a grant expires, the activism in most cases is interrupted.

A small but significant number of organizations in our dataset receive (or have received)several grants at one time, including in some cases a grant for institutional development, i. e. a grant not tied to a particular activity. Our data suggest that a substantial amount of external funding is an important determinant of effectiveness. Multiple grants or large grants do not yet make recipient organizations wealthy, but they do allow these organizations to employ several people and plan activities beyond their current grants. Institutional grants in particular enable these organizations to allot time to fundraising. Most organizations with little funding are forced to focus on one type of activity or on corruption in one particular area. The organizations with multiple grants or a large institutional grant, by contrast, tend to pursue a multipronged approach employing diverse methods of activism and addressing more than one type of corruption. While many organizations with weaker financial capacity can point to one or two examples of impact, one organization from Kharkiv with substantial funding, for instance, within only a few years has won a range of court cases, has successfully advocated a new procurement policy at the oblast administration, and has secured the annulment of many tenders.[113] In addition to this, the (social) media presence of the organization suggests that it is highly successful in raising awareness about corruption in the city and the region. A similar organization from Dnipro has equally won a range of court cases and, according to its own claims, has secured the annulment of procurements worth 500 million hryvnias.[114]

There are a number of potential downsides of external funding to civic activism. One is that competition over grants can induce rivalry among groups who in other circumstances might work together and split these organizations into haves and have-nots of international assistance.[115] Another downside is that the process of applying for grants requires time and effort which otherwise could be spent on the primary

fight against corruption has recently increased, accessed November 2, 2018 https://www.fhi360.org/sites/default/files/media/documents/resource-civil-society-organization-2017-regional-report.PDF:223.

113 Interview with representative of civil society organization, June 11, 2018, Kharkiv.

114 Interview with representative of civil society organization, September 3, 2018, Dnipro.

115 Sarah L. Henderson,"Selling Civil Society: Western Aid and the Nongovernmental Organization Sector in Russia." *Comparative Political Studies* 35, no. 2 (2002): 139–67; Tsveta Petrova and

activity of the organization. Some commentators also express a concern that some international donors may not appreciate what issues and types of activity are most fitting in a certain national or regional context and compel their grantees to work on issues of secondary importance.[116] External funding of civil society organizations is also blamed for undermining the grassroots nature of local initiatives. According to this line of criticism, external funding across many countries has led to the emergence of a class of professional, grant-seeking NGOs that are disconnected from the public.[117] Not unlike in other countries, in the context of Ukraine it can be argued that 'Western-funded NGOs form an 'NGO-cracy,' where professional leaders use access to domestic policy-makers and Western donors to influence public policies, yet they are disconnected from the public at large.'[118] Those Western-funded NGOs do not correspond with the popular image of civil society organizations that strengthen social capital and thereby enhance democracy. While foreign aid to civil society organizations often aspires to support the development of grassroots organizations, the professional grant-seeking NGOs that actually emerge may crowd out grassroots initiatives.[119] In Hann's formulation, external funding of civil society organizations has led to the 'abortion of local processes of change.'[120] Studies of anti-corruption activism, as noted, suggest that locally originating grassroots initiatives, building on existing social capital, tend to have higher success rates than initiatives without grassroots. Among anti-corruption organizations in the regions of Ukraine that do not receive external funding, some clearly have a genuine grassroots base that helps them to create impact. An organization from Mariupol consisting of workers from one of the city's major enterprises, for instance, has been effective in uncovering corruption at the enterprise and raising awareness about the corruption.[121] In another example, an organization from Ternopil which was established

Sidney Tarrow. "Transactional and Participatory Activism in the Emerging European Polity: The Puzzle of East-Central Europe." *Comparative Political Studies* 40, no. 1 (2007): 74–94.

116 Marina Zaloznaya, William M. Reisinger and Vicki Hesli Claypool. "When Civil Engagement is Part of the Problem: Flawed Anti-Corruptionism in Russia and Ukraine." *Communist and Post-Communist Studies* 51, no. 3 (2018): 245–55.

117 Thomas Carothers and William Barndt, "Civil society." *Foreign Policy*(1999): 18–29; Irene Hahn-Fuhr and Susann Worschech, "External Democracy Promotion and Divided Civil Society—TheMissing Link." In *Civil Society and Democracy Promotion*, eds. Timm Beichelt, Irene Hahn-Fuhr, Frank Schimmelfennig and Susann Worschech (London: Palgrave Macmillan UK): 11–41.

118 Orysia Lutsevych. *How to Finish a Revolution: Civil Society and Democracy in Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine*. Chatham House Briefing Paper (2013) accessed December 23, 2019 https://www.chathamhouse.org/sites/default/files/public/Research/Russia%20and%20Eurasia/0113bp_lutsevych.pdf:1.

119 Armine Ishkanian, "Democracy Promotion and Civil Society." In *Global Civil Society 2007/8: Communicative Power and Democracy* eds.: Martin Albrow, Marlies Glasius, Helmut K. Anheier, and Mary Kaldor. (London: Global Civil Society—Year Books. SAGE publications Ltd): 58–85.

120 Hahn, *External Democracy*.

121 Interview with representative of civil society organization, October 4, 2018, Mariupol.

by local fishermen and which focuses on the issue of poaching and other forms of illegal use of water bodies, has won a number of court cases.[122] And in Dnipro, a grassroots organization that focuses on corruption related to road safety receives much appraisal for its awareness-raising efforts and has been successful in holding corrupt actors to account.[123] What these grassroots initiatives have in common is a clear focus related to the personal or professional background of their activists. This background provides them with an intimate knowledge of the issues that they address through their anti-corruption activism. Because they share a set of interests with a more or less clearly defined group of people, moreover, these activists are also relatively successful in mobilizing others. What this type of activists also have in common is that, as theory would predict, they do not receive external funding. While the grassroots nature of these organizations strengthens their ability to create impact, their lack of material capacity impedes their effectiveness. Without the type of funding that grants provide, grassroots organizations have, for instance, fewer resources to employ people, hire consultants, pay legal fees, or print newspapers. The grassroots nature of these organizations therefore is at the same time a strength and obstacle.

Conclusions

Anti-Corruption organizations in the regions of Ukraine are confronted with a multitude of challenges, but many of them are able to point to examples of real impact. In their struggle to create impact, they face two key dilemmas. First, many organizations lack sufficient capacity to be effective. More than half of anti-corruption organizations function without any type of funding beyond voluntary contributions of core activists. The funding of other organizations typically comes in the form of grants from foreign governments, non-governmental organizations, and foundations. With few exceptions, however, such grants are small and cover a short period. Given a lack of substantial funding, anti-corruption organizations cannot hire necessary staff and services, and have fewer opportunities to acquire knowledge and skills that could help make their work more effective. Second, many organizations lack a credible support base. They are far from the ideal type of community-based organizations that represent the interests of their members and contribute to building social capital. Most of them instead rely on the dedication of, usually, between one and five activists, while membership is more often than not ephemeral. Because they do not have a substantial support base, anti-corruption organizations, like many other types of civil society organizations in Ukraine, cannot mobilize supporters to help them advance their cause and are often seen as lacking legitimacy to promote change for the public good.

Our findings show that the anti-corruption organizations that are most effective tend to be those that convincingly solve either one of these two dilemmas. Some organizations solve the capacity dilemma by attracting sustained and substantial

122 Interview with representative of civil society organization, November 20, 2018, Ternopil.

123 Interview with representative of civil society organization, September 3, 2018, Dnipro.

funding, typically in the form of international assistance, allowing them to hire a core staff, purchase professional services, and engage in multi-year planning. Other organizations solve the support dilemma by drawing from a real base of support, such as the workers of an organization or a group of people directly affected by a certain type of abuse. There are in practice few if any organizations that solve both dilemmas: organizations with substantial professional capacity are not built on grassroots, and activists with a grassroots organization struggle to build a professional organization or have no interest in doing so. Our findings, consequently, suggest that there are different but in practice mutually exclusive pathways to impact. We also find that political will among local authorities is an important conducive factor to the effectiveness of anti-corruption activism as it creates, in particular through advocacy efforts, more opportunities for impact. Political will also enables certain forms of cooperation with the authorities. While anti-corruption activists can be effective using confrontational methods, effects that result from cooperation with authorities on average appear more substantial and sustainable.

These findings carry a number of implications for practitioners of (international) assistance. First, what types of effects can be achieved in anti-corruption activism and which activities generate more effect depends on the local political context and especially on the extent of political will among authorities. International assistance is therefore more likely to create impact when decisions about funding are based on knowledge of the local political environment. Second, the often small and short-term grants that anti-corruption organizations in Ukraine receive from donors accentuate rather than solve their capacity dilemma, as the small and short-term grants do not allow to hire a core staff and otherwise build a professional organization. Once such grants expire, the activism moreover is in most cases interrupted. International assistance is therefore more likely to be effective when it prioritizes substantial, multi-year funding to select organizations over small grants scattered across a larger number of organizations. Finally, while capacity for the anti-corruption organizations outside Kyiv is mostly determined by material resources, they also often lack, by their own admission, necessary professional skills and knowledge. At the same time, a small number of Kyiv-based anti-corruption organizations do possess the professional capacity to effectively carry out anti-corruption activism through, among other things, advocacy, raising awareness, and conducting investigations. A potentially productive avenue of international assistance is to help facilitate the transfer of knowledge and skills from higher-capacity anti-corruption organizations to lower-capacity organizations.

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