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Political Will for Anti-Corruption Reform: Communicative pathways to collective action in Ukraine

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Frontpage Photo: Maidan square, soon after the Revolution of Dignity in 2014, still a symbol of people's sacrifice for overcoming the corrupt political regime. Photo: Oksana Huss

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List of Abbreviations

CRA	Corruption risk assessment
CSO	Civil society organisation
LPA	Local public authority
NAPC	National Agency on Corruption Prevention
NABU	National Anti-Corruption Bureau of Ukraine
HACC	High Anti-Corruption Court
SAPO	Specialised Anti-Corruption Prosecutor's Office
TI	Transparency International

Abstract

Why do some local public authorities engage in meaningful and sustained anti-corruption efforts while elsewhere such initiatives falter? To address this question, we advance a definition of political will as it relates to anti-corruption reforms and examine six local settings in Ukraine which showed sustained reform effort between 2014 and 2021. While previous conceptualisations see political will as a function of leaders' individual level preferences or contextual characteristics, we argue that it may emerge through intentional and strategic interactions among key stakeholders. The analysis identifies key communicative tasks serving to induce initial commitments, make commitments operative, and sustain change, that stakeholders must continuously undertake to promote anti-corruption political will. Three recommendations are derived for local governments: to invest in multi-stakeholder platforms, use facilitators, and build internal capacity. The communicative functions identified here can help create a network of linkages that reduces the power gradient between authorities and society, enabling the flow of knowledge, information and civil society demands. These networks can aid in addressing other complex policy challenges as well.

Acknowledgments

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Preface

By Johan Lilja, Secretary General, Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy

The mission of the Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy (ICLD) is to contribute to poverty reduction by promoting local democracy in primarily low- and middle-income countries. In order to fulfil this, we promote and encourage decentralised cooperation through municipal partnerships programme; adding capacity-building through our international training programmes; and investing in relevant research and creating important research networks. ICLD documents and publishes key lessons learned from our ongoing activities, initiates and funds relevant research, engages in scholarly networks, connects relevant researchers with practitioners, and organises conferences and workshops. We also maintain a publications series. 'Political Will for Anti-Corruption Reform: Communicative pathways to collective action in Ukraine' is the 22nd report to be published in ICLD's Research Reports series. This is a result from the research project financed by ICLD, comprising this report and two corresponding policy briefs.

Several publications in our series tackle corruption, from varying perspectives but always with a holistic view on anti-corruption work where laws and policies are not enough. While other reports discuss norms at grassroot level, here we dive into the leadership – trying to understand why political will for anti-corruption arises, or why it doesn't. As in most human-to-human interaction, communication and open dialogue proves to be key. The report provides useful advice of the communicative functions to promote.

The research took place before the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine. So, the context of the research is at large different today. In my view, it is both commendable and important of the researchers to continue their work despite the raging war. The effects of the invasion on the communicative processes that build this type of political will remains to be seen, but I believe the tools this research identifies are helpful for resilience and reconstruction: helpful in supporting a social contract of trust and accountability. This research is one of the many ways we will continue to support local governments in Ukraine and beyond in strengthening democracy and give people the opportunity to decide their futures themselves.

My genuine opinion is, to fight poverty and reach the ambitious goals set out by Agenda 2030, change must be anchored at the local level through data-driven, community-based improvements in means of transparency, participation, and accountability. I hope that this research will contribute to inspire and inform local policymakers to continue the hard and challenging work and to be engaged in making the world a better place for all.

Visby, Sweden, January 2023

Johan Lilja
Secretary General, ICLD

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Introduction

Insufficient political will on the part of incumbent rulers is frequently cited as a primary explanation for failure to create effective anti-corruption bodies or legal frameworks. Studies of both positive developments and policy failure (Batory 2012; Quah 2015; Jones 2017; Jongen 2021) mention political will as decisive, as do strategic policy documents on the anti-corruption agenda (USAID Office for Democracy and Governance 2006; Chêne 2010). Contemporary successful transformations such as those in Botswana, Hong Kong, Rwanda, Singapore, like many historical predecessors, occurred with an autocratic ruler at the helm, when political will is primarily a function of an individual ruler's preferences (Post et a. 2010; Quah 2017). Little is known about how anti-corruption political will develops under conditions of democracy (Mungiu-Pippidi 2015, 132).

This paper examines six cities in Ukraine, an electoral democracy (Boese et al. 2022, 25), which all exhibited positive development in political will to tackle corruption between 2018 and 2021. Corruption exists in many forms. The focus here is on so called grand corruption but at the municipal level, i.e. when politicians or upper-level civil servants use their positions of power for private gain. While paying bribes to access public services is immediately noticeable to citizens, grand corruption can have more far-reaching implications for the quality and efficiency of government services, as for example when officials in procurement processes award contracts to firms who offer the largest kickbacks rather than the best services.

In the cases examined, the impetus for change came from different types of actors and for divergent reasons; the organisational arenas for developing policy solutions differed both in terms of organisational approach and the actors involved. There was, in other words, no common model or sequence via which political will to mitigate corruption emerged. By focusing on the interactions among actors, described here as functions of communication, the paper identifies key steps in the *processes* that contributed to the emergence of political will, which can unfold and transpire in a plurality of organisational forms and arenas.
Section one defines political will as it relates to anti-corruption and explains why communication among key actors may be more crucial in anti-corruption efforts than other policy areas. After introducing the cases, the paper presents the findings from data analysis from 71 interviews, which identified seven communicative functions crucial to the development of anti-corruption political will, along with empirical illustrations from the cases. Together, the communicative functions promoted and sustained key actors' commitments to anti-corruption efforts, and fostered trust in one another's commitments to do the same.

Political will as it relates to anti-corruption efforts

What is political will?

Post et al. (2010) offer a useful baseline definition of political will, as "the extent of committed support among key decision makers for a particular policy solution to a particular problem" (2010, 659), and suggest veto player theory (Tsebelis 2002) as a tool to identify "key" actors.[1] The nature of corruption as a policy challenge requires two important extensions. Key actors have strong incentives to *profess* support for anti-corruption efforts, given public dissatisfaction with corruption. Effective policy responses require substantial investments of time and effort, however, and key actors may also profit from corruption, which together incentivise talking the talk without walking the walk. Moreover, the recognition that other key actors face the same incentives may cultivate distrust in others' commitments, further undermining incentives to invest effort in promoting change.

We therefore first add that key actors not only have the commitment to promote change but, crucially, also *trust one another's commitments to do the same*. If only a handful of actors, even if they are in positions of political power, make genuine efforts to promote reform, those efforts will have short-lived effects at best, and

1 Veto players (Tsebelis 2002) are those with the power and position to block a reform and whose positive assent is necessary to change the status quo (Post et al. 2010, p. 661).

reform promoters may even face even retaliation from others (Karklins 2005). Second, political will to reduce corruption requires not only that government actors commit to a change of rules or praxis, but business leaders as well. Corruption involves and benefits both corrupt officials but also colluding businesses; reforms may therefore impose new restrictions and requirements on business. Where non-compliance is the historical modus operandi, meaningful change requires active commitments from business leaders as well.

Reciprocally trusted commitments among key actors constitute a crucial but minimal component of political will. Political will can be said to be stronger when key actors also share a common understanding of the problem and agree upon effective policy solutions (Post et al., 2010), and when civil society actors also show strong anti-corruption commitments and involvement.

Communication and the development of political will

As Mungiu-Pippidi observes, "the challenge remains in building control of corruption by democratic means, therefore by solving collective action dilemmas" (2015, 132). Anti-corruption political will is in fact a collective action dilemma, as the actors involved have incentives to condemn corruption publicly, but also have incentives to do little to further reform efforts either in the hope that others will invest the resources needed to bring about change, or even to continue to profit from corruption.

Research on both real-world examples of successful efforts to resolve collective action dilemmas, as well as numerous studies of how participants perform in lab settings, both underscore the importance of communication (Ostrom 1998). Two separate meta-analyses of game theoretical research finds that conversation is the strongest predictor of individuals' ability to commit to a collectively beneficial payoff (Sally 1995, 61; Balliet 2010). That said, the finding that communication is important does not add much to saying that political will is important. What do actors *do* when they communicate such that anti-corruption political will might emerge and evolve?

We study communication processes through which information and knowledge are transferred and disseminated, actors describe their positions, and persuasion and learning occur (Ostrom 1998). In all of this, actors can be more, or less, open and truthful, strategic and manipulative, or clear and skilful. By looking at cases where the outcome is known, and by asking actors to describe the processes that moved the anti-corruption agenda forward, we distil communicative functions that enable the collective outcome.

Alternative explanations

Any political process cannot not be entirely understood divorced from the context in which it transpires. Conditions internal to a government body (agency) and conditions external to the government body (environment) can both shape what actors are in positions of power, the hierarchies and relations among them, and thus the issues discussed in political settings as well as how communication unfolds (Figure 1).

Contextual conditions shape and constrain the space for political action. This includes both the design of government institutions (Malena 2009; Woocher 2001) regime type (democracy), competitiveness of elections, the economic base and disruptive events (crisis and shock) (Brinkerhoff 2000), but also factors such as religion, ethnicity or other socially constructed institutions. Agency characteristics and capacity, and the interests of leadership or group within an agency, may also stimulate the emergence of political will (Blickle et al. (2018, 23). Leaders' personal beliefs and values, education, experiences, and relationships can play a role (Živanović 2015, 90).

These factors, even if *conducive* to the emergence of political will to curb corruption, will not by themselves lead to its emergence. Inaction is always an option. In addition, contextual and agency-level conditions may be slow to change, while facilitating and sustaining effective communicative processes may take place

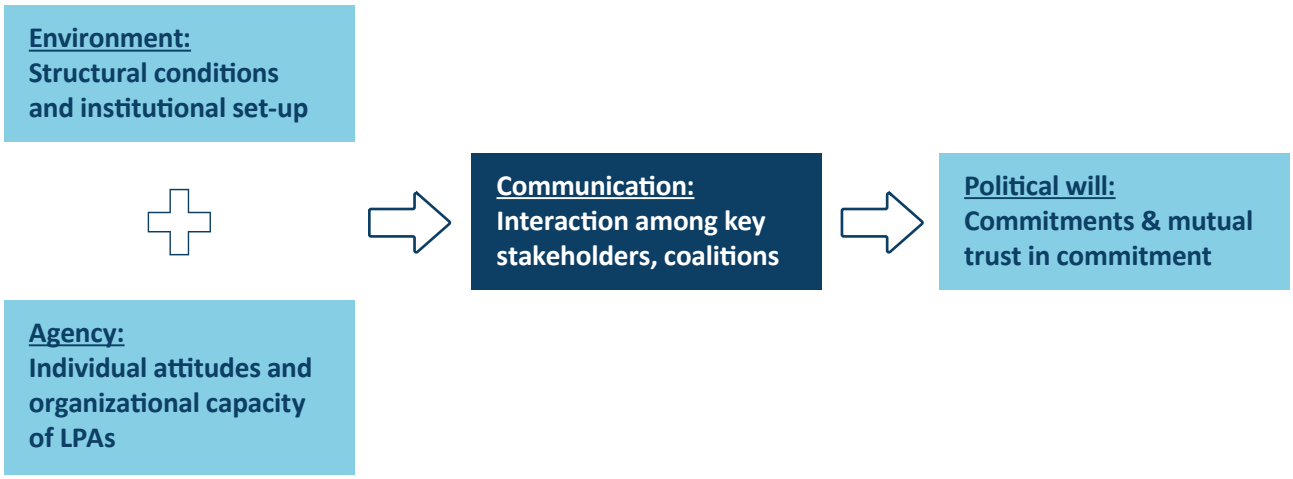

Figure 1 Conditions for political will

in the shorter term, provided that conditions are not completely adverse. The next section describes the conditions in our cases, as well as relevant developments at the national level, which also have implications for the scope conditions of our findings.

Context, methodology and overview of cases

Ukraine in 2015-2021: popular demand for anti-corruption amid high corruption perceptions and bold anti-corruption reforms

Ukraine at the time studied was an instructive albeit not a typical case for examining anti-corruption political will at the local level. Corruption was among the rallying issues of the 2013-2014 Revolution of Dignity and in the years following, civil society coalitions for transparent and accountable government operations mobilised at both national and local levels (Bader et al. 2019; Keudel 2022, 447–48). The Revolution created a window of opportunity and numerous anti-corruption reforms to increase transparency, accountability and public participation followed (OECD 2017).

First, Ukraine introduced administrative and criminal liability for all major corruption-related offenses as per UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).[2] Independent anti-corruption institutions were created, covering corruption prevention (NAPC), investigation (NABU and SAPO) and justice (HACC). The law on access to public information introduced far-reaching transparency regulation, obliging officials to publish their assets, and generating all information on public procurement – one of the most corrupt spheres of policymaking – in machine readable open data format. This provided both law enforcement agencies and grassroots activists with legal foundations to develop instruments for counteracting corruption.

Second, numerous digital tools have been created and civil society networks mobilised to make use of open data and to exercise accountability through monitoring, investigating, publishing, and reporting of corruption. The Prozorro platform for transparent public procurement, developed and utilised by civil society, is internationally recognised as a leading anticorruption technology, and a country-wide community of activists uses artificial intelligence to detect corruption. Similar initiatives have arisen around asset declarations, public budget expenditures, decision-making process (e.g. Bihus.info).

Finally, citizens and authorities developed and utilise numerous tools to enhance citizen engagement in policymaking: e-petitions, citizen consultations, participa-

2 In addition, the Law on Corruption Prevention was extended to cover local public authorities, which inter alia, required asset declarations of public officials and responsibility for false declaration. Some of them were rolled back, however, at the end of 2020, including illegal enrichment and liability for false statements in asset declaration.

tory budgeting and social audit tools. Against the historic background of a massive oligarchic influence on political parties and politics, this brought a major shift in the social contract, which increased citizen agency to shape the public sphere on an everyday basis.

In tandem with these reforms, the 2014 Decentralisation reform (Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine 2014) created fiscally independent and politically empowered municipalities, which became the main providers of public services (education, healthcare, utilities) and economic development (Roberts and Fisun 2014; Romanova and Umland 2019). Decentralisation increased opportunities for corruption locally but also gave rise to new demands for accountability (Huss et al. 2020). Exercising their relative autonomy to shape anti-corruption policies and tools within the national framework, local authorities enacted transparency and accountability regulations, though to varying degrees (for example, Fedynchuk et al. 2018; Khutkyy and Avramchenko 2019; Lukerya et al. 2016; TI Ukraine 2018).

Methodology: case studies in regional centres with political will for anti-corruption

Measurement of political will and case selection

This paper analyses the processes involved in the emergence of anti-corruption policies and tools in 2015-2021 in Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Poltava, Vinnytsia and Zhytomyr – all regional centres.[3]

In comparison to other cities, regional centres have more resources in terms of material assets and human capital (Dudley 2019). The six selected cases exhibited a positive change in political will for anti-corruption.

Our measure of political will includes two components: 1) commitment by key actors to legal and institutional reforms limiting their power (Brinkerhoff 2000, 243) and 2) trust of one set of relevant stakeholders (civil society) that others' commitments to anti-corruption are genuine.

The City of Content, a civil society - municipality dialogue platform, is located in this historical villa (built 1901, architect unknown).
Photo: CC Visem

3 We excluded Kyiv, because as a capital city it has a different governance model. We exclude Uzhhorod, because despite multiple efforts, we could not find civil society respondents for the survey. We also excluded Symferopil in the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and Donetsk and Luhansk due to their temporary illegal occupation by Russia. We included cities that performed the functions of the regional centres in the two latter regions: Mariupol and Sievierodonetsk.

Figure 2 Ukrainian municipalities and case study cities

We measure the first component as progress on at least one index of local authorities' transparency: TI Transparent Cities Index[4] or Local Government Publicity Index.[5] These indices reflect the existence of a register of municipal property, open data on places for municipal advertising, or having supervisory boards for municipal enterprises, all of which limit discretion among local authorities when managing resources.

The second component – the trust that anti-corruption commitments are genuine – reflects the assessments of anti-corruption activists. The measure builds on two original surveys of CSOs: the first face-to-face with 242 CSOs in 2018 (Huss et al. 2020) and the second conducted online in March-April 2021 of 172.

While not a panel study, some organisations were included in both rounds. Both surveys asked CSO activists to assess anti-corruption political will in their local government, and whether local anti-corruption efforts were moving "in the right direction", allowing us to identify positive change.[6]

Based on the combined measure of political will, we selected six cases with indications of political will and its positive development over time. First, we selected all cases that exhibited higher than average political will in 2021 and a minimal positive change compared to 2018; second, we dropped cases with negative assessment of the direction of anti-corruption in 2020-2021 (see Figure 3). Then we used progress on at least one index of local authorities' transparency to triangulate the selected cases.

4 https://transparentcities.in.ua/en, last accessed 17 July 2022
5 https://publicityindex.org/, last accessed 1 September 2021
6 The ideal measure would reflect the attitudes of all key actor groups about all other key actor groups (i.e. politicians, civil servants, businesspeople, civil society), but at present, such data is unavailable.

The selected cities are thus deviant (frontrunner) cases as they show positive change compared to other cities. It is important to note that civil society assessments of local public authorities' (LPAs) political will were not overwhelmingly strong, however, and that LPAs made efforts in other cities as well. These six cases show the most positive change, and our analysis seeks to map common elements in how it arose. The analysis does not test hypothesised explanations against each other, which would require comparing successful cases with less successful cases. Our research design instead aims at developing a theory of change by looking at similarities in these cases (Seawright and Gerring 2008, 302ff).

After identifying cases, we[7] conducted 71 semi-structured online interviews in the six selected cities (between 7 and 10 respondents per city) between May and August 2021. Interviewees included representatives of local authorities (deputy mayors, secretaries and members of a city council and executive public officers from different departments) members of relevant city council working groups, and representatives of local CSOs and the business sector. Most interviewees were involved in anti-corruption efforts, i.e. well-acquainted with the processes, and were identified in official statements, protocols of council sessions, media reporting, and the feedback of other deputies and executives.

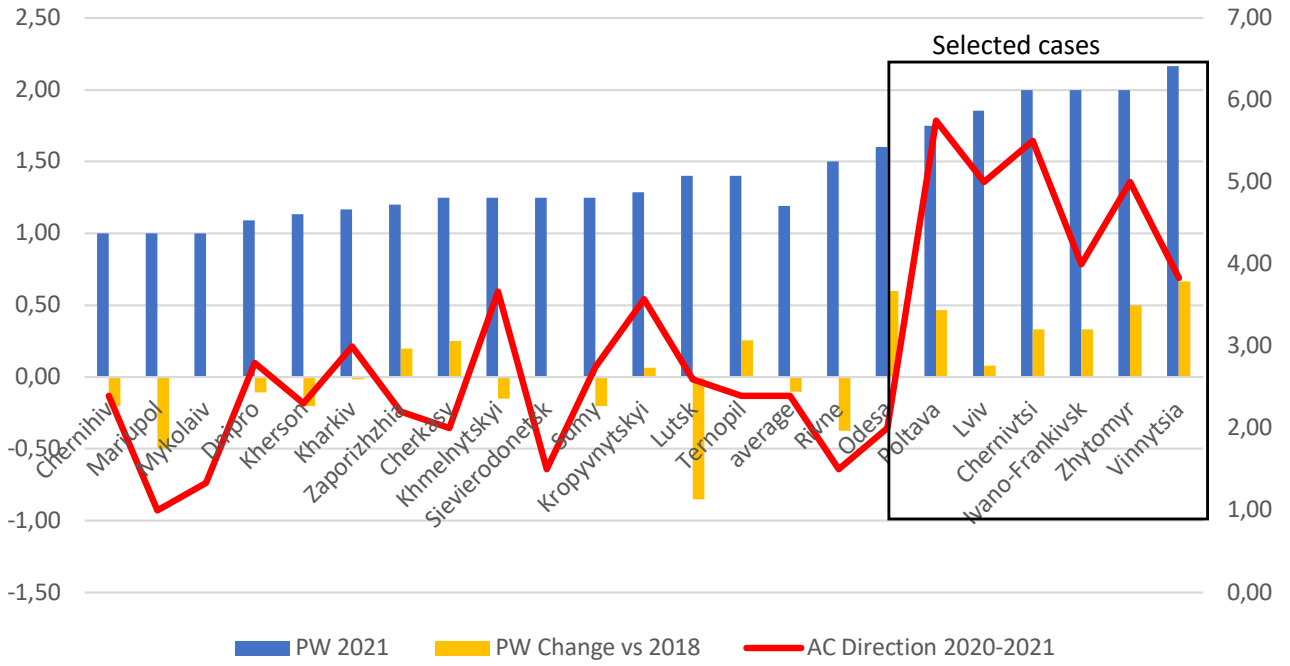

Figure 3 Positive change in political will based on CSO surveys

Note: Left y-axis PW2021 (blue bars) show city means of activists' survey responses (n=130) to question *To what extent is there political will among the local authorities in your city to fight corruption?* Response scale ranged from 1=absence of political will to 11=very high political will, rescaled 1=low (1-3), 2=medium (4-6), 3=high (7-11). PW2018 city mean of activist (n=191) responses to identical question, response scale 1=absence of political will, 3=very high political will. Yellow bars show change between 2018 and 2021 where positive values indicate positive development of political will. AC Direction 2020-2021 (red line) shows values on right y-axis of 2021 city mean of activists' survey responses to question *Please recall the anti-corruption actions of the LPA in your city over past 12 months, do you think they were going in the right direction?* 1=Not at all, 6=Yes, to some extent, 11=Absolutely.

7 The interviews were conducted in the Ukrainian language by the research team: Oksana Huss, Dmytro Iarovyi, Kristina Khambekova, Oleksandra Keudel, and Alina Los. At each interview, one team member led the conversation, and another made notes. Interviews were transcribed and coded (inductive, focused coding) with the help of MAXQDA.

Interview guides were adapted to the specific interlocutors. The guides consisted of 5 themes: definition of corruption and its causes, interlocutors' and LPAs' anti-corruption activities (rationale, achievements and pitfalls, conflict lines around their adoption), communication process around anti-corruption initiatives (involved actors, organisational forms of communication, content), subjective assessment of the effectiveness of an initiative, resources used (human, material, and international technical assistance), and outlook for the future (Appendix 3). Before each interview, we adjusted the guide based on our desk research of a person's involvement in anti-corruption activities in their city. Most interviews were recorded. We anonymised the responses for interlocutors' security in the face of the Russian full-scale invasion since reform-minded LPA members and activists became targets of the occupiers.

Overview of cases: local scope conditions, institutional settings, and anti-corruption activities

Scope conditions

Before presenting the results, a brief consideration of the scope conditions of our findings is in order. The cities shared some conditions (see Appendix 1) considered favourable for anti-corruption political will. Selected cities were, for example, pluralist in the sense of competing economic and political elites, which is a conducive environment for anti-corruption activism (Huss et al. 2020), transparency (Mazepus et al. 2020), and participatory reforms (Keudel 2022). Local politics is fairly competitive: no party dominates the councils; mayors face medium to high competition during elections. In Chernivtsi and Poltava, mayors lack party support as opposition parties control the council, which can hamper reform efforts.[8]

In terms of economic conditions, the six cases are typical of regional centres in terms of size with ca. 300,000 residents (except Lviv with ca. 700,000 residents) and are rather medium-developed cities, with Chernivtsi being the lowest-performing and Poltava the highest-performing. None has a single industry that dominates the local economy, which instead builds on trade and services, light industrial production (textile or automobile assembly); Lviv stands out for its IT-industry.

Demand for anti-corruption policies – a possible explanation of governance reforms – differs between the cities. Citizens perceiving corruption as a serious issue varies between 40% in Chernivtsi and 72% in Poltava (Rating Sociological Group 2016, 8); participatory demands also vary between 6% in Chernivtsi and 21% in Vinnytsia, respectively, the lowest and the highest values for Ukraine (Rating Sociological Group 2016, 105–7). Moreover, parties with anti-corruption agenda are not uniformly represented in the councils: while in Ivano-Frankivsk and Zhytomyr ca. 2/3 of seats are taken by parties with an anti-corruption agenda, in the rest of the cases this is slightly over 40% (own calculation - see Appendix 1; for clustering of Ukrainian parties into anti-corruption parties, we follow: Onopriychuk 2017, 17). Our cases are situated both in regions with Habsburg and Russian imperial heritage, belonging to the Western and Central macro-regions. Geography and history do not, in other words, systematically explain political will for governance reform in post-Maidan Ukraine.[9]

In sum, none of the cases have highly unfavourable conditions such as a closed order oligarchy. Even with favourable preconditions, the emergence of anti-corruption political will is by no means a certainty, however. In addition, other conditions commonly regarded as drivers of change differ across the cases, which indicates that they were not critical for the outcome. The communicative processes described below may have transformative potential in various types of settings in other words, though perhaps not under the most adverse conditions.

8 Competitive political environment culminated in Chernivtsi and Poltava with dismissal of those mayors by a respective council through the vote of no confidence in 2018. According to interlocutors, competition in Chernivtsi was conducive for more transparency (Interviewees 112, 125), while in Poltava in was rather a mayor's dismissal that unblocked transparency initiatives (Interviewee 563).

9 Our sample does not feature cases in South-eastern Ukraine. This is the most industrialized region, with regional centres often dominated by one industry or a sea port, which we rather link to less political will for anti-corruption than geographical location or historical legacies per se (pluralist economic structures are associated with more pluralist governance, and vice versa: Mera 2016).

Organisational setting

Procedurally, either the mayor, the executive departments, or council deputies may initiate policy change in the municipalities.[10] Mayors and council deputies are directly elected every five years in simultaneous local elections across the country; the executive committee is proposed by the mayor and confirmed by the council. The local self-government structure follows the "strong mayor" model: as the highest municipal authority and head of both the council and the administration, the mayor sets the council's agenda and organises its work, voting in the council, and chairs council sessions, and can issue executive orders (Congress of Local and Regional Authorities 2016, 28, 98). The city council checks the power of the mayor and holds the executive bodies accountable through, inter alia, rules of procedure, deputies' appeals, and elaborating/reviewing legislative proposals in standing commissions. The council can also cancel the acts of the executive, or initiate a vote of no confidence against the mayor.

Organisational forms of communication between the main governing bodies and non-governmental stakeholders varied in the selected cases, suggesting that there is no single model for structuring communication that facilitates anti-corruption political will. For example, there are no patterns in the usage of media or advisory councils or other communication platforms (such as standing commissions of a council) between the cities. Working groups, however, are common in the cases, but they are also common in less successful cases.
We did observe two commonalities in the organisation of anti-corruption work in the cities with emerging anti-corruption political will. First, CSOs were more likely to use direct forms of communication with LPAs, e.g. roundtables, trainings or providing LPAs directly with constructive policy proposals (Appendix 2). This points to the importance of dialogical spaces which allow for direct exchange of argumentation rather than only mediated communication in the public domain.

Second, in many successful anti-corruption initiatives, an individual or unit took on the role of facilitator or standard-bearer and played a key role in sustaining momentum in the communicative processes. Facilitators ensured that ideas generated at workshops were documented and kept on the agenda in subsequent meetings. In Lviv and Vinnytsia, LPAs created dedicated administrative units ("integrity sector" and "quality assurance unit", respectively) to coordinate and implement anti-corruption activities, such as corruption risk assessments or codes of ethics for the executive. Urban development agencies coordinated some anti-corruption efforts in addition to their typical fundraising and municipal project management activities. Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk and Zhytomyr, in contrast had anti-corruption advisors rather than special units. These advisors were often funded by an external donor and performed similar roles coordinating and sustaining LPA effort (e.g. EUACI).

While the dedicated actors, mentioned above, often assumed coordinating roles, some crucial initiatives were facilitated by CSOs, local deputies, or deputy mayors: for example, the adoption of public auctions was often led by CSOs (e.g. Zhytomyr, Lviv) or, instructively, the very creation of an anti-corruption administrative unit in Lviv, which materialised thanks to coordinating work of a local project manager. This echoes the finding from the citizen participation literature about an often invisible work of facilitators who connect the participants, deliver information to them, and use specific methods to structure communication (Escobar 2019). These actors map stakeholders, tailor arguments to their interest, "transport" the arguments between different arenas and stakeholders, organise group communications, in short enabling the communicative functions discussed in this paper.

While we do not find any evidence that units with facilitating functions perform better than individual consultants in coordinating the adoption of initiatives, the former may be better to enable implementation. An external consultant reflected that communication aided in the adoption of an integrity plan, but that subsequent implementation was weak. Part of his explanation was

10 The 1997 Law of Ukraine On Local Self-Government stipulates the structure of local government and the main provisions of legislative-executive relations at the local level.

that an external actor (he) was coordinating the development of the integrity plan and thus the LPA executives did not have the necessary ownership (715).

Anti-corruption initiatives

Anti-corruption policies introduced in these cities targeted both petty but primarily grand administrative corruption. Among the negotiated solutions the interlocutors referred to, for example, council rules of procedure with maximum public access to drafts, decisions, and proceedings of the council (especially, Chernivtsi, Lviv), public auctions for lease or sale of municipal property (land, real estate) – often via Prozorro.Sale (Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv, Chernivtsi, Vinnytsia),[11] geo-information systems (GIS) to visualise open data on municipal property and its lease/sale and on procured services such as street cleaning (Chernivtsi, Lviv, Vinnytsia, Zhytomyr), ethics codes for executives and for elected deputies (Vinnytsia, Ivano-Frankivsk, Lviv), dedicated anti-corruption strategy or integrity plan (all).

Open data has been introduced in all our cases, albeit with a different depth: e.g. while in IT-savvy Lviv open data is regularly updated thanks to the dedicated municipal institution, in, for example, Chernivtsi this has been challenging due to lacking human resources. Importantly, the sheer amount of adopted anti-corruption policies cannot be linked systematically in our cases to the perceptions of LPAs' political will by the CSOs.

Communicative functions: Identification and illustrations

Three overarching communicative functions emerged as crucial to developing and sustaining political will (see Figure 4).). The first relates to establishing the initial, requisite and mutual political commitments, i.e. key actors voice commitments and, crucially, can witness and recognise similar commitments among other key actors. This first component consists of three more specific functions: 1) identify and make visible the prospective benefits of collaborative behaviour, in this case, appropriate and effective rules and regulations to mitigate corruption; 2) make public statements committing to support action to address the issue at hand; and 3) hold each other to account to honour the commitments previously made.

The second overarching component relates to deepening and sustaining political will, i.e. making commitments operative. Here also three more specific functions were identified. Communication served 1) to map the dimensions and strains of corruption and to prioritise areas most in need of attention; 2) to translate abstract policy goals such as transparency, impartiality, and efficiency into operative policy solutions; and 3) to vet policy solutions among relevant stakeholders once they begin to take shape.

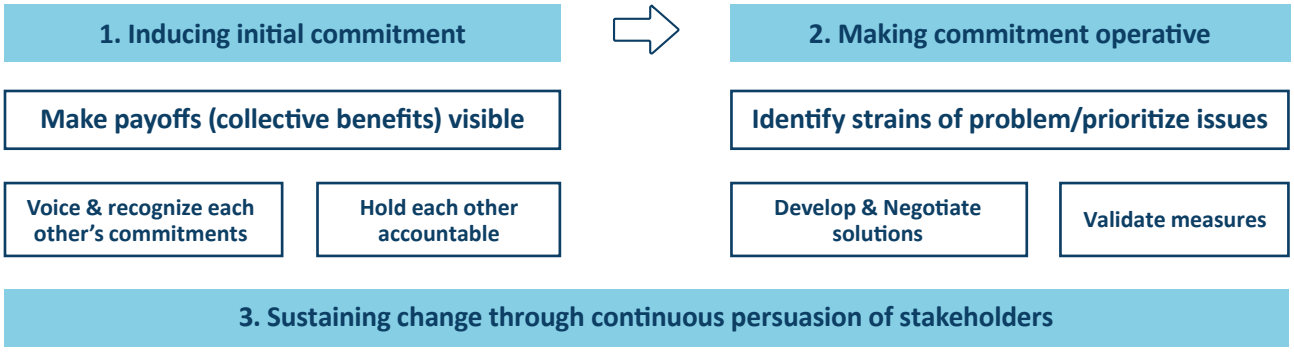

Figure 4 Functions of communication for political will to reduce corruption in local authorities

11 Use of municipal property is one large corruption issue, which can manifest via grand corruption forms (usually, because influential businesses are represented in the council and can decide on the rental or sale for non-competitive prices by colluding with other deputies) and petty corruption forms (when a public official can be bribed for simply checking the availability of property and/or for a positive decision).

The third overarching function relates to actors' continuous efforts to persuade relevant stakeholders and especially veto-players of the necessity for policy action. Together, these functions of communication facilitate stakeholder coordination and continually reaffirm commitments, helping actors overcome the mutual distrust typical in settings with systemic corruption.

Communication to induce initial commitment to anti-corruption effort

This overarching function relates to inducing commitments and ensuring key actors follow through on those commitments. We identified three relevant activities:

Make payoffs visible to stakeholders

Work on communicative action points out that communication may shape actors' preferences (Risse 2000). The first function of communication is thus *to define and create a shared sense of value with respect to the benefits of collaboration*. Anti-corruption implies an intangible payoff: improved quality of government. While research demonstrates that impartial and efficient government institutions benefit well-being, government effectiveness, and economic growth, the potential payoffs may nonetheless be poorly understood. Moreover, as in any collective action dilemma, some actors benefit tremendously from the status quo, and for those actors the benefits of collaboration may be yet more difficult to envision and appreciate. Fostering a joint understanding of the benefits of quality of government may be needed to induce commitments.

In the six cases studied, eradicating corruption was not a primary focus for any single actor initially, but emerged through communication among key actors as a necessary means to achieving other ends. As respondents recounted, this avoided the negative implication of identifying and punishing perpetrators. Instead, corruption was framed as an obstacle to achieving other benefits, i.e. the kind of payoffs which participating stakeholders could accrue from greater transparency or preventing corruption schemes that resulted market distortions in various forms. Individual deputies or executives at times acted as norm entrepreneurs (Finnemore and Sikkink 1998), initiating the discussion about payoffs. In other cases, tackling corruption emerged as imperative to achieving other positive outcomes.

Specifying the payoffs in a positive way "starts" the conversation from the assumption that all want these positive outcomes. The payoffs varied: some of the payoffs broadly concerned the city's economic development (Lviv, 433; Vinnytsia, 673), increased revenue for social services (Lviv, 453) or a vision for a new form of governance that could stimulate socio-economic development (Vinnytsia, 614) or could satisfy popular demand for more stakes in local decision-making (Poltava, 546). Other payoffs mentioned were sector- or agency-specific, such as the city's attractiveness for international investors (Chernivtsi, 112), a 'clean' reputation of a public authority and better standing in transparency rankings (Lviv, 433), protection of architectural heritage (Ivano-Frankivsk, 233), or better public service for citizens, such as healthcare (Zhytomyr, 732). Framing the discussion in this way from the outset made it difficult for outright opposition. Importantly, in none of the cases did norm entrepreneurs primarily seek post hoc accountability (investigations and punishment), which enabled bringing a broad range of local officials on board.

No specific organisational structures aided communication over payoffs in most cities and for most initiatives, with two exceptions. In Lviv, local authorities introduced a multi-stakeholder platform to shape the city's economic strategy together with the IT and tourist sectors. Representatives from the tourist sector raised the issue of complicated and untransparent regulations, for example, for the installation of summer terraces; this launched the process of review of municipal property management process more broadly (433). In Vinnytsia, the platform hosted civil society and invited local authorities to co-create new principles of interaction between authorities and civil society in the city (614). Unlike the platform in Lviv, the one in Vinnytsia has its own offices, which contributes to sustainability.

Lviv (tower of Dormition church and the dome of Dominican Church) - one of the main cultural centres of Ukraine,
Photo credit Oksana Huss

Voicing and recognising others' commitments

Resolving a collective action dilemma and sustaining cooperation requires that actors "gain a reputation for being trustworthy and reciprocate others' efforts to cooperate" (Ostrom 2010, 551). A first step is that actors need to declare their commitment to pursue a collaborative strategy. While seemingly self-evident, in collaborative efforts under a high degree of uncertainty, as with efforts to reduce corruption, such proclamations are needed. Developing rules to mitigate corruption requires considerable effort, and tacit support is unlikely to convince others of intended effort. Key actors publicly proclaiming their intention to commit to a collaborative effort may also endogenously induce change in the proclaimer, especially if done repeatedly. "Over time, people come to believe what they say, particularly if they say it publicly" (Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999, 15). Moreover, when a critical mass of actors publicly commit to reform, others become more susceptible to shaming if they do not follow suit.

In our six cases, relevant stakeholders verbalised their commitment to a specific policy measure, or to the principles of transparency and accountability in government, to one another and the broader public. Local authorities made such proclamations in a range of settings, such as expert roundtables (e.g. in Chernivtsi and Lviv), assembly meetings at which CSOs were in attendance (Chernivtsi), public hearings, and investor meetings (both Vinnytsia). Interestingly, our interviewees report one of the functions of the expert roundtables (such as on local democracy or procurement) was to elicit from municipal leaders commitments for anti-corruption initiatives or at least for the principles of transparency and accountability . When the mayor invited CSOs to internal meetings of public officials, he enabled trilateral political-executive-civil society mutual exchanges of commitment. An executive officer recalls that these meetings made one feel like "whether you want it or not, [we] had to take measures and act in this [transparency] direction" (Chernivtsi, 112). Communicating with the public directly on construction projects, Vinnytsia LPAs committed in front of a broad audience to address issues in the construction sector.

Chernivtsi (Armenian church) - one of the most multi-ethnic cities in Ukraine,
Photo credit Oksana Huss

Mutual holding to account

An important consequence of publicly stated commitments is that they set the stage for another communicative function, which relates to converting cheap talk into costly effort (Risse 2000, 8). Once persons of authority publicly commit to a reform effort, they help create or affirm a normative standard against which they can later be held to account. To hold an authority accountable entails reference to a shared principle or legal standard. Reference to such a standard elevates an expression of criticism into an accountability action, and transforms a chorus of critics into an accountability forum, i.e. the set of actors who might raise uncomfortable questions without having the formal authority of a principal (Bovens 2007; Olsen 2015). Public proclamations of commitments thus make an actor susceptible to accusations of back-peddling, deceit or grandstanding. Publicly stated commitments are, in fact, grandstanding unless followed by the communicative actions described here.

In the six cases, this type of communication occurred when activists reminded authorities to adhere to their own procedures, decisions, and public commitments related to corruption prevention. Importantly, politicians also exhibited this function in invoking each other's commitments to pressure each other to follow through on pledges. This took place in public as well as private and professional spaces, and was carried out by both governmental and non-governmental actors. In public spaces, citizens would attend council meetings to "remind" the council on their own commitments – often this referred to issuance of construction permits when authorities were making decisions against formal regulations, raising suspicions of corruption (Chernivtsi, Ivano-Frankivsk). A deputy from Vinnytsia recalls how CSOs attending council and commission meetings acted as an accountability forum for the deputies, which prevented them from adopting corruption-prone regulations:

> ...There are many CSOs attending council meetings. CSOs also attend meetings of the standing commissions. And this is very important. I think that CSOs are the organisations who move this issue. They prevent from considerations of [draft regulations] with a corruptive purpose (Vinnytsia, 683).

An employee of the integrity unit in Lviv similarly reminded the mayor in private conversation of his own anti-corruption stance when progress lagged. Local politicians in Chernivtsi established an informal communication platform between themselves and the mayor to collaboratively identify and remove corruption risks or particularism in each other's proposals:

> If such questions even arise in the council of the majority that this or that proposal should be supported, ... it is very strictly checked for compliance with the legislation. No one in this majority wants to support illegal things even if they would come from a deputy of the council majority or mayor himself, [just] because he is a mayor. (133)

Participation in working groups made attendees vulnerable to accountable actions even without having made voiced commitments. For example, an executive officer recalls that he would confront a politician-member of the group for not supporting a decision during voting, precisely with an argument that "you have been to the working group, and did not raise any objections" (422, Lviv).

Communication to make commitments operative

The second overarching function of communication relates to moving from commitments to tangible policies and technical solutions. Here as well, three specific functions emerged in the cases.

Identifying strains of the problem and prioritising issues to tackle

Through dialogue, actors were able to assess the effects of corruption on local business and government operations, and to identify specific corruption schemes prevalent locally. Some definitions of political will stipulate that a necessary condition is that key actors share a common conceptualisation of the problem at hand (Post, Raile, and Raile 2010). As corruption schemes vary and accountability systems have myriad loopholes and short-

comings, thorough mapping of the terrain is needed. Paradoxically, corruption may on the one hand be evident to government officials and business actors, and even civil society and the general public, but only a small set of insiders are likely to know the details of how rents are extracted. Developing effective policy solutions requires thorough analysis and evaluation of the problem. Evaluating corruption and identifying its specific strains is particularly challenging, however, and may require communication carried out under conditions of anonymity.

Some of these communicative processes occurred in interviews with local officials conducted by an analyst to assess the quality of the local procedures in which informants described the "bottlenecks" of procurement processes or the "price" (the typical bribe or kickback amount) of a construction permit. A public official from Chernivtsi recalls such an interview with a newly-appointed head of one of the departments:

> [The head of the department] says that according to his estimations of corruption schemes at the level of a department head in small Chernivtsi – it [a bribe] was a question of $30-40,000 USD, [for] issues such as approval of the construction conditions and limitations, construction plans. (152)

In others, analysts interviewed officials to map corruption risks by identifying government operations with low rates of compliance with transparency requirements, or where officials have a high degree of discretion in the use of resources with insufficient oversight. On occasion, such interviews were a part of formal Corruption Risks Assessments (CRA) and included end users, mostly businesses, or monitoring organisations from civil society (in Chernivtsi, Lviv and Vinnytsia).

In Lviv, a municipal unit entrusted with corruption prevention together with a local CSO, kicked off their co-creation of the anti-corruption strategy with a workshop to identify corruption strains. They invited businesspeople whose activities depend on renting municipal property or receiving permits, local activists, and a neutral facilitator (a university professor) to organise the discussion and distil the primary findings (444). In Zhytomyr, the LPAs with the financial support of EUACI commissioned a representative survey of residents to help define the most egregious types of corruption; they commissioned an audit of the central municipal hospital as a result of citizen feedback (732).

Developing operative solutions

While identifying strains of the problem may entail confidential dialogues with embedded actors, developing solutions instead entails seeking out and harnessing relevant policy and legal expertise. Policy brokers and policy entrepreneurs may, like norm entrepreneurs, be central to developing such solutions (Mintrom and Norman 2009), and may be representatives from higher levels of government or civil society, possibly with backing and training from international donors.

Like several of the functions mentioned above, however, developing operative solutions need not result from the efforts of a specific type of actor nor from the transfer and diffusion of policy solutions from elsewhere. Some solutions may emerge from local deliberations and negotiations regarding the most appropriate solutions to meet local conditions (see Wickberg 2020).

In our cases, communication enabled reformers to integrate expert policy knowledge with experiential knowledge of local conditions to develop anti-corruption tools or procedures to close loopholes. For example, in Lviv public officials used users' ideas to elaborate an alternative procedure based on a discovered corruption case:

> When we analysed the internal procedure of that department [where corruption was detected], we communicated both with honest employees and honest businesses to find out how they see the remaking of the system so that it didn't let corruption risks materialise, but at the same time didn't create too many bureaucratic hurdles" (444)

The forms of communication varied between public consultations, working group discussions, bilateral conversations and municipality-donor dialogue. In some cities, the coordinating agency or an external consultant held bilateral conversations with heads of executive departments to "translate" the requirements for trans-

parency into specific technical solutions, which it would then refine together with the respective department (444 in Lviv, 125 in Chernivtsi, 732 in Zhytomyr when developing the integrity plan). In other cases, the LPA would develop operative solutions together with international experts and local civil society:

> After [a series of expert interviews and resident survey on corruption issues] we started elaborating the integrity plan together with respective departments, with deputies, and with an engagement of civil society activists who work in the relevant sphere (Chernivtsi, 173)

> Now we are preparing 4-5 activities, which we are discussing with international experts, with civil society organisations who work here and are active [in the city] who helped us devise the [Open Government Local Action] plan (Vinnytsia, 614).

Validating proposed measures

Communication to collaboratively develop solutions enhances the "goodness of fit" of policy solutions. In order to further ensure the viability of these solutions, communicative interactions with the actors directly involved in implementation may be needed. Formalised consultation with stakeholders often occurs in policy development; policy proposals circulate to agencies, service providers and industry for input and feedback. This consultative work serves both to refine proposals as well as aid in the legitimation of the proposal (Peters 1992). Consultation can allow for a co-constitution of policies rather than a mechanical process of injecting ideas and negotiating interests. Vetting policy solutions may both refine proposals and adapt to local conditions, and pre-empt opposition and obstruction at a later date.

In the cases, once a draft of a policy solution was available, local authorities carried out "reality checks" of the proposed measures with relevant audiences, ranging from experts to potentially affected stakeholders. Authorities sought feedback through informal bilateral consultations, public presentations and round tables, as well as advisory bodies of experts and activists. In Chernivtsi, a personal acquaintance facilitated the process:

> A councillor, who communicates very well with them – with these civic activists – he threw them our draft regulations, they read and made remarks to us, where they saw that what we were doing was wrong, so to say (133).

Elsewhere, drafts were discussed in groups of experts and potentially affected stakeholders. In Lviv, the anti-corruption unit drafted a code of ethics for councillors and convened a meeting with councillors and the council secretariat to "criticise the code and make something better of it." Some councillors raised objections to the draft, prompting revisions (444). In Vinnytsia, draft proposals of any policy underwent mandatory review by sectoral advisory bodies, to collect "proposals, commentaries and recommendations, on the basis of which executive authorities formulate decisions to be adopted" (624).

Politicians of course discussed and modified policy proposals in formal settings, such as through standing commissions, where councillors also signal whether they generally support the proposal (Vinnytsia 673, Lviv 453, 493, Ivano-Frankivsk, 233). Some cities instead used more informal "agreement councils," ad hoc meetings of faction heads before the plenary, where, once again, participants assess each other's readiness to support the measures (Chernivtsi 112). At times, consultants funded by international donors would develop proposed measures and then validate them in more informal communication with relevant actors (Lviv on Integrity Sector, Chernivtsi on Integrity Plan).

Persuasion to sustain change

Persuasion constitutes a core element of both policy change and norm diffusion, and consequently of the work of policy and norm entrepreneurs (e.g. Finnemore and Sikkink 1998; Mintrom and Norman 2009; Risse, Ropp, and Sikkink 1999; Tarrow 2005). Studies of norm change tend to see persuasion as a process of socialisation through which entrepreneurs seek to induce internalisation of norms, i.e. by changing actors' understanding of what it means to be a good person, or state. As change almost always implies a cognitive burden for actors involved, and

potentially also foregoing rents, continual persuasion is essential.

As a communicative function, persuasion was at work in several of the functions mentioned above (as suggested in Figure 4), though it was not necessarily so. For example, key actors sometimes on their own initiative publicly commit to anti-corruption efforts, but at times were persuaded to do so by the force of the better argument, or fear of reputational costs. Heads of agencies participated in the co-constitution of policy solutions, but at times did so only after shared objectives or moral or legal standards were invoked. As an example of the latter, a local public official in Vinnytsia recalls meetings at the standing commission for the legality, where they discussed whistleblowing procedures:

> I informed the mayor, informed at the standing commission. I come, tell why this is important, how it corresponds to the law, how…if people would know where to report corruption, then some will be afraid to do corruption. They [deputies] ask questions, about how this will be organised (634).

In our cases, this function was especially prevalent when a draft regulation or initiative needed political backing, or when implementation and follow-through of a policy initiative was weak. In both situations, policy entrepreneurs delivered tailor-made arguments to convince stakeholders to keep on track or support their drafts, like here in Zhytomyr:

> I started my anti-corruption activities from an electronic office, this is my initiative No.1. This must be decided by the council. So, my task is to prepare these councillors so that they adopt the decisions. I convince them during work in the commissions. […] We discuss all draft at commissions, so I will have an opportunity to tell more [of this initiative], to provide evidence and tell why this is needed and why this is so (763).

Indeed, in the six cases, interviewees recounted the role of persuasion to overcome inaction, disagreement or opposition to proposed initiatives by key municipal managers or deputies.

Persuasion assumed two forms. First, argument sought to highlight payoffs either for the individual (e.g. if an executive agrees to co-create transparent procedures for their department, it will allay suspicions of corruption, 433), or for the agency (e.g. efficiency gains, since clear rules would expedite administrative decision making). Second, in a more deliberative form, actors would address concerns and objections with explanations and counter-arguments. For example, faced with an idea of an electronic auction, a municipal property department in Lviv expressed doubts about the economic advantages of the approach and expressed concerns that the tool would be cumbersome for businesses. In response to this, actors agreed to pilot a small-scale test. Parties thus allowed themselves to be persuaded instead of simply insisting on original preferences (453, 493).

Conclusions

Political will, often noted as crucial to the success and failure of anti-corruption efforts, rarely takes centre stage in corruption research. As such, the question of what processes and factors might induce or foster anti-corruption political will has largely been overlooked. Our study proposes a means to study anti-corruption political will empirically. Based on interviews describing the processes, we then inductively pinpointed seven communicative functions that transpired in all six settings with sustained will for institutional reform.

The six cases hold lessons for other local public authorities, though certain contextual factors are worth reiterating. Ukraine at the time of the interviews experienced a window of opportunity. National protests in 2015 placed corruption at the top of the policy agenda and ignited anti-corruption movements at the local level throughout the country. Comprehensive decentralisation reforms created opportunities for change and reform in local government. That said, we found no evidence of positive change in most cities surveyed, pointing to the question this report has sought to answer: what processes and efforts explain the emergence of political will.

To reiterate, the organisation and institutional frameworks for reform efforts varied between and

within the cities. While working groups to develop measures were used in all six cities, they also were used in cities where anti-corruption political will was not detected. Similarly, no patterns emerged in the usage of round tables, media or advisory councils, or other communication platforms, suggesting that communication can assume many organisational forms. In all cases, facilitators – units or individuals with skills to organise communication and sustain momentum – were instrumental in sustaining the process. Communication does not depend on specific individuals, but rather is fostered through a facilitation skill set. Such a set can be trained and placed in different organisational forms within an LPA or externally. A skilled facilitator makes the reform process more robust in a way that it will continue even if some actors exit the process. The analysis identified three clusters of communicative functions which together develop a collective commitment to anti-corruption and a mutually shared confidence in others' commitments. Communication helps key stakeholders define the "stakes" from their own perspective and then reaffirms commitments throughout the process. Second, communication was crucial in identifying strains of problem, prioritising the most egregious schemes for rent extraction, developing solutions, and then validating those measures. And third, persuasion, often carried out by dedicated standard-bearers, creates coherence in and across the messy communicative events. Importantly, these communicative functions do not represent a linear process: one need not start by making payoffs visible and gradually move towards vetting of the operative solutions through persuasion. In our cases, the development of operative solutions was often the entry point for communication: actors came to realise and articulate the payoffs while exchanging arguments for and against operative solutions.

In contrast to some conceptualisations of political will which see political and administrative actors as the source of initiatives for anti-corruption policies (Brinkerhoff 2000, 242–43), the cases suggest that the impetus at times came from non-governmental actors, and in some cases emerged from interactions among actors rather than from a single actor. Political will emerged in cities with both proactive and reactive stances of authorities, provided that they allowed and engaged in communication that then transform their initial openness into collaborative action on anti-corruption measures. Reactive openness may be sufficient when local officials have an intent to counter corruption but lack the internal capacity to take needed measures; international technical assistance in this case is highly useful. In the long term, however, developing internal capacity may be needed to sustain political will.

From a policy perspective, the findings are instructive and, in several respects, encouraging. If political will is seen as individual-level intent or conviction, the best advice for those hoping for reform might simply be to wait and hope for the proper leader to emerge. The findings presented here indicate that even where officials are only moderately willing – and do not even create a specific unit to promote anti-corruption reform – it is still possible to initiate and build momentum for anti-corruption initiatives. Given an impetus for reform either on the part of civil society or business, positive change can ensue.

Recommendations for strengthening communication efforts

The three functions of communication that promoted anti-corruption political will together point to a flattening of hierarchies between authorities and society. Knowledge and information flow in both directions and civil society actors feel entitled to demand that politicians keep their promises. As such, anti-corruption-related communication may have significantly contributed to the broader democratisation processes in Ukraine. To sustain both the political will and the ensuing democratisation from below, we recommend focusing on four approaches that LPAs may undertake and international donors may support:

1. Develop **multi-stakeholder platforms** tasked to define relevant local collective benefits (e.g. a vision for socio-economic development, revitalisation).

This has three goals. First, a complex issue like corruption needs all relevant stakeholders – authorities, civil society and business – onboard and trusting in each other's commitments. Regular interaction helps foster trust, a necessary step is settings with systemic corruption. Second, such interactions need to be sustained over time; institutionalisation of such platforms is therefore beneficial. Third, the collective benefits to be defined should be framed as positive outcomes, to which all stakeholders can relate. "Combatting corruption" implies searching for perpetrators, which can hamper commitment and coordination efforts.

2. Employ **facilitators to structure and sustain constructive communication** regarding anti-corruption policies, and invest in strengthening their facilitation skills. Such actors may come from government institutions and agencies (e.g. anti-corruption/integrity units or urban development agencies), civil society, universities or business. Effective long-term facilitation requires institutional support (funding for the space, salaries) and training in facilitation techniques and methods, conflict resolution, and stakeholder management.

3. Support **data collection and analysis skills** among employees of local authorities, especially in facilitating institutions and agencies. Evidence-based argumentation is the point of departure to credibly convince the opponents of reform regarding expected benefits. Identifying strains of corruption or developing and vetting measures all require skills to correctly evaluate systems in place and develop solutions to improve those systems. Methodological expertise can be outsourced, but local policy actors need to be able to assess data needs, quality, and relevance.

Epilogue

Since the full-scale Russian invasion on 24 February 2022, some of our interlocutors have enlisted to defend Ukraine as members of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. Others ensure that LPAs function despite the war: they continue providing local public services to residents and internally displaced persons, support (repeatedly attacked) infrastructure, and do so under immense psychological duress of uncertainty and incessant news of fallen soldiers and civilians, friends, and strangers. At the same time, there is a confidence that Ukraine will prevail, and discussions of post-war reconstruction within Ukraine and with international partners are ongoing. The communicative processes propelling political will described here may be informative for designing the recovery interventions since mutual trust in each other's commitment to integrity during the recovery process will be crucial to sustaining local development. These findings may also have a broader relevance for the policy community. Citizen engagement in anti-corruption work may contribute to building societal resilience to better face different crisis situations. Communication functions to coordinate difficult change among many stakeholders, as our research suggests, also develop the networks that can be deployed to respond to other challenges and crises quickly and effectively.

The communicative patterns described in this report exemplify an ongoing broader shift in the social contract in Ukraine. In the emergent social contract, Soviet-style relations of citizen subordination to authorities give way to democratic accountability and trust-based citizen-state relations. During the finalisation of this report in January 2023, Ukrainian journalists and investigative anti-corruption institutions (NABU and SAPO) uncovered cases of high-level corruption in two ministries. While the revelations produced a public outcry, they also triggered a chain of resignations and further investigations rather than merely remaining a public scandal – an unprecedented outcome of anti-corruption policies so far. These events promisingly suggest a new emerging social contract in Ukraine: public trust is more valuable than personal loyalty and accountability institutions, both vertical or societal, check the power of public officials.

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Appendices

Appendix 1 Contextual conditions in the selected cities

	Chernivtsi	Ivano-Frankivsk	Lviv	Poltava	Vinnytsia	Zhytomyr
Population*	264,298	238,196	717,273	279,593	369,739	261,624
Economic conditions						
Macro-economic region	**West**			**Centre**		
GRP UAH/capita**	46,136	63,254	85,198	134,449	83,175	70,247
Main industries	Trade (incl. cross-border), services; light industry: food & beverages, woodwork, mechanical engineering	Mechanical engineering light industry: food & beverage, textile, clothing, leather products, wood products, paper; printing	IT cluster, tourism, engineering and automobile industry, light industry: food &, beverages tobacco, textile, clothing, leather products, publishing, and printing	Trade and services, mechanical engineering light industry: construction materials, food, wood products, paper & paper products, light industry, developing IT industry	Trade and services, light industry: food construction materials, mechanical engineering, paper, small arms; printing activities	Trade and services, light industry: food & beverages, textile, clothing construction materials
Political conditions						
Competition for mayor's position***	4.26	4.97	3.51	7.04	3.71	5.70
% of seats of the largest party°	24%	33%	38%	19%	37%	26%
Does the mayor belong to the largest party?°	no	yes	yes	no	yes	yes
Corruption issue salience (demand)						
Corruption as problem°°	40%	56%	64%	72%	57%	52%
Citizen preference for participatory mechanisms (2016)°°	6%	12%	16%	9%	21%	8%
% of seats for anti-corruption parties°°°	50%	79%	53%	57%	46%	71%
Historical legacies						
Under Imperial rule	Habsburg, 1775-1918	Habsburg, 1772-1918		Russian, 1775-1917	Russian, 1797-1918	Russian, 1795-1918
Under Soviet rule	1939-1991			1919-1991	1920-1991	1919-1991

*Population of the largest Ukrainian cities (2022). Available at: https://cutt.ly/YV8LMHS (last accessed 6 October 2022)

**The data reflect Gross Regional Product (GRP) per capita (in factual prices) as similar value for the level of the city was not available. Source: State Statistics Service of Ukraine (2019), available at: https://ukrstat.gov.ua/druk/publicat/kat_u/2021/zb/04/zb_vrp_2019.pdf, p. 23 (last accessed 3 October 2022). Minimum value is UAH 18,798 (Luhansk region), maximum value is UAH 320,885 (Kyiv City), average is UAH 85,624.

***Own calculation following G. Bilev. "Politics in the Provinces: Subnational Regimes in Russia, 1992–2005." In Inside Countries, edited by Agustina Giraudy, Eduardo Moncada, and Richard Snyder, 115–55. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108678384.004, p. 128-129. The larger the index, the larger the competition. Smallest competition in 2015 was in Kharkiv (2.19) and the largest in Uzhgorod (8.95).

°Own calculation based on the data of the Central Election Committee of Ukraine for 2015 Municipal Elections (archived by the researchers from https://www.cvk.gov.ua/vm_2015/; not available as of 24.02.2022 in the open access). Largest value for the % of seats of the largest party is in Kharkiv (68%), smallest is in Poltava and Cherkasy (19%); average is 34%.

°°Rating Sociological Group. 2016. Ukrainian Municipal Survey, 20 January - 8 February 2016. Kyiv: International Republican Institute. http://ratinggroup.ua/en/research/regions/vseukrainskiy_municipalnyy_opros.html., For corruption salience – see p. 8. Average value is 58%, minimum is 37% (Mariupol), maximum is 89% (Sumy). For preference for participation – see p. 105-107. Question: "In your opinion, what spheres should be of priority for your newly elected local authorities? Creation of citizen participation mechanisms in the community". For reference: 13% is an average for Ukraine; Average for West – 14%; Average for Centre – 12%; Average for Southeast – 11%. Highest values were 21% for Vinnytsia and Lutsk.

°°°We calculate % of anti-corruption parties in local councils based on classification of parties as "anti-corruption" in the study of reforms in public procurement (Onopriychuk 2017, 15–17) by adding all mandates of these parties and dividing by total number of seats in a council. For local parties, for which no classification was available, we first checked, whether corruption was an issue in party program or manifesto in 2015 local elections.

Appendix 2 Channels and forms of communication by CSOs in the selected cases compared to the rest of the regional centres

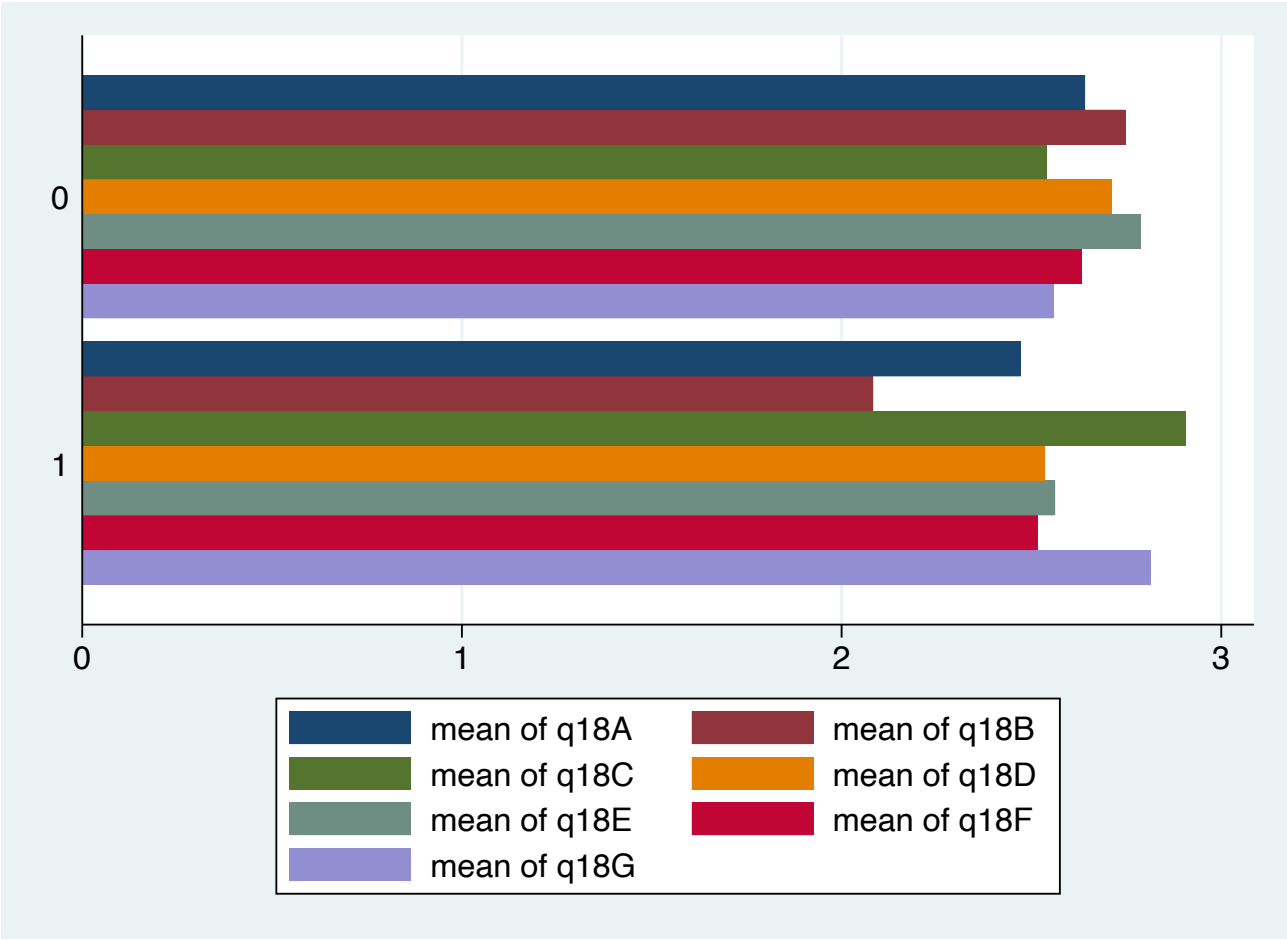

Figure A2. Frequency of CSO use of different engagement strategies. Bars represent mean of CSO responses for each item in case study cities (=1) compared to non-case study cities (=0)

Question: In the past 12 months, when you wished suggesting ideas/proposals on countering or prevention of corruption to local authorities, how did you communicate those to your LPA and how often? 4=We do this regularly 3=Do occasionally 2=We've done it on a few projects 1= Do not do this at all

Items: 18A Informal communication with the mayor or council or public servants (e.g. face-to-face meetings, via phone, messengers etc); 18B By appealing via social media publicly to authorities or their representatives (e.g. tagging institutions and/or officials on Facebook); 18C By appealing to public opinion (e.g. a talk-show on TV, interviews in media); 18D By active participation at events such as round tables, thematical trainings, public hearings or consultations; 18E By mobilising citizens in various ways (flash mobs on social media, demonstrations); 18F By consulting authorities directly with constructive policy or action proposals (including based on policy analysis); 18G By creating and/or publicising rankings of your city/local authorities compared to others

Appendix 3 Interview guide

Below is the list of questions, split in thematical blocks. Depending on the professional focus and experience of an interlocutor, questions were adapted.

DEFINITION OF CORRUPTION

1. How do you assess the issue of corruption in your city?
   → Is it a prevalent issue? If so, in which sectors? Why? What are the main forms of corruption you see?
2. Recall when you have been confronted with the corruption issues you have now mentioned for the first time.
   → What reasons for corruption did you consider crucial back then? What counteraction did you consider relevant back then?
   → Have you ever changed your opinion about the reasons and consequences of corruption since
If so, why and when?

AC INITIATIVES: AC STRATEGY/ POLICY/ ACTIVITY

3. What can you personally do in your capacity as a [position] to resolve named issues/ counteract corruption? (Checking perception of personal capacity – Influence, Authority, Resources – and political opportunity structures)
5. Can you name several activities/initiatives that you actively designed to counteract corruption? (In the following questions, focus either on the overall AC strategy of the city if available, OR general measures (e.g. code of ethics, e-governance) OR most collaborative initiative related to the sector, where AC performance was highlighted by the CSOs in the specific city (public procurement, education, healthcare)
6. Why did you decide to prioritise (by providing your support) these concrete initiatives? (Which were the reasons/motives for you to do so?)
   → PERSONAL BACKGROUND: Role of previous experience (e.g. revolving door effect from civil society, business)
   → PERCEPTION OF ENVIRONMENT: Role of corruption and anti-corruption on the national level; Perception of pressure from the civil society, electorate, business [cover for alternative explanations]
   → Follow-up: Was there anyone or anything (an event, an actor) that prompted you to pay attention to these particular initiatives? Was there any request for this kind of change from outside the LPA?
7. Where did the idea of these activities/initiatives come from? Was it an individual or a collective decision? Who participated in its development?
   → if individual: who, how?
8. Have you experienced any reluctance/hesitation to support that idea? If so, why? What were alternative propositions?
   → Role of ENVIRONMENT (probe for opposition of other council members, business sector, executive department heads, possible counter-action from the oblast or national level}
   → What happened to these alternative suggestions/critique? (check, if some persuasion work was done or rather critics excluded)
9. Why do you think these particular activities were more suitable than others to counteract corruption? (Possible follow-up: why did you think they would work? What aspects of corruption in this sector/or problem they mention did you aim to tackle with these activities?)
   → What are hidden assumptions about the impact mechanism of the activities?
10. Have you tried any other activities/ started initiatives that didn't work out? If so, why they didn't work out?

COMMUNICATION PROCESS

11. Who else is involved in [Name of the initiative]? What are their roles/ responsibilities? Could you give me an example that demonstrates well, how decisions are taken?

→ Elaborate on types of relations, pay specifically attention to relations between authorities and civil society, individuals and collective actors, transnational partnerships/collaborations and business sector etc.

→ Elaborate on hierarchies, how it's initiated, what is the communication culture (Possible questions: who initiated this proposal? How was this decision eventually made/who had the last word?)

12. Do you collaborate with other actors (CS organizations / authorities/ business / IOs)? If so, how does this collaboration take place?

→ Do you think the intentions of these actors with regards to anti-corruption are serious and honest?

→ Do you think the actors involved in development or implementation of the AC initiative are convinced that it is necessary?

→ Probe whether there are any decision-making or communication platforms (collective formal or informal) involved? Or is it rather informal?

→ Do you see any active engagement from the side of the business with regards to AC? If yes, how does this engagement look like? How is the demand communicated? What is the demand?

→ What about international organisations? If involved: in what ways (e.g. conditionality)?

13. Have misunderstanding or even conflicts ever arisen in the cooperation? If yes, why/ about which issues? How were they resolved? Was the (common) understanding achieved? If yes, how? If not, what was the solution?

14. Are there any actors that you decided to exclude? Why?

OUTCOMES: assessment of use and results

15. Do you have an example when you wanted to give up the [Name of the initiative]? Why?

16. So, can you call [Name of the initiative] a success-story? If so, why? If not, why? Could you give some examples?

RESOURCES

17. How did you make [Name of the initiative] happen? What was necessary for [Name of the initiative] to get started / to work?

18. Do you have personnel assigned to this issue? Did they receive any training?

19. What is the budget devoted to [Name of the initiative] (if there is such a budget line)? What are the sources of funding? Have you ever faced any challenge in allocating funding to that?

FUTURE

20. Do you currently have any other ideas/plans for anti-corruption initiatives?

21. Do you have anything to add that we haven't discussed so far?

THE GLOBAL GOALS

For Sustainable Development

ICLD Swedish International Centre for Local Democracy