School of Management

Working Together for Good Governance: The Role of NGOs in Corruption Prevention in the Cambodian Public Sector

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DECLARATION

To the best of my knowledge and belief this thesis contains no material previously published by any other person except where due acknowledgment has been made.

This thesis contains no material which has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any university.

Signature:

Date: 1 June 2017

ABSTRACT

Corruption remains a concern and a challenge for development, good governance, human rights, and democracy, within both the global and Cambodian context. Owing to its devastating effects, corruption has been the subject of much research over the last few decades. Despite substantial effort, research evidence has shown no sign of improvement in the fight against corruption. Corruption remains and continues to grow, to some extent, in an uncontrollable manner. One of the major reasons which contributes to the failure is because corruption research focuses on the corrupt government to dealing with corruption within its administration, without inclusion of non-state sectors into the anti-corruption war. Accordingly, research into the role of NGOs, an independent democratic organisation which has largely been ignored in the fight against corruption in governments, is a need.

To this end, the aim of this research is to explore how NGOs can become more effective in combating public sector corruption in Cambodia. Corruption affects everyone, and a government on its own cannot solve the problem because in developing, as well as less democratic countries in general, the governance, legislative and judicial systems are fragile. The power is in the hand of the executive, and thus a check and balance mechanism is mainly disabled. In such environments, the government usually, if not always, has no real political will to make changes to the system from which they get benefits unless there is pressure from outsiders. Thus, the inclusion of NGOs is of great significance, not only to control corruption in the public sector on their own endeavours and to encourage the two sectors to work side by side, but also to empower the public to actively participate in corruption prevention, and put more pressure on government to make changes. In this sense, this paper seeks to begin addressing this gap by examining current research that focuses on anti-corruption generally and NGOs in particular. Taking Cambodia as a context, proposed here is a research project to help inform theory and practice in this area.

To accomplish this aim, this study adopted a qualitative research inquiry to elaborate on and develop existing perspectives in the corruption research literature in which a phenomenological approach was employed as it aims at exploring the everyday lived experiences and multiple perspectives of people working in NGOs, and to examine the ways in which NGOs approach corruption prevention. Data was collected through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews with executive directors,

project managers and team leaders of NGOs. The data was triangulated with secondary data in the form of document evidence, such as reports produced by the NGOs. NVivo software was employed for transcribing audio recording, coding and analysing the data.

As a result, this study contributes to both theory and practice. In terms of theory, this research contributes to the shortage of theory development in corruption research literature, and is responsive to the fragmentation in previous corruption research which is mostly confined to silos of particular disciplinary perspectives through the development of two different, but interrelated, conceptual frameworks: framework (p) and framework (s). Framework (p) represents the problems of NGO current practices and framework (s) represents the solution to the problems which is built by incorporating the 3Is (Integrated and Intensified Intervention) approach into framework (p). Addtionally, this study helps improve the current state of understanding and address problems associated with corruption prevention within contemporary literature through the introduction of five new concepts, including political, legal, social, cultural and economic trap. It also contributes to the expanding stock of theoretical knowledge of the relationship between NGOs and corruption through the conceptualisation of the strategic actions of NGOs into three insightful concepts: civic empowerment, civic advocacy and civic oversight.

With respect to practices, this research informs practitioners and policy-makers by providing a conceptual roadmap for designing strategic directions and actions by interpreting the framework into practices. The 3Is concept helps inform practitioners and policy-makers of how to navigate their policy development and operations through three core components, including organisational reinforcement, work reinforcement, and promoting institutional recognition and support. Effective management and execution of the 3Is could improve the organisational practices of NGOs, reduce organisational constraints, and thereby influence contextual traps, factors which all contribute to the widespread nature of corrupt tendencies.

While this research is limited to the Cambodian context and the focus is from the perspectives of governance-oriented NGOs, it raises some interesting questions which are worthy of consideration for further research within other national contexts with similar situations to Cambodia. Since the proposed framework is integrative and encompasses different variables, including dimensions, components and elements,

testing the framework in other contexts may help refine the conceptual validity of the framework and expand its generalisability.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to:

my father, Mr Kim Sorn IN

for his love and inspiration,

my mother, Mrs Sophal KIM

for giving me birth and care when I was a child. Although she passed away since I was under ten years of age, she is always the goddess in my heart,

my wife, Mrs Lekhena IV

for her love and support,

my lovely son, Mr Serey Both SOM

my beautiful daughters, Miss Serey Tepee and Serey Tevy SOM

They are my everything; they are the bright of my life, their smiles inspire me to move ahead.

May they grow up with full potential and brilliant future.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

3Is	Integrated and Intensified Intervention
ACA	Anti-corruption Agency
ACL	Anti-corruption Law
ACU	Anti-corruption Unit
ADB	Asian Development Bank
CBO	Community-based Organisation
CCHR	Cambodian Centre for Human Rights
CEN	Community Empowerment Network
CPIB	Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau
CPP	Cambodian People Party
CPI	Corruption Perception Index
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DANIDA	Danish International Development Agency
D & D	Decentralisation and Deconcentration
EFCC	Economic and Financial Crimes Commission
EIC	Economic Institute of Cambodia
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GAO	Government Accountability Office
HREC	Human Research Ethics Committee
ICAC	Independent Commission Against Corruption
ICNL	International Center for Not-for-Profit Law
LANGO	Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organisations
M & E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NANSMIT	National Association for Independent Media of Tajikistan
NCCC	National Counter Corruption Commission
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
OAS	Organisation of American States
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
POCA	Prevention of Corruption Act
POBO	Prevention of Bribery Ordinance
TI	Transparency International

UN	United Nations
UNCAC	UN Convention against Corruption
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNGC	UN Global Compact
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WB	World Bank
WBI	World Bank Institute
WTO	World Trade Organisation

CHAPTER 1

SETTING THE STAGE

1.1. Introduction

This chapter will introduce the key features presented in this thesis. It begins with a description of the background and rationale for this study which covers the background relating to non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and corruption and its prevention within the global and Cambodian context. It also provides a description of the reason why this problem deserves a closer look. Next, it will introduce the research questions and objectives of the study, followed by the scope of the study. The subsequent section presents research design which focuses on methodology and methods and techniques utilised, as well as the justification for utilising them. Following this, the significance that this study is expected to contribute to both academic community and practitioners will be presented, as will a description of key research findings. Finally, the chapter ends with the outline of the thesis.

1.2. Background for this Study

1.2.1. Global Context

Corruption affects all segments of society in both developed and developing nations, however its pervasiveness is paramount in the latter. It is first and foremost the enemy of development. The World Bank estimates around US$1.6 trillion is lost each year to various illegal activities, including corruption, criminal activities and tax evasion Otusanya (2012). Cobham (2005) notes that developing countries are estimated to be losing more than US$385 billion in revenue annually, due to tax evasion. The former Chairman of the Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) disclosed that pervasive corruption in Africa bleeds the continent of $148 billion each year, representing 25 percent of its gross national product (EFCC Report, February 2006) (Otusanya, 2012). Also, the African All Party Parliamentary Group, estimated that African political elites hold somewhere between $700 and $800 billion in accounts outside the continent (see Otusanya, 2012). Financial criminal practice is continually depriving the African economy of sums large enough to make a real difference in social investment in education, transport, pensions,

housing, healthcare, and for freeing people from poverty and squalor (Oxfam, 2000; Sikka, 2008).

Corruption lowers the level of investment (Rose-Ackerman, 2002), drives away foreign investment (Mauro, 1995), discourages the creation of new businesses (Albrecht, Malagueno, Holland, & Matt, 2012), reduces government revenues through tax evasion and embezzlement (Tanzi, 1998) or misappropriation of public properties, increases the cost of doing business (Murphy, Shleifer, & Vishny, 1993; Rose-Ackerman, 2002), and leads to the misallocation of resources in the economy (Albrecht et al., 2012). In addition, Ciocchini, Durbin, and Ng (2003) argue that corruption lifts up costs for governments and businesses in newly democratised nations. Indeed, it may also generate inequality in business competition. Clearly, corruption hampers development.

Second, corruption is the enemy of human rights. According to the World Bank, for example, corruption increases poverty (Judge, McNatt, & Xu, 2011). It breeds injustice and unfair treatment in societies (Graycar & Sidebottom, 2012), creates social inequality (Enderwick, 2005; Uslaner, 2008), restricts the public from their right to investigate the way the electoral systems operate (Theobald, 1990), and puts citizens outside political or policy development processes (Chang & Chu, 2006). Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (1995) conclude that corruption often opens up ways for public officials and politicians to pass policies and to make decisions just to support certain segments of society, especially partisans and affiliates, at the expense of the wider community (Cailier, 2010).

Corruption is increasingly viewed as a major obstacle to the fair and efficient distribution of wealth worldwide (Rose-Ackerman, 1997). It continues to punish those who are already economically impoverished and disenfranchised, bringing an unfair advantage to those who are politically well-connected (Rama, 2012). Corruption also results in poor public services delivery, as the bureaucratic organisation lacks the resources and ability to provide infrastructure, public services and anti-poverty programmes (Robinson, 1998), and goods and services are only satisfactorily provided to those who can afford to pay bribes (Salifu, 2008). When bureaucrats perform poorly in response to public demand (della Porta, 2000), the poor or marginalised groups suffer the most. Further, Chang and Chu (2006) argue that in corrupt societies bureaucratic officials often divert administrative resources or

projects to areas where they can maximise their benefits, rather than address public concerns.

Third, corruption is the enemy of democracy. For example, democratic institutions such as the media and civil society organisations (Antlöv, Brinkerhoff, & Rapp), which are recognised as independent and influential corrupt watchdogs, are tightly controlled or owned by the government and government supporters (Anderson & Tverdova, 2003). Theobald (1990) highlights that corrupt governments discourage the growth of political parties and deter active political involvement in the democratic process. Furthermore, Anderson and Tverdova (2003) and Seligson (2002) assert that corruption negatively impacts on the basic principles of democracy, such as on accountability, equality and openness (Chang & Chu, 2006), and on democratic participation, which is the foundation of a strong government (Migdal, 1988). Clearly, corruption discourages non-state actors, including the public, to participate in the political, social, economic and cultural life of a nation.

1.2.2. Cambodian Context

Cambodia is a country in mainland South-East Asia, bordering with Thailand to the northwest, Laos to the northeast, Vietnam to the east, and the Gulf of Thailand to the southwest. It covers a total area of 181,035 km^2, with a population of over 15 million (Factbook, 2016). Cambodia is a tropical country, rich in natural resources. Buddhism is the official religion, practised by approximately 95 percent of the population. Cambodia's main geographical features include: the Tonlé Sap River, the Mekong River and the Bassac River, and is surrounded by mountain ranges to the north, east, in the south-west and south, and 60 offshore islands. The south and south-west of the country constitute a 443 km long coast at the Gulf of Thailand. The landmass is bisected by the Mekong River, stretching over 486 km, and the longest river in Cambodia (Factbook, 2016).

Angkor Wat 'Capital Temple' is the largest religious monument in the world, stretching over a land area of 162.6 hectares. It was built by the Khmer King Suryavaraman II in the early 12th century. It was originally constructed as a Hindu temple for the Khmer Empire, gradually transforming into a Buddhist temple toward the end of the 12th century. Angkor Wat is the only temple to have remained a significant religious centre since its foundation. The temple is at the top of the high

classical style of Khmer architecture. It has become a symbol of Cambodia appearing on its national flag, and it is the country's prime attraction for visitors. Angkor Wat was nominated as World Heritage in 1992 by UNESCO and represents the richness of Cambodian traditional architecture.

Unfortunately, war has ruined this country which has high economic potential; Cambodian civil war had dragged this country into the genocidal regime. For example, the Khmer Rouge, also known as the 'killing field' regime, caused the deaths of up to two million Cambodian people between 1975 and 1979, which was nearly a quarter of the country's population at the time, through forced labour and genocide. After the fall of the Khmer rouge regime, the new government, People's Republic of Kampuchea (1979-1989) was established, which was later renamed The State of Cambodia (1989 to 1993). From early 1993 to the present, the country has been renamed the Kingdom of Cambodia, which is also the name it was given in 1953, soon after it gained independence from France. Under the supervision of a peace process by United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in the early 1990s, Cambodia has transitioned itself from one-party rule to a liberal multi-party democracy.

Although political structures are undergoing significant change, the legacy of war has weakened social trust and broken the spirit of the Cambodian people which has resulted in a lingering fear of state authority, and a decrease in social trust and solidarity. This greatly influences civic participation in social affairs and the demand for government to be responsible for its actions. Good governance remains the most critical challenge for national development in this newly emerging democracy. As highlighted by Malena and Chhim (2009), the problems of corruption, weak accountability and other governance concerns continue to hamper development.

In 2015 Cambodia was ranked 150 out of 168 nations by Transparency International on their Corruption Perception Index (Transparency International, 2015). It scored 21, the same as Zimbabwe, and one point behind Myanmar and Democratic Republic of Congo, and just three points in front of Syria. This demonstrates that corruption in the public and private sectors is a critical challenge facing the government of Cambodia as it endeavours to promote good governance, socio-economic development and well-being.

Although the government has undertaken steps to tackle corruption as stipulated in its political platforms and national plans, such as the "National Strategic

Development Plan", the "Rectangular Strategy" and, recently, the adoption of an anti-corruption law and the establishment of an independent anti-corruption institution, there remains widespread systemic corruption in the executive arms of the government that act as a major constraint on economic and social development (Malena & Chhim, 2009; United States General Accounting Office, 2002). Undoubtedly, this results, to some extent, from the weakness of the legal system and lack of political commitment to enforce laws and regulations, the absence of regular investigation of government official activities, and a lack of public commitment. Critically, a recent move by the government through the adoption of LANGO (Law on Associations and Non-Governmental Organisation) was viewed by both national and international communities as restricting the involvement of CSOs, and the general public, in social issues including corruption. As argued by International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (2016), for example, the LANGO has been used by government authorities to break up meetings and training conducted by NGOs and CBOs. It further stated that NGOs that work in advocacy, legal rights and human rights are seen by the government as unwanted opposition, and this limits the operational space for their activities. Consequently, this has hampered the government reform efforts to promote good governance, weakened the rule of law, delayed efforts to accelerate poverty alleviation, and retarded social development.

There has been research on corrupt phenomena in Cambodia which reveals the pervasive and negative effects of corruption on socio-economic development. For example, a study by the EIC (Economic Institute of Cambodia, 2006) shows the effects of unofficial fees on the performance of local public services. Calavan, Briquets, and O'Brien (2004) provide evidence to show that corruption has become part of everyday life in Cambodia as a result of a weak judicial system and the absence of rule of law, and Nissen (2005) reports on the impact of corruption on ordinary Cambodians. In this regard, UNDP (United Nations Development Programme, 2008) indicates that curbing corruption may transform the lives of the population and accelerate human development.

The existing research on Cambodia raises some interesting questions, particularly with regards to the root causes and effects of corruption within the executive branch of government. This is especially relevant when corrupt practices conducted by public servants in government ministries and agencies are illuminated. This has implications for the political will and motivations of the government in the

fight against corruption. It is also important to consider the repercussion of when and how the raising of public awareness of corruption, and its consequences, on their daily lives affects governance. This has value in terms of how the public and non-government organisations (NGOs) are able to get involved in combating corruption, and how the public is able to demand accountability and knowledge of budgeting used by government officials. Clearly then, corruption affects national development and poverty alleviation efforts.

1.3. Rationale for this Study

Globally, it is evident that corrupt behaviours show no sign of decreasing after decades of time and effort spent on controlling their pervasiveness by researchers and practitioners. This motivated me to examine the roles of the outsider (NGOs) rather than the insider (government), which is the focus of most previous researchers and practitioners. It is noticeable that NGOs, as a new wave of movement, from humanitarian assistance to development and, lately, to policy advocacy and corruption prevention, have been playing a pivotal role in resisting corruption through a variety of means (Transparency International, 2002; United Nations, 2002). At a strategic level, for example, they are involved in policy advocacy or administrative reform efforts; at a practical level, they engage in monitoring government activities or public mobilising to demand good governance, and others. NGOs in Cambodia have proliferated since the deployment of United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC) in the early 1990s. Presently, there are around 4,950 registered NGOs and associations in Cambodia, with an estimation of about 1,350 organisations currently active (International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, 2016), most of which work in development issues whilst some focus on governance and corruption. Nevertheless, the functioning of their roles/activities faces significant challenges. NGOs appear to encounter more challenges when working in the area of advocacy, human rights and democracy (Bañez-Ockelford & Catalla, 2010; International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, 2016).

The roles of NGOs in corruption prevention have been largely ignored within the academic community, although their prominent roles are widely recognized by practitioners. This means that the roles of NGOs in corruption prevention remain

largely confined to the grey literature. Few papers that focus on NGOs and corruption prevention appear in the peer reviewed literature. Notable recent exceptions include Aderonmu (2011) and Carr and Outhwaite (2011), who focus on NGOs and corruption prevention; Boulding (2010) who examines NGOs and political participation; and Jenkins and Goetz (2010), who explore NGOs and access to information. Thus, there remains a significant number of yet to be answered research questions and unaddressed research problems and theoretical puzzles. For example, little is known about the role of NGOs in stimulating public participation in controlling corruption, or how NGOs go about lobbying political elites in order to promote the political will to fight corruption. There are also important questions about the factors affecting the effectiveness of NGOs in their efforts to control corruption in nations where democracy is fragile, emergent, nascent or non-existent. As long as governments are unable to address corruption on their own, have no real commitment to change without outside pressure, and are less effective when they act both as a corrupt player and anti-corruption enforcer, collective action and responsibility is paramount in addressing corruption. Research attention to the role of NGOs in the fight against corruption will help greatly in the anti-corruption endeavour. Therefore, understanding the roles played and barriers faced by governance-oriented NGOs is noteworthy in terms of establishing the most feasible measures/mechanisms for its enhancement.

Corruption remains and continues to grow, often in an uncontrollable manner. It affects everyone in a nation, and a government on its own cannot solve the problem. Since looking for solutions from within the government has been less effective, taking a closer look from an outsider's perspectives would be of great benefit. Studying the roles played by the NGO sector in the fight against corruption is one area that is largely ignored in the corruption research literature. In this sense, this paper seeks to begin addressing this gap by examining current research that focuses on anti-corruption generally, and NGOs in particular, aiming at exploring how NGOs can become more effective in preventing public sector corruption in Cambodia.

Apart from this, while there has been much research on corruption in general, the specific area of corruption prevention is relatively underdeveloped and under-theorised. This also motivates me to get involved with the attempt to develop an integrated substantive theoretical framework to help inform practitioners and

researchers. Currently, there is no specific theory of corruption prevention, with the majority of corruption research tending to test existing theories borrowed from other disciplines. For example, the use of sociological-based theories such as contingency theory to test the effect of human development and national culture on corruption (Sims, Gong, & Ruppel, 2012), and the use of economic theories such as a principal-agent model to test the relationship between party system competitiveness and corruption (Schleiter & Voznaya, 2014). Additionally, the research that does adopt theory tends to be confined to silos of particular disciplinary perspectives. As a result, research tends not be truly cumulative, leading to a lack of the development of a coherent body of models and theories that explain corruption and ways to prevent it occurring (Judge et al., 2011), hence practitioners find it difficult to gain useful insights from research.

Also, anti-corruption research thus far fails to help because it provides only partial explanations about the public sector to addressing the problems without considering the involvement of non-state actors in the processes. It provides explanations of 'what should be done,' but limited discussions about 'how it should be done'. In the area of public sector reform, for example, there has been the lack of inclusion of independent non-state actors, particularly NGOs. In addition to theoretical problems, there are also a number of methodological issues. So far, much of the corruption research has been quantitative. This is probably due to the sensitivity of the issue of corruption. Sending out questionnaires for respondents to complete in the form of, for example, closed questions or pre-determined responses will probably not yield deep insights into what is really happening on the ground. Also, the literature on corruption is replete with review papers. As a result, there is little to offer concrete and current solutions to inform policy makers and practitioners in the fight against corruption.

1.4. Research Questions and Objectives

This section introduces the overall research questions and objectives, as well as their sub-research questions and specific research objectives, respectively.

1.4.1. Main Research Question

The main research question of this research is:
How can NGOs become more effective in preventing public sector corruption in Cambodia?

1.4.2. Main Research Objective

The major aim of this research is:

To explore how NGOs can become more effective in preventing public sector corruption in Cambodia.

Satisfactorily answering the above research question and objective is dependent on how well this research is able to respond to the following specific research objectives and research sub-questions, which will all be assessed in chapter six.

Specific Research Objectives

1. To explore the extent to which the current theories help address corruption.
2. To identify roles played by NGOs in preventing public sector corruption in Cambodia.
3. To discover factors perceived by NGOs that hinder their functions in preventing corruption.
4. To discover actions taken by NGOs to address challenges and to improve their operations.
5. To develop an integrated substantive theoretical framework that will help inform research and practice.
6. To set out future directions to improve practices and study.

Research Sub-questions

1. To what extent does current theory adequately explain corruption prevention?

2. What roles (right, responsibility, activity) can NGOs play in promotion of good governance/corruption prevention?
3. What are factors that obstruct the operational processes of NGOs in corruption prevention?
4. What factors make NGOs effective in preventing corruption and holding the government responsible for its actions?
5. What factors make NGOs effective in stimulating political participation in resisting corruption?
6. What measures can NGOs take to encourage top government leaders to have real political will in combating corruption?
7. What factors make the intervention of NGOs gain credibility and public support?

1.5. Scope of the Study

The area of inquiry: The focus of this inquiry is on the role played by governance-oriented NGOs in promoting good governance, as well as preventing corruption in the Cambodian public sector. Governance-oriented NGOs refer to those that work on the issues of governance, corruption, democracy and human rights. NGOs that work on development or humanitarian issues are excluded from this study. The idea is that choosing development or humanitarian-oriented NGOs may increase time wasted on collecting more irrelevant data since they are lacking experience in governance or corruption issues. This just makes the sample size bigger and takes longer to reach data saturation. Instead, choosing the right target participants saves time, provides rich information, and data saturation is reached quicker.

The setting: This research was conducted in Phnom Penh, the capital city of Cambodia. The reason is that most NGOs, including governance-oriented NGOs, are based in Phnom Penh. This does not mean that these kinds of NGOs only work in Phnom Penh. Indeed, many of their activities and projects are at a grassroots level as well. Particularly and purposively, the capital is a hub of well-known and highly experienced NGOs. They can provide rich, contextual data required for this research.

The sample: The sample for this study was purposively selected, paralleled with the selection of the setting. Participants were chosen from among the

governance-oriented NGOs who have several years of experience working on governance or corruption issues in particular. The sample size for this study was 14 senior participants from both local and international NGOs. Among these participants, ten of them are executive directors of the organisations, one decentralisation and governance programme director, one secretariat coordinator, one research and information manager, and one operations officer.

1.6. Research Design

This research adopts a qualitative research method (for more details go to Chapter Three, Research Methodology). Given that there is little research on corruption prevention and NGOs, qualitative research will be used to elaborate on, and develop, existing perspectives in the corruption research literature. Richards and Morse (2007) claim that the selection of a method for any research project does not happen by default; it is based on the research question. With this in mind, the research question addressed in this research is, *"How can NGOs become more effective in preventing public sector corruption in Cambodia?"* Qualitative research properly seeks to answer questions such as these by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit those settings. It allows researchers to share understanding and perceptions of others, and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily life (Berg, 2004). Qualitative research will offer specialized techniques for obtaining in-depth responses about what employees of governance-oriented NGOs think and how they feel. It also enables researchers to gain insight into the attitudes, beliefs, motives and behaviour of the participants (Patton, 2002; Punch, 2005). Since corruption is a highly sensitive issue, it is likely that data collection through quantitative questionnaire would be difficult and inaccurate because people will tend to under-report, or be reluctant to respond in any detail. Therefore, qualitative methods are appropriate for such a sensitive issue.

This research attempts to discover the roles played and barriers encountered by NGOs in combating corruption in the Cambodian public sector. In this sense, the phenomenological approach is employed, as it aims at exploring the everyday "lived experiences" and multiple perspectives (Creswell, 2013) around the issue of corrupt transactions. This approach is best suited to this field of study as it will provide me (the researcher) with the opportunity to clearly understand the situation on the

ground, and capture the perceptions and experiences of governance-oriented NGOs working in this emerging democratic country. Adopting the phenomenological method will also allow the researcher to identify and explain the strategies, influence and obstructions of NGO governance and anti-corruption programmes.

In this study, data are collected through semi-structured, face-to-face interviews. This data collection approach allows the researcher to capture people's perceptions, meanings, beliefs, attitudes and definitions of the phenomena (Punch, 2005). The interview questions are designed to be as open-ended as possible, centred on the roles played and barriers encountered by NGOs in combating corruption, as well as on factors that hinder the effective functioning of NGOs in this endeavour. These questions will allow participants to articulate their responses without explicit boundaries and without imposing pre-conceived categorisations that may inhibit responses (Fontana & Frey, 2005). The semi-structured interview method allows for probing of more details, and for new questions to emerge during the interview (Fay, 1996). These interviews are designed to "yield in-depth responses about people's experiences, perceptions, opinions, feelings, and knowledge" (Patton, 2002, p. 4). The interview structure is also based on the view of Bruner (2004), who argues that only through narrative can lived experiences be revealed. Literature and documentary sources, such as research reports, relative to NGOs and corruption prevention, particularly in developing countries, will serve as data triangulation.

The sample selection method for this research project will be "purposive" sampling (Patton, 2002). Purposive sampling will allow the researcher to determine in advance the key informants to be included in the data collection process that will provide meaningful and rich information relevant to the contextual and lived experiences of governance-oriented NGOs who give consent to participate in this research project. Therefore, participants will be chosen on a purposive selection basis from a number of NGOs that work on governance issues in Phnom Penh, Cambodia. This selection method is based on the position that only those who work in governance and corruption issues could provide reliable and rich information about certain situations, and what is happening on the ground.

Ideally, the sample size in qualitative interviews is determined by the concept of "data saturation;" that is, the point where data gathered in subsequent interviews no longer produces new thematic insights (Guest, Bunce, & Johnson, 2006). Guest et al. (2006) posit that saturation is generally reached after 12 interviews and that major

themes are presented after six interviews. However, the sample size for this study is not confined by these research findings.

NVivo software is utilised for data coding and analysing perceptions of the research participants. This software package is not only appropriate for analysing the data but also for data management, including storing and retrieving information. The constant comparison method will be employed to find out the correlations as well as the differences and similarities between the emerging themes or concepts of the participants in the study, grounded from the output of the initial and selective coding processes. Data interpretation and writing will be subservient to the participant's words. This means that the emerging themes are grounded in the data.

1.7. Contributions of the Study

By examining and responding to the remaining unsolved problems of the literature, encompassing both challenges of NGOs in corruption prevention and challenges of corruption research, this research contributes to both theory and practice.

1.7.1. Theoretical Contributions

At the theoretical level, this research develops two different but interrelated frameworks—framework (p) and framework (s). Framework (p) represents the problems of the current practices of NGOs; and framework (s) represents a solution to the problems identified in framework (p). Framework (p) helps improve understanding about the current state of problems and surrounding environments where NGOs operate, the current state of their strategic actions, and the associated organisational constraints. Framework (s) represents solutions to the problems identified in framework (p), through the intervention of the 3Is approach. The 3Is stands for Integrated and Intensified Intervention, focusing on organisational reinforcement, work reinforcement and promoting institutional recognition and support. The proposed frameworks contribute to addressing the shortage of integrated theory development and the problem of fragmentation of corruption research which is mostly confined to silos of particular disciplinary perspectives (see details in Chapter Four and Five).

This study also helps improve the current state of understanding and addresses problems associated with corruption prevention of contemporary literature through the introduction of five new concepts that take context into account: political trap, legal trap, social trap, cultural trap and economic trap. This research expands the stock of theoretical knowledge by providing in-depth understanding and new insights into these contextual concepts. In addition, this research also contributes to the expanding stock of theoretical knowledge regarding the relationship between NGOs and corruption research. The major contribution of this study is the conceptualisation of the strategic actions of NGOs into three novel concepts, encompassing civic empowerment, civic advocacy, and civic oversight (see details in Chapter Five). The provision of in-depth understanding and insight into these concepts is a major response to the significant gap in the contemporary literature regarding the lack of research into the role of NGOs within the academic community. As such, the results of this research may have broader relevance to other national contexts.

In addition, this research contributes to expanding the stock of methodological knowledge in corruption research. First, it contributes to expanding the stock of empirical data in corruption research. Although there is a need for sound data, there are relatively few studies that are grounded in data. Second, it contributes to solving the lack of qualitative research in the area. Third, this research also draws the attention of researchers to the usefulness of qualitative inquiry for topics that may not be quantifiable (see details in Chapter Five).

1.7.2. Practical Contributions

In terms of practical contributions, this study offers practitioners and policy-makers a conceptual roadmap for designing strategic directions and actions. This means that turning the proposed framework, which encompasses a set of different dimensions, components and elements, into practice is of great value to effective policy-making, decision-making, planning and implementation (see details in Chapter Five). This research also potentially shifts the attention of researchers from looking at 'what should be done,' which looks at solutions to corruption problems from within the government, to 'how it should be done,' by looking into the inclusion of non-state actors into tackling corruption. More specifically, turning the

3Is approach into practice not only helps increase the effective intervention of NGOs in corruption prevention in their own endeavours but also promotes public awareness to fight against corruption (see details in Chapter Four and Five), which thereby impacts on contextual traps, factors associated with the generation of the prevalence of corruption.

1.8. Overview of the Findings

The findings of this research are conceptualised into two different but connected frameworks—framework (p) representing the problems of current practices of NGOs, and framework (s) representing solutions to the problems identified in framework (p). Framework (s) is built by incorporating the 3Is approach into framework (p). The framework is simple but integrative. Indeed, it is simple in that it is developed as a problem-process-impact format, however, it is also integrative since it encompasses dimensions, components and their embedded elements, and covers multiple disciplines.

The 3Is approach is a core feature of the framework. The intervention of the 3Is aims at improving NGOs current practices, reducing NGOs current constraints, with the end target of helping reduce corruption through the impacts of the 3Is. The 3Is is set up as grounded in the voices and knowledge of key informants with years of experiences working in governance and with corruption issues in Cambodia. The 3Is is primarily composed of three interrelated and interactive components, encompassing organisational reinforcement, work reinforcement, and promoting institutional recognition and support. The three components, including the elements embedded within them, work together to reduce constraints, improve practices and influence contextual traps, and thereby reduce corruption. According to the data, organisational reinforcement emerged through the integration of three elements, namely reinforcing organisational policy, reinforcing organisational management systems, and reinforcing information and monitoring systems. Through this iterative and interrelated process, it not only helps improve the functioning of the organisations and prevents the incidents of misconduct but also, at the same time, builds trust and support, and restores the reputation of the NGO sector. All of these elements ensure that the voices of NGO are heard and their activities are influential.

Regarding work reinforcement, the analysis suggested three emerging

elements: cooperation and coordination, networking and coalition building, and evidence-based intervention and adaptation. Through this iterative and interrelated process, it makes NGOs activities become more operationalised and effective. For example, the two sectors, state and non-state, come closer and work together on a mutual understanding basis through cooperation and coordination. Through networking and coalition building, the NGOs sector is united and makes the voice of advocacy stronger, persuasive and more influential. Through evidence-based intervention and adaptation, the operations of NGOs become more credible and responsive to contextual situations. The third aspect of the 3Is is promoting institutional recognition and support. The data suggest that as a governance-oriented institution, it is worthwhile for NGOs to build reputation, and make their work more functional, supportive and effective through promoting institutional recognition and support. Promoting institutional recognition and support is constituted by combining two emerging categories, including the demonstration of good governance practice, and building institutional trust. Through this iterative and interrelated process, the voice of NGOs is heavy, persuasive and influential. As such, the actions of NGOs may make a significant impact on government and society. By contrast, if NGOs work is not clean or set by example, their intervention may not gain public trust and support. To accomplish this goal, it is essential that NGOs have to, for example, act as a role model, be clean and incorruptible, be neutral in their work, and be processes-based, pragmatic and responsive. Therefore, the 3Is approach, along with its embedded elements, influences the contextual traps resulting from the improvement in organisational practices, and the reduction of organisational constraints.

Contextual traps cover five different but interrelated disciplines which drive the growth of corruption. They are composed of political, legal, social, cultural and economic variables. Indeed, it has emerged from the data that politics are found as the foremost and leading driver contributing to the pervasiveness of corrupt practices. This links to two critical categories: lack of 'political will' among elite officials to fight against corruption, and lack of 'public will' among the general public to actively participate in corruption prevention endeavours. As grounded in the data, the association between corruption and lack of 'political will' falls into five elements: political vested interest, limited openness and cooperation from state actors, narrow views of state actors toward civil society organisations (CSOs), a

mere political rhetoric of the state actors, and lack of consistent strategy and campaign to combat corruption. Moreover, lack of 'public will' is responsible for the increase in corrupt tendencies in Cambodia, although the data suggest that it is strongly influenced by the lack of 'political will'. Lack of 'public will' includes lack of public trust, limited public participation in corruption crusade, and public involvement in corrupt practices.

Regarding the legal trap, the data suggest that the association of the legal trap and corruption falls into three categories: the separation of powers, substandard anti-corruption law and units, and lack of law enforcement. Moving a step further from political and legal traps leads us to the social trap. Social traps play a significant part in contributing to corruption. The analysis suggests that the social trap emerged from the combination of three categories including fear factor, social norms, and limited knowledge of the public. With regards to the cultural trap, the analysis reveals two significant categories associated with the link between culture and corruption. They are composed of traditional cultural influence and newly-emerging habit, and these are partly responsible for the generation of endemic corrupt behaviours. Economic trap is another contextual variable that contributes to the pervasiveness of corruption. According to the analysis, the economic trap is made up of the combination of two emerging categories: poverty and lack of incentives.

Organisational practices are the strategic actions taken by NGOs to prevent corruption. They are comprised of three broad elements including civic empowerment, civic advocacy, and civic oversight. The interventions of NGOs, to a certain extent, not only play their part to prevent corruption but also provide the general public basic understanding of their rights and roles, the roles and responsibilities of public authorities, and knowledge about governance or the influence of corruption. They also empower the public to actively participate in social affairs, especially issues that impact on their daily living. This means encouraging the public to be more courageous to discuss with, to demand, and to follow up public official's activities, as well as to hold the government responsible for its actions. Their interventions are important to promote good governance and for preventing corruption, which are critical challenges for national development and improving people's livelihoods.

However, the current state of organisational practices is limited by not only the contextual traps, as abridged above, but also by the internal constraints of NGOs

which influence the intensity and effectiveness of their operations. The analysis suggested three emerging elements concerning the organisational constraints of NGOs. These are composed of management and leadership constraint, corruption and governance constraint, and financial constraint. Again, the intervention of the 3Is, if effectively managed and executed, does help address these barriers, enhance organisational practices, and thereby influences contextual traps leading up to promoting good governance and reducing corruption.

1.9. Outline of the Thesis

This thesis is composed of six chapters. Chapter One sets the stage for the study. Chapter Two deals with the literature relating to corruption research and NGOs. First, the chapter explores and synthesises what the established literature tells us about corruption research (what is known). This covers three broad themes, including causes, effects and solutions. Second, it discovers and amalgamates the roles played by NGOs in contemporary corruption prevention research. Third, the review attempts to unearth the remaining unsolved problems of contemporary literature (what is not known), encompassing theoretical, methodological and thematic problems. The chapter ends with a discussion about directions for future study.

Chapter Three presents the methodology. This is divided into three parts. Part One is concerned with research methodology. This includes the rationale for choosing a qualitative research paradigm in which the logic of philosophical foundations is discussed, beginning with a philosophical perspective, and also considering ontology, epistemology, a qualitative research inquiry, and concluding with a phenomenological approach of inquiry. Part Two departs from research methodology to explore research methods and techniques used in this study. This covers data collection, data analysis (theory building processes) and how the analysis is to be written-up. Part Three is concerned with rigour and ethical considerations.

Chapter Four presents the findings of the study. The chapter is divided into two main parts. Part One deals with the problems of current practices of NGOs that were conceptualised into a framework (p). This part discusses three issues: (1) contextual traps, factors contributing to the widespread of corrupt behaviours and also imposing constraints to the growth and endeavours of democratic institutions,

particularly NGOs, to corruption prevention; (2) the organisational processes of NGOs, covering organisational practices (strategic actions), and organisational constraints; and (3) outcomes of NGO strategic actions. Part Two introduces a proposed framework (s) which is comprised of an integrative 3Is approach to corruption prevention, aiming at addressing the problems highlighted in framework (p). This deals with three major issues, encompassing organisational reinforcement, work reinforcement, and promoting institutional recognition and support undertaken by NGOs.

Chapter Five is concerned with the discussion of the key findings of this research in comparison with the larger literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The chapter is divided into three parts. Part One consists of two sections. Section One discusses the contribution of the study to theory and Section Two is concerned with the essence of the study to practices. Part Two discusses the possible generalisability of the study to a broader context and Part Three explains the potential limitations of the study.

Chapter Six concludes the discussion of this research by assessing how well this research appropriately addresses the research questions and objectives of the study. It is also concerned with recommendations for actions, and directions for future research. This chapter ends with my personal concluding remark.

The next chapter covers extant academic and practical literature on NGOs and corruption research, including NGOs and corruption prevention, particularly what is known and what is not known. It also sets out directions for future considerations.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

Until recently there has been little evidence to describe the success of anti-corruption efforts. Public sector corruption remains and continues to grow, to some extent, in an uncontrollable manner. Despite numerous publications in the field of corruption, production of corruption prevention research and theory has been mainly underdeveloped. Further, after decades of corruption study, research into the roles of NGOs in the fight against corruption remains largely ignored within the academic community. The review finds few papers in the peer review literature that focus, for example, on NGOs and corruption prevention (Carr & Outhwaite, 2011), NGOs and political participation (Boulding, 2010), and NGOs and access to information (Jenkins & Goetz, 2010). To this end, this chapter will explore the existing research on corruption and its prevention and, importantly, the role of NGOs in corruption prevention.

The chapter is organised as follow. First, it explores and synthesises what the established literature tells us about corruption research (what is known). This covers three broad themes, including causes, effects and solutions, which are the main focus of corruption research throughout history. Second, it discovers and, at the same time, amalgamates the roles played by NGOs in contemporary corruption prevention research. Third, the review attempts to unearth the remaining unsolved problems of contemporary literature (what is not known). This takes into account a number of noticeable problems, encompassing theoretical, methodological and thematic problems. Therefore, the final section concludes and suggests possible required actions to which this thesis aims at addressing.

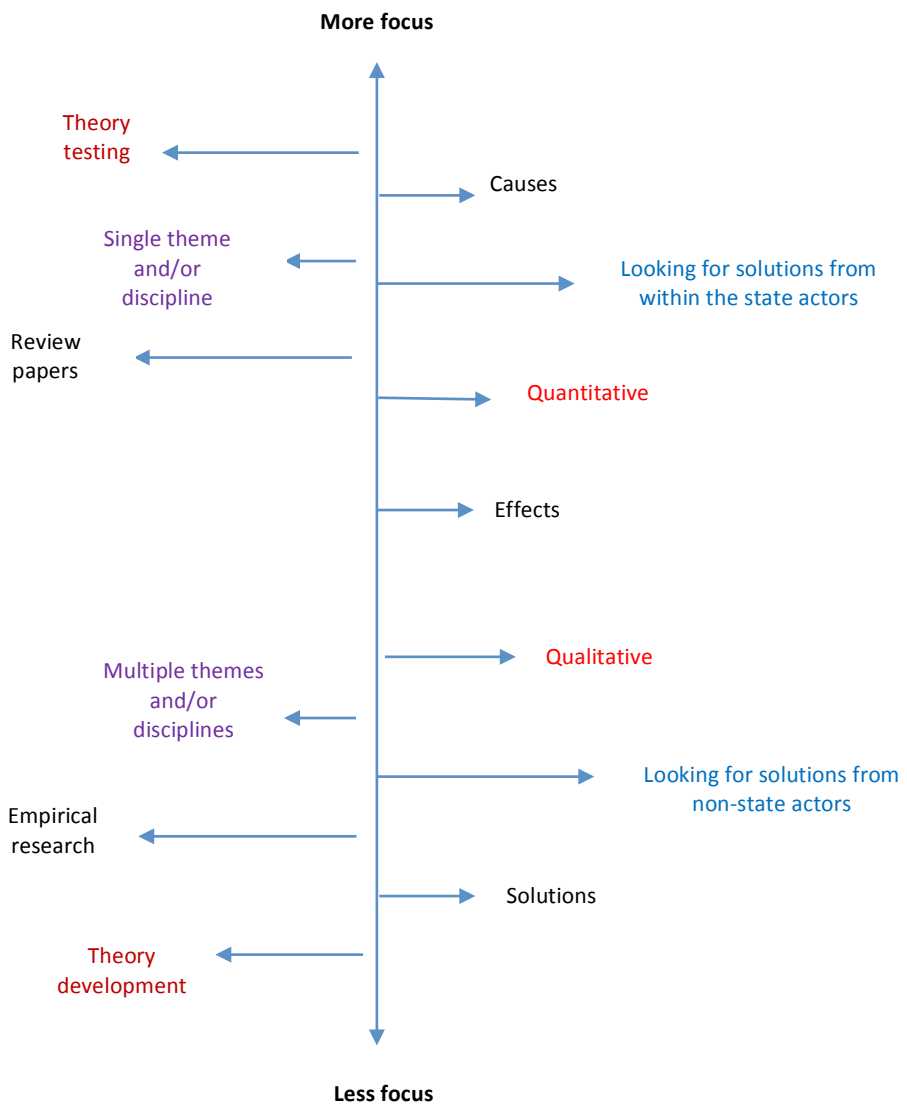
2.2. Corruption and NGO Research

2.2.1. General Patterns of Corruption Research

Overall, corruption research shows a number of general patterns. First, the majority of corruption research focuses on three broad themes: causes, effects and solutions. Research material into the causes of corruption is perhaps twice as much as research into the effects of corruption, with the very least amount of research conducted on solutions to corruption. Second, corruption research is dominated by

theory testing rather than theory development. Third, the review also reveals that there has been a lot more research that focuses on a single theme and/or discipline than that of multiple themes and/or perspectives. Fourth, existing literature is overwhelmed by review papers, with relatively few studies that are grounded in empirical data, and the majority of corruption research is quantitative in nature rather than qualitative. Finally, in terms of solutions, which attract the least interest by contemporary researchers, the research largely looks at solutions from within the state sector, which is, allegedly, the most corrupt administration, rather than from non-state actors, the perceived prominent corrupt watchdog. The following illustration (Figure 1) summarises these patterns and the details will be discussed in subsequent sections.

Figure 1: General pattern of corruption research



2.2.2. Major Themes in Corruption Research

2.2.2.1. Causes of Corruption

After decades of comprehensive studies about the causes of corruption, research evidence suggests, sometimes with conflicting findings, that they are numerous and varied (Judge et al., 2011). Therefore, this does not reveal to corruption fighters or policy makers much about what approaches should be taken. To better understand this issue, this review groups the causes of corruption of the established literature into five major categories: political, legal, economic, social and cultural and managerial causes.

Political Causes

The extant literature shows that in developing countries and emerging democracies, in particular, political causes of corruption are paramount. Lack of political will (Mishra, 2006; Abdulai, 2009) by the government to combat corruption generates corrupt tendencies. This, for example, is revealed through the lack of bureaucratic oversight which facilitates corrupt practices (Xin & Rudel, 2004), and lack of law enforcement (Lapalombara, 1994). Corruption occurs when political parties get involved in government systems, referred to as party-directed corruption (Mistree, 2015). For example, politicians or elected officials appoint their political members to hold lucrative positions in government (Blechinger, 2005), and design rules and regulations to benefit their supporters (Evertsson, 2013). Further, excessive government discretionary authority over the allocation of goods and services (Erlingsson, Bergh, & Sjölin, 2008; Graycar & Sidebottom, 2012; Habib & Zurawicki, 2002; Morris & Klesner, 2010; Tanzi, 1998), and lack of, or low levels of, political competition (Chang & Golden, 2010), stimulates a favourable climate for political corruption (Mishra, 2006). What is more, a large state role in the economy (Morris, 2001), extensive government control and regulation of economic resources (Salifu, 2008), and politician's monopolistic control of regulatory bodies (Otusanya, 2012), generates corrupt tendencies. Likewise, bureaucratic interference in business (Ampratwum, 2008) and misallocation of resources (Riley, 1998), lack of administrative supervision over stakeholders with discrete power over public

resources (Erlingsson et al., 2008) with insufficient accountability measures (Graycar & Sidebottom, 2012), also encourages corrupt opportunity.

In addition, corrupt acts tend to increase during the process of democratisation (Murphy et al., 1993). The research findings show that at the early stages of democratic transition, the democratic institutions such as free media and civil society organisations which act as influential oversight bodies, are tightly controlled by the governments (Campbell & Saha, 2013; Otusanya, 2012), or are not strong enough to hold the public officials accountable for their actions (Manzetti, 2000; Tulchin & Espach, 2000; Xin & Rudel, 2004). It is also suggested that the occurrence of corruption results from the limited capacity of government officials during the transformation process (Banfield, 1975; Manor, 1999; Prud'homme, 1995).

Further, the review suggests a strong connection between political funding and corruption. In this regard, many researchers (i.e., della Porta & Vannucci, 1999; Harstad & Svensson, 2011; Johnston, 2005; Rose-Ackerman, 1999; Williams, 2000) notice that political parties are often shaped by private sponsors in the way decisions and policies are made. For example, as a compensation, political parties or officeholders, in return, design rules and regulations to benefit their electoral funders (Austen-Smith, 1998; Grossman & Helpman, 1994; Harstad & Svensson, 2011; Kaufmann & Vincente, 2011) and grant contracts, or appoint lucrative jobs, to their electoral funders, provide tax benefits, and reduce control on donor firms (Apollonio & La Raja, 2004; Gordon, 2001; Hart, 2001; Stratmann, 1992; Zullo, 2006).

Legal Causes

Adding to the political cause, another major cause of corruption is weakness in the legal system. Corruption occurs due to the ineffectiveness, complexity and ambiguity of laws (Lapalombara, 1994). For example, when a legal system is fragile, bureaucrats and politicians use their power to interpret the laws and regulations in a way that benefits their partisans and supporters, or to intimidate potential activists (Jain, 2001). Jain (2001) also claims that weak law allows the governments to reduce the effectiveness of the laws through political appointments, or through reducing and allocating resources. This makes it difficult for the legal system to combat corruption (Meagher, 2005). Complex and vague laws and regulations are weapons for

governments to employ the legal system as a means to intimidate potential critics (Campbell & Saha, 2013).

Additionally, the absence of an oversight mechanism, especially the anti-corruption agencies, is strongly associated with an increase in corrupt tendencies. Independent, resourceful and powerful agencies that fulfil their functions without interference from any person or party deter corrupt transactions (Abdulai, 2009); however, the non-existence of this agency worsens the situation (Salifu, 2008). Further, corruption is entrenched in societies due to poor or deficient law enforcement (Albrecht et al., 2012). For instance, lack of enforcement in forest administration is fuelled by corruption among foresters which leads to substantial habitat destruction (Robbins, 2000). However, the established literature is lacking in agreement about the existence of rules and regulations, and how widespread corruption really is. Some researchers argue that lack of legal instruments generate corrupt transactions, while others claim that this is not the case. Bardhan (1997), for example, mentions that many legislations and rules bring about more corrupt practices.

Economic Causes

Within the realm of economics, poverty and underpaid government officials are a major economic cause of corruption. Most researchers conclude that public officials tend to become involved in corrupt behaviours when they are paid below the basic subsistence level (Barr, Lindelow, & Serneels, 2009; Becker & Stigler, 1974; Chand & Moene, 1999; Mookherjee & Png, 1995; Salifu, 2008; Soot, 2012; Stapenhurst & Langset, 1997). Indeed, poverty may force public servants to act corruptly to supplement their revenues (Husted, 1999; Judge et al., 2011; Paldam, 2001; Serra, 2006; Xin & Rudel, 2004). For them, rules are not important when they are hungry (Rama, 2012). Dignity is also unimportant when they are poor. Starving people find it difficult not to sell their votes for small things in return, such as a bag of rice or little money, and under-paid civil servants find it difficult to resist the temptation to take a bribe (Blechinger, 2005).

However, research evidence shows a controversial argument relating to low salaries of public officials and corruption. Sosa (2004), for example, argues that tackling corruption through public official's increasing wages may not discourage

corrupt favours; instead, they may start to demand higher bribes. Similarly, USAID and various studies highlight that increasing a public official's salary is unlikely to minimize corrupt practices (Ampratwum, 2008). As in the case of the Enron company, for example, higher pay has not shown to hinder the temptation of managers from becoming involved in corrupt practices (Soot, 2012). Poverty and corrupt phenomenon remains a vicious cycle that is intricately connected. According to some researchers, for instance, poverty encourages corruption, while corruption brings about poverty (Husted, 1999; Paldam, 2001; Rama, 2012; Serra, 2006).

▒ Social/cultural Causes

The literature also suggests that social and cultural issues are important factors associated with corruption. Cultural and family relationships are associated with high perceptions of corrupt favours. In developing countries such as Africa, and Asia, cultural and family ties are stronger than in developed nations, such as Europe or North America, where individualism tends to be higher (Hofstede, 1983). When there is a strong bond of collectivism, corruption is often prevalent in the form of nepotism which is paramount in all types of business transactions (Khera, 2001). Rose-Ackerman (1999) argues that in the business sector, gift giving is prevalent, and it is quite usual to give one's relatives a job or contract. For example, it is customary for Thai citizens to give gifts to public servants as thanks for good services provided (Rose-Ackerman, 1999). Graaf (2007) describes such practices as a mutual reciprocity in people lives based on the belief that when one helps someone else, they expect that person to reciprocate. Such practices are often also applied within the public sector. Unethical standards of officials also cause corruption. In a society with low ethical standards, the public, especially the government officials, engage in more corrupt acts since they are unable to succumb to the temptation of rejecting bribes (Nas, Price, & Weber, 1986; Soot, 2012; Tanzi, 1998). What's more, Graaf (2007) argues that trust within close personal relationships increases the chance of benefitting from the delivered corrupt transactions and reduces the chance of getting caught.

In this area of research, however, contemporary literature is still conflicted with regards to distrust and corruption. According to Gavor and Stinchfield (2013), for example, the greater levels of perceived corruption among government officials,

the less trust citizens have in their political institutions. They add that properly functioning institutions generate trust amongst citizens, and ill-functioning or corrupt ones generate distrust. Similarly, political corruption in Asia causes citizens to decrease their level of trust in political and economic institutions (Chang & Chu, 2006), and the large percentages of populations throughout Africa express very little trust in their political institutions, thus likely aggravating corruption-related activities (see Gavor & Stinchfield, 2013). Davis, Camp, and Coleman (2004) also found that social mistrust is perceived to increase corruption in Chile, Costa Rica and Mexico. Along this same line, Heidenheimer (1996) argues that the root cause of political corruption in Italy is a by-product of mistrust among its people. As a consequence, when mistrust builds up over time, it may become a cultural legacy which affects the whole society for generations (Xin & Rudel, 2004).

In addition to this, research evidence shows the inconsistency between social norm and corruption. Researchers like Klitgaard (1988), and Caiden and Dwivedi (2001) argue that corruption is 'contagious'. This means corruption spreads like a communicable disease from one person to another through their daily communication or through the way they see their social context (Graaf, 2007). This is a causal chain of relationships that begins with certain values and norms within society which directly influences the values and norms of individuals, which make them corrupt (Graaf, 2007). Graaf (2007) furthers that once an organisational culture (or country) is corrupt, every person who comes into contact with it also runs a big risk of becoming corrupt. Likewise, Mishra (2006) and Xin and Rudel (2004) claim that people tend to be corrupt because there are many others who are corrupt. Therefore, corruption is more likely to be the social norm rather than deviant behaviour (Mishra, 2006).

Managerial Causes

Weaknesses inherent within managerial systems and organisational cultures may contribute to corrupt tendencies. It is argued that corruption in an organisation results from the inconsistency between an organisation's declared values and its managers' actual behaviour (Biron, 2010), professional deficiency and poor ethical behaviours of employees (Tanzi, 1998), lack of organisational initiatives and appropriate inducements (Mishra, 2006), and poor, or lack of, a staff performance

monitoring system. Additionally, Ashforth and Anand (2003) claim that the culture of overlooking corrupt practices, or supporting unethical behaviours, by organisational leaders or managers encourages corrupt practices. It is also noticeable that in many corrupt governments, officials who obey the rules or norms of the societies are frequently more susceptible to being condemned for corruption and, therefore, the incentive to remain compliant declines; thus, non-compliance tends to be on the rise (Mishra, 2006). As such, it is more likely that the source of institutional corruption is the institution, its management and its routines and procedures, and not the outcome of purely individual failure (Beeri & Navot, 2013).

2.2.2.2. Effects of Corruption

Literature on the effects of corruption is voluminous. Many authors liken its devastating force to "cancer", "virus" and "disease" (Otusanya, 2012). In this area of research, studies focus on five major variables, including political, legal, economic, social/cultural, and administrative. These evolve around the loss of capital, the impact on growth and social development, and, more recently, on the concept of good governance, democracy and human rights.

Political Effects

Studies on political effects focus on the negative influence of corruption on the growth and development of political institutions. For example, corruption discourages the growth of multi-party democracy and limits the public to the right to participate in policy making processes (Theobald, 1990), as well as placing citizens outside policy development processes (Chang & Chu, 2006) and encouraging political inequality (Enderwick, 2005).

Also, corruption threatens the effort to create legitimacy for emerging democracies and transitional countries (Xin & Rudel, 2004). It contributes to political distrust among citizens and, consequently, results in legitimacy crises in political systems (Bowser, 2001; Chang & Chu, 2006; Seligson, 2002). In Mexico, for example, corruption leads to the pervasiveness of distrust in the political system, particularly police and politicians (Morris, 1999), and corrodes people's trust in political systems in Latin America (Cailier, 2010). Chang and Chu (2006) further

claim that the call for a referendum in South Korea in 2003 clearly demonstrates the corrosive impact of political corruption on institutional trust and regime legitimacy. Indeed, institutions lose their autonomy and credibility and, instead, become personal instruments of corrupt leaders (Chang & Chu, 2006).

Furthermore, corruption may threaten the stability of governments (Grabosky, 2001). In the last couple of decades, for instance, the administration of president Tolbert of Liberia was toppled and charged with corruption by means of coup d'état, and a number of ministerial levels in Syria were overthrown from offices as part of an intensive campaign against graft and corruption (Macrae, 1982). More recently, in early 2011, there were a series of events throughout North African nations involving angry people opposing corrupt governments, which led to the transformation of these regimes (Graycar & Sidebottom, 2012). Also, corruption undermines the growth of government efforts to promote democratic values. According to Anderson and Tverdova (2003), for instance, institutions vital to a functioning democracy, such as a free media and civil society organisations, are tightly controlled or owned by government and its supporters, and Seligson (2002) asserts that corruption strongly impacts on the basic principles of democracy like accountability, equality, and openness, and on democratic participation which is the foundation of a strong government (Migdal, 1988).

Legal Effects

The literature on corruption research also draws attention to the effects of corruption on a nation's legal system. According to Graycar and Sidebottom (2012), corruption undermines government efforts to enhance rule of law and good governance; for example, policies and projects are designed to benefit a certain part of society, particularly for the interests of their partisans. It also weakens the accountability of governments (Evertsson, 2013). In corrupt regimes, political elites and government officials often formulate laws and regulations to benefit their affiliates and electoral funders (Austen-Smith, 1998; Evertsson, 2013; Grossman & Helpman, 1994; Harstad & Svensson, 2011; Kaufmann & Vincente, 2011).

The objective of enacting legislations and rules is to provide incentive for corrupt favours (Nielsen, 2003). Lately, in South Korea for example, legislation and rules were designed to target certain businesses that had not provided sufficient

annual contributions to the governing political party, to pay more. Thus, to bypass these discriminatory rules and regulations, the businesses have to bribe the government officials (Nielsen, 2003). Campbell and Saha (2013) also claim that companies that give donations to the Democratic Republican Party (Korean DRP) have, in return, gained access to low-interest loans and import licenses.

Economic Effects

In the field of economy, corruption research shows a range of economic consequences. Many authors maintain that corruption lowers the level of investment (Rose-Ackerman, 2002), drives away foreign investment (Mauro, 1995), discourages the creation of new businesses (Albrecht et al., 2012), reduces government revenues through tax evasion and embezzlement (Tanzi, 1998), increases the cost of doing business (Manzetti & Blake, 1996; Murphy et al., 1993; Rose-Ackerman, 2002), and leads to the misallocation of resources in the economy (Albrecht et al., 2012). Likewise, corruption lowers levels of per capita income (Kaufmann, Kraay, & Zoido-Lobaton, 2000), increases red tape in business transactions (Brunetti, Kisunko, & Weder, 1997; de Soto, 1989), draws talent away from entrepreneurship and innovation (Murphy, Shleifer, & Vishny, 1991), and fosters allocative inefficiencies (Lien, 1990).

Moreover, corruption may have distorting effects on government expenditures (Tanzi & Davoodi, 1998; Zelekha & Sharabi, 2012) which makes some governments unable to function properly (Tanzi, 1998). It leads to the inefficient and unfair distribution of scarce benefits and undermines the purposes of public programmes (Rose-Ackerman, 2008). Moreover, it affects the level of GDP per capita, international trade and price stability (Bardhan, 1997), and limits development and decreases literacy (Kaufmann & Kraay, 2002). Additionally, corruption brings about inequality in business competition (Ciocchini et al., 2003). For example, in order to win the contracts and gain special treatment, bidders may bypass the responsible departments by bribing political elites in the government (Manzetti & Blake, 1996). In some cases, contracts are only granted to companies that have close political connections (Nellis & Kiberi, 1989). Therefore, one would argue that if contracts are obtained in such ways, then it is unlikely that the contractors would be efficient in terms of quality and cost (Beenstock, 1979).

However, within this area of research, the established literature also shows conflicting findings. For some authors, corruption can have beneficial effects within a society. For example, it may be good for growth since it relaxes the rigidity of bureaucracy (Huntington, 1968), and serves as a boost to a country's economic development by reducing inefficiency and prolonged judgments (Leff, 1964). From a business perspective, corruption stimulates foreign direct investment because it may circumvent regulatory and administrative processes, thus increasing efficiency in business transactions (Eggera & Winner, 2005), and it also increases levels of entrepreneurship in nations that have high levels of administrative barriers (Dreher & Gassebner, 2013). Similarly, for some researchers, corruption is functional and serves as grease for the bureaucratic machine by eliciting administrative actions, as well as facilitating the development of parties, encouraging political participation, and helping to promote a stable and binding political environment (Bayley, 1966; Huntington, 1968).

Social/cultural Effects

Existing literature also demonstrates the prevalent effects of corruption on the social and cultural aspects of a nation. In this regard, corruption increases poverty (Judge et al., 2011) since it reduces fair and efficient distribution of wealth (Rose-Ackerman, 1997), and reduces resources available for infrastructures, public services and anti-poverty programmes (Robinson, 1998). When bureaucrats perform poorly in response to public demand (della Porta, 2000), the poor or marginalized groups suffer the most. Obviously then, corruption keeps on punishing those who are already economically impoverished and disenfranchised, and brings an unfair advantage to those who are politically well-connected (Rama, 2012). Also, it breeds injustice and unfair treatment in societies (Graycar & Sidebottom, 2012), and makes it extremely difficult for governments to produce policies and services that are responsive to the general public (Rothstein & Uslaner, 2005; Warren, 2004).

Furthermore, corruption contributes to the lack of social interaction. It spawns distrust in social interactions (Enderwick, 2005; Morris & Klesner, 2010; Seligson, 2002) which encourages people to act dishonestly (Gavor & Stinchfield, 2013), and breeds resentment amongst the public, reduces and distorts confidence, and discourages people to be honest and transparent (Rama, 2012). Additionally, it

reduces public trust in a regime's ability to respond to citizens' concerns, and, in turn, this lack of institutional trust breeds corruption as it drives citizens to bribe in order to gain access to decision makers (Chang & Chu, 2006). Clearly then, corruption does not in any way promote social cohesion or the social contract that binds people together but, rather, threatens it (Ochulor, 2011). When such beliefs about corruption are deep-rooted, it contributes to the decline of ethical values in societies as people seem to consider corruption as the social norm (Mishra, 2006).

Administrative Effects

In terms of administrative effects, corruption greatly reduces the administrative abilities to deal with public interests. For example, corruption results in poor public services delivery since the bureaucratic agencies lack resources, and goods and services are only provided to those who can afford to pay bribes (Salifu, 2008). Furthermore, in corrupt societies, officials often divert administrative resources or projects in ways that benefit them as individuals, often at great, social, economic, and environmental expense (Chang & Chu, 2006). According to Goldsmith, for example, corruption skews public expenditure away from health and education, presumably because they are more difficult to manipulate for bribe purposes than other projects, and corrupt politicians might be more inclined to spend on large-scale investment projects rather than on textbooks and teachers' salaries, even though the latter may promote economic growth to a greater extent than the former (Goldsmith, 1999). Similarly, in developing countries, wealth from natural resources (e.g., minerals, and forest) has been misappropriated for private gain by government officials, often leading to uncontrolled environmental degradation (Pellegrini & Gerlagh, 2005; Robbins, 2000; Winbourne, 2002). Overall, according to the World Bank estimation, through illegal logging alone developing countries lose about $18 billion annually (see Dillon et al., 2006). Local communities are displaced by invasive logging practices or oppressed by complicit authorities (Dillon et al., 2006). In the environmental and natural resources sector, corruption takes away the rights from citizens to a clean and complete environment, misallocates environmental resources, and diverts funds from conservation and preservation programmes (Winbourne, 2002).

2.2.2.3. Solutions

In recognition of the devastating effects of corruption on societies, the war against corruption started in the 1990s (Ampratwum, 2008; Warburton, 2007; Xin & Rudel, 2004). International communities, donors, governments, non-governmental organisations, and scholars have devoted considerable time and effort to tackle this social issue. For example, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) created a convention that criminalized bribery abroad by enterprises based in OECD countries in 1997 (Galtung, 1998), and some African nations undertook administrative reforms aiming at curbing corrupt practices in their public sectors (Riley, 1998). Likewise, international financial institutions, such as the World Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank, demonstrated a strong determination to control corrupt acts in their development projects (Quick, 2000; Shihata, 2000).

These actions testify to the emergence of a global consensus that fighting corruption is a pressing issue as it hinders sustainable economic growth and retards the ability of emerging democracies to promote good governance (Doig & Mclvor, 1999). Indeed, until recently there has been little evidence to describe the success of these joint efforts. As previously stated, corruption remains and continues to grow, to some extent, in an uncontrollable manner and there is a growing body of useful literature that focuses on this topic. The research in this area focuses on political, legal, administrative, managerial and market-based approaches to corruption control.

Political-based Approach

According to the existing literature, a political approach is one of the leading strategies to reduce corrupt practices. This measure may be the promotion of political competition so that political parties or activists are able to keep their eyes on activities of governments (Chang & Golden, 2010), and to hold public officials accountable for their actions. Political competition can play a major role in topple down corruption politicians from office in the next election (Montinola & Jackman, 2002). As such, a high competitive environment reduces incentive opportunities for politicians to get involved in corruption for fear of being thrown out of office. Democratic decentralisation, which is the foundation of good governance, can also

assist in the reduction of corrupt tendencies as it brings governments close to local communities, and people can actively participate in local issues including curbing corruption (Ve´ron & Williams, 2006). Also, it gives local politicians and elected councillors the incentive to keep their eyes on government official's activities (Bardhan & Mookherjee, 2001), and increases local participation and vigilance (Azfar, Kahkonen, & Meagher, 2001). Further, Ve´ron and Williams (2006) claim that the failure of decentralisation to constrain corrupt behaviours is just the result of incomplete, or distorted, decentralisation.

Additionally, the contemporary literature also suggests that democratic institutions are powerful in resisting corrupt tendencies. Civic organisations (Xin & Rudel, 2004) such as NGOs and trade unions, free media and public access to government information (Albrecht et al., 2012), and freedom of the press (Lederman, Loayza, & Soares, 2005), are influential democratic institutions which discourage corrupt favours, since they work independently and are able to shed light on government wrongdoings. According to Meagher (2005), for example, media and civic organisations have helped make a fundamentally open and cooperative approach to corruption control successful in Hong Kong and Australia. Similarly, the World Bank indicates that civil society makes an appearance, mainly as a safeguard against corrupt officials (World Bank, 2000). Ve´ron and Williams (2006) and Xin and Rudel (2004) emphasize that NGOs have certainly played important roles in recent prominent campaigns for integrity in government. For example, in the 1991–1992 campaign to oust Brazil's president, Fernando Collor for corrupt activities, a coalition of NGOs articulated the public's discontent, mobilised people for demonstrations, and pressured politicians in the Brazilian Congress to vote for impeachment (Mische, 1998).

Furthermore, the established literature recommends building human capacity as an essential approach to help reduce corruption. Public education and awareness raising on impacts of corruption on societies (Tavits, 2010) are important approaches that can bring about extensive public support in this fight. In addition, some authors highlight the significance of human development proliferation (Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012). This is evident in most well-established democratic societies where people are educated; they often spend time following the government's activities by reading newspapers about government's policies, and participate in political processes (Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012). Similarly, Ochulor (2011) highlights the

importance of conducting public campaigns and incorporating moral and ethical standards in the educational curriculum, and in every sector and aspect of the people's lives. Studies also show that the public may be more committed to scrutinise and uncover corrupt government transactions in countries where human development is high (Sims et al., 2012). The higher the level of human development indicates an environment that promotes equal access to opportunities for people to exercise their free will and realize their maximum potential (Ul Haq, 1995). This, in turn, resulted in decreases in incidents of corruption, as well as improvements in public service quality (Deininger & Mpuga, 2005). Further, increased human development encourages more individuals to collectively seek social justice and enhanced moral standards (Zhang, Cao, & Vaughn, 2009). In addition, some scholars such as Dalton (1994), Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002), and McClosky and Zaller (1984) also argue that in well-developed, established democracies the more educated the citizens are, the more likely they are to support and defend core democratic values and principles. By contrast, when citizens are poorly educated, they may be unaware of their rights to duly influence their political leaders (Hors, 2000).

Legal-based Approach

The legal context also receives a significant level of attention in anti-corruption research. Salifu (2008), and Graycar and Sidebottom (2012) argue that creating new laws and regulations, and putting them into real practice, is an effective way to deter corrupt practices. For example, accounting rules have played a vital role in reducing corrupt transactions by way of detecting actual corrupt practices and deterring upcoming abuses in China (Sun, 1999), and audit regulations may be a vital step in the fight against corruption (Albrecht et al., 2012). However, some researchers warn that laws that are not consistent with prevailing morals may exert pressure on public officials to enforce them selectively (see, Soot, 2012). In addition, approaches to curbing corruption must be best suited to their specific contextual situation, such as its economic, social and political circumstance (Salifu, 2008), and ineffective or bad laws only give multiple opportunities to those who attempt to increase their profits (Evertsson, 2013).

Also, in this field of research, previous studies pay special attention to the presence of supervision agencies (Salifu, 2008; Lederman, 2005). Shleifer and

Vishny (1993) and Lederman et al. (2005) assert that governments that have any form of anti-corruption bodies are observed to be less corrupt. Some authors argue that to have those legal instruments being effectively enforced is to establish an independent, resourceful, and powerful anti-corruption agency or oversight body; this agency has to fulfil its functions without interference of any organisation or person (Grabosky, 2001; Albrecht, 2012). Adding to this, some researchers are in the position of imposing extensive external checks and balances on public institutions and officeholders (Kaufmann, Kraay, & Mastruzzi, 2004) as a way of detecting corrupt tendencies.

Just creating anti-corruption bodies is not enough to combat the complex phenomenon of corruption. To succeed in the fight against corruption the ACA (Anti-corruption agency), for example, must have sufficient resources, including competent staff and budget, punishable and forcible power, and strong political and public support (Meagher, 2005); be independent in monitoring the implementation of government's overall anti-corruption policy, in appointing and removing staff without political pressure or interferences, be independent in proposing budget directly to the legislature, and have the right to access witnesses and documents; they must have the power to freeze assets and seize travel documents; the ability to protect informants; and the authority to monitor assets, income and expenditures, and tax returns (see Meagher, 2005). In addition, according to some authors, to be effective the ACA must have access to power in investigations and prosecutions, provide an educational and awareness raising function, and hold a legislative role (i.e., proposing reform bills to parliament) (Lengseth in Meagher, 2005), and also be active in capacity building and punishment functions (Doig, 1995), in planning and performance measurement (Doig & Riley, 1998), and in research and prevention capabilities (Meagher, 2005).

However, it is evident that having an ACA is one thing, making it effective is quite another. In Thailand, for example, the Counter Corruption Act and its National Counter Corruption Commission (NCCC) were established and operationalised decades ago. Corruption is widespread in this country and the NCCC is known as the "paper tiger" (Quah, 2010). This may mean that when political leaders propose to establish an anti-corruption agency, they have little reason to be candid about their motives and expectations; and where the ACA is not structurally independent, it can be no more powerful than its bureaucratic and political patrons (Meagher, 2005).

Importantly, many authors pinpoint the lack of real political will amongst the attributable leaders to the failure of combating corruption (Abdulai, 2009; Mishra, 2006; Persson, Rothstein, & Teorell, 2010; Quah, 2010; Zhu, 2012).

Administrative-based Approach

Apart from political and legal factors, the administrative approach is recommended by many researchers in corruption literature. Indeed, bureaucratic corruption may be controlled by conducting administrative reform and anti-corruption reform. In terms of administrative reform, for example, some authors suggest reducing corrupt opportunities of bureaucrats by, for instance, increasing competition, minimization of government monopoly and discretionary authorities in distributing goods or services, and by reinforcing the structure of public sector's accountability (Graycar & Sidebottom, 2012; Xin & Rudel, 2004), and introducing overlapping jurisdictions that create competition between officials, and job rotations (Rose-Ackerman, 1978). For some authors, the focus is on strengthening civil liberties and promoting active participation from the public in administrative processes (Ve´ron & Williams, 2006), and reducing the opportunities and incentives for corruption through administrative and civil service reform, including meritocratic recruitment and decentralisation (Persson et al., 2010), and reducing the number of permits and the amount of discretion exercised by bureaucrats (Kaufmann, 1997).

Established literature also suggests anti-corruption reform as a way to share a powerful contribution to disrupting entrenched corrupt governments. According to Nielsen (2003), for example, corruption reform interventions that focus on corruption networks are likely to be more effective than interventions that focus solely on individual behaviours. An intervention that targets and punishes one officer can be less effective than an intervention that focuses on the corruption network. One unethical officer can be replaced by another unethical officer. Similarly, Rose-Ackerman (2000) claim that reform movements that culminate in the removal of corrupt officials from office will have little long-term effect on rates of corruption if the reforms do not change the organisation and incentives of the people who hold office. Some authors add that reforms are unlikely to have a sustained effect on levels of corruption unless they coincide with changes in the larger society (Xin & Rudel, 2004).

▒ Management-based Approach

The managerial approach has also been suggested by scholars and researchers as another effective strategy to control corruption. For example, Carvajal (1999) asserts that managers' reputation of integrity may minimize corrupt favours; Huberts, Kaptein, and Lasthuizen (2007) emphasize role-modelling, openness and the strictness of leaders; and Soot (2012) stresses the adoption of codes of ethics and control. Along the same line, some authors focus on managerial aspects, including 'Interventionism' (conducting investigation and punishing when found guilty), 'Managerialism' (setting up sound management structures, procedural rules), and 'Organisational Integrity' (i.e., institutional operational standards, anti-corruption measures and employee ethical code of conducts) (Matei & Matei, 2011), clear rules and procedures (McCusker, 2006), clear goals and missions, and performance monitoring (Banfield, 1975), on setting clear rules of recruitment (Soot, 2012), and good communication, extensive information sharing and commitment, to honesty in relationships with employees, as key ingredients in preventing delinquent behaviours and corruption in an organisation (Niehoff & Paul, 2000).

In addition, while McCusker (2006) suggests the prioritization of anti-corruption activities and reforms as strategies to prevent corruption, Salifu (2008) recommends the USAID approach which is interested in improving public sector employee reward systems and enhancing accountability by strengthening transparency, oversight, and sanctions, and Paternoster and Simpson (1996) emphasise the importance of managerial ethics in curbing corporate crime. Moreover, Soot (2012) suggests a range of measures, such as disciplinary sanctions and dismissals, employee's monitoring, internal financial audits, and public scrutiny to deter corrupt behaviours. Banfield (1975) supports positive motivations for the loyal employees (a high salary), negative motivations (sanction when corrupt act is detected), and probity and selection based on loyalty, and Soot (2012) recommends the World Bank meritocratic principles of recruitment in civil service as a step towards elimination of a patronage system.

Market-based Approach

Research into corruption prevention also concentrates on the market-based approach. The market-based approach can also be an effective way to reduce corruption since a large state role is likely to encourage corrupt transactions. Many researchers suggest that economic liberalisation and market deregulation are rigorous agendas for the private sector which may contribute to the reduction in corrupt practices (Otusanya, 2012). This is a way of making a smaller government, which is significant to minimise corruption by way of reducing extensive involvement of governments into the economic resources of the countries. For example, privatisation can reduce corrupt transactions by removing certain assets from state control (Rose-Ackerman, 2002) to the market by way of an effective, competitive bidding process. As is claimed by many authors, competition can act as a vehicle to constrain economic malfeasance (e.g., Ades & Tella, 1999; Serra, 2006; Treisman, 2000). Deregulation is also important as it may eliminate or minimise the state regulatory power over certain industries or markets, as well as the allocation of economic resources (Mishra, 2006; Rose-Ackerman, 1996).

However, the established literature shows the inconsistency of findings relating to deregulation and economic liberalisation as a means to minimise corrupt practices. Levels of political and bureaucratic corruption, for example, are unlikely to have decreased, particularly in the transitional economies of the former Soviet Bloc (Humphrey, 2002). Bureaucratic red-tape, patronage and rent seeking still exist (Ades & Tella, 1999; Jessop, 2002; Rose-Ackerman, 1996; World Bank, 1997). The process of transferring assets to private ownership is fraught with corrupt opportunities. For example, instead of bribing a state agency to obtain contracts and favourable treatment, bidders for a public company can bribe officials in the privatisation authority or at the top of government (Manzetti & Blake, 1996), and corrupt incentives are more specific to the privatisation process (Rose-Ackerman, 2002). However, many researchers persistently conclude that corruption subsists only where liberalisation has been incomplete, or where states have been left with too many regulatory powers (Ve´ron & Williams, 2006), and where the reforms have not been proper or adequate and the right incentives are still not in place (Mishra, 2006).

To conclude, all these aspects are evident in the established literature on corruption research. The focus has been on causes, effects and solutions, and has

revolved around some major variables, including political, legal, social/cultural, administrative/managerial, and economic issues. The next section examines what the contemporary literature has told us about the roles of NGO in corruption prevention.

2.2.3. NGOs and Corruption Prevention Research

2.2.3.1. The Roles of NGOs

NGOs are a subset of civil society (Antlöv et al., 2008), a sub-sector of civil society (Buxton, 2009), and an integral part of civil society (Bromideh, 2011). Through the thousand year history of human civilisation, people have organised themselves into non-governmental organisations, such as social/ethnic groups, in an effort to improve their circumstances (Henderson, 2002). These social groups provide social services, education, health and religion related activities, such as self-help groups (Antlöv et al., 2008), self-governing (Henderson, 2002), and self-supporting and self-generating (Mercer, 2002).

Although NGOs have a long history with considerable discussion and research abounding regarding these independent organisations, their definition is still vague. Without a commonly agreed definition, and no clear division between NGOs and civil society organisations (CSOs), NGOs and CSOs have often been used interchangeably. What is clear is that NGOs or CSOs stay between the public sector and the business sector. The United Nations, the World Bank and the European commission all set different definitions. However, the most preferred one may be the one defined by the UN:

> *[A]ny not-for-profit, voluntary citizens' group, which is organised on a local, national or international level. Task-oriented and driven by people with common interests, NGOs perform a variety of services and humanitarian functions, bring citizens' concerns to governments, monitor policy, and encourage participation at the community level. They provide analysis and expertise, serve as early warning mechanisms, and help monitor and implement international agreements (Carr & Outhwaite, 2011, p. 6).*

This definition highlights certain key features discussed by many authors and scholars, including non-profit or not-for profit (Henderson, 2002; Kim 1997; Yamamoto, 1999) voluntary groups/organisations/associations/actions (Antlöv et al.,

2008; Fisher, 1997; Kim 1997; Lowry, 2008; Mercer, 2002; Quadir, 2003), and the organisation's common goals are to address their common concerns, and provide humanitarian and development assistance. This definition includes the roles of NGOs in advocacy, monitoring, participation and social mobilisation. These are, of course, fundamental roles that NGOs can employ to demand societal sustainable reforms, and to hold government official accountable for their activities.

According to some research evidence, the UN Anti-Corruption Toolkit (United Nations, 2002) and the TI Corruption Fighters' Toolkit (Transparency International, 2002), NGOs, the subset of civil society (Antlöv et al., 2008), are key players in tackling corruption. Their roles in corruption prevention include public education and awareness raising, building coalitions and networks, policy advocacy and civic mobilisation, monitoring and access to information, and corruption/governance research.

Research suggests that public education and awareness raising is one of the important strategies that NGOs employ to resist corrupt practices. This approach can be conducted through education and training initiatives (Langseth, 1999; Mavuso & van der Merwe, 1999), and the activity focuses specifically on good governance, integrity and ethical issues by utilising different means such as posters, leaflets, newspapers, radios and TV. Another approach has been on awareness campaigns by employing workshops and advanced technology, to mobilising grass-roots support (Kaufmann, 1998), building anti-corruption clubs in schools (Aderonmu, 2011), and promoting public agent's ethical code of conduct (Cheema, 2011). In addition, Rasmussen (2010) emphasizes a rights-based approach developed and incorporated into NGOs programmes. This approach promotes the public understanding of their rights and strengthens social capital so that they are able to hold government officials accountable for their actions. Kaufmann (1998) denotes this strategy as the promotion of a balance between prevention and enforcement measures in tackling corruption, and Chêne (2010) categorises public education and awareness raising as soft diplomacy to addressing corruption.

Building coalitions and networks is also an integral element that NGOs employed to build up their voices in controlling corruption. This thought is based on the position that corruption is a crime without borders. Indeed, it affects everyone and cannot be addressed by government itself; it must be the responsibility of everyone. In this regard, Chêne (2010) focuses on anti-corruption coalition building

to reinforce collective responsibilities and actions to curb corruption and promote integrity and accountability. Transparency International (TI) is an example as it has built linkages with different stakeholders, both at the global and national levels. Additionally, Yamamoto (1999) provides evidence of the building of networks among NGOs in Asian countries and with governments in terms of sharing expertise, perspectives and resources: Buxton (2009) The Community Empowerment Network (CEN) of national networks in Central Asia of the World Bank Institute (WBI) project, and NANSMIT (National Association for Independent Media of Tajikistan) networks in India. Similarly, Chêne (2010) denotes other well- known anti-corruption coalitions and networks, such as Philippines' Transparency and Accountability Network and South African National Anti-Corruption Forum. However, to be more effective, coalition building to fighting corruption must include journalists and the media and be based on grassroots initiatives (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2010).

Literature about NGOs underpins the pivotal roles of policy advocacy and civic mobilisation in combating corruption. According to Cheema (2011), civil society, as an agent of change, plays an active role in policy analysis, policy making, decision making and advocacy to make sure that government officials are accountable, and the interests of the poor and underserved communities are taken into consideration. Along the same line, Salamon, Hems, and Chinnock (2000) posit the idea that NGOs are schools for advocacy pushing for societal transformations, and Mercer (2002) underpins that NGOs are the channel for mobilising civic movements pursuing political changes. As in the case of South Korea, for instance, Lowry (2008) emphasizes that the roles of NGOs as watch groups or voluntary organisations have become influential in stabilizing democratic political system. Likewise, Antlöv et al. (2008) reveal evidence from the experience of NGOs in Indonesia who act as an independent oversight body working collaboratively with a national anti-corruption agency to expose government corrupt practices, and undertake independent advocacy campaigns across issues of the public sector.

Monitoring and public access to information is another major factor that NGOs can employ to tackle corruption. Oversight, watchdog and monitoring functions have all been suggested by authors in this review. Some signify the importance of independent oversight and watchdog functions as an approach to hold accountable government activities, and to scrutinise the abuses of state power

(Antlöv et al., 2008; Cheema, 2011; Mavuso & van der Merwe, 1999; Mercer, 2002). The following examples are, to a certain extent, two effective anti-corruption NGOs. The first one is an African watchdog and whistle blowing NGO that takes the lead in counterweighting state power and promoting transparency and accountability by shedding light on corrupt officials in the media (Aderonmu, 2011). The other is the MKSS (Workers' and Farmers' Power Organisation) of north Indian state of Rajasthan, a grassroots organisation that succeeds in promoting the right to information and monitoring local government expenditures (Jenkins & Goetz, 2010).

Last but not least, governance/corruption research is also an important determinant to corruption prevention. This approach is recognised by The UN Anti-Corruption Toolkit (United Nations, 2002) and The TI Corruption Fighters' Toolkit (Transparency International, 2002) as a potential method. However, it seems to be downplayed by authors in this review, except for a couple of them. Kaufmann (1998), for example, argues that scorecard evaluation on local service deliveries and bribery provides useful information for promoting good governance and reforms, and Langseth (1999) emphasises the benefits of integrity and annual corruption surveys. For Carr and Outhwaite (2011), research not only contributes to promoting strategies to curb corruption but also provides input for particular aspects of governance issues, such as the effectiveness of the legislature and enforcement. More importantly, suggestions and recommendations from the research provided crucial thoughts for future consideration and adjustment on any project.

2.2.3.2. The Challenges of NGOs

There is evidence to suggest that the operational space of an NGO is often problematic when working with less-open governments. For instance, the Bangladeshi government put substantial pressure on policy choices available to NGOs, and intimidations by government officials on NGOs staff during their operations have forced many Bangladeshi NGOs involved in social mobilisation to shut down (Rahman, 2006). Similar events have also occurred to Cambodian NGOs staff. For example, Cambodian Centre for Human Rights (CCHR) workers, during their interviews with the local people to collect information on the impact of land conflicts involving private company and economic land concession, were intimidated by government officers (Cambodian Centre for Human Rights, 2012). In such

situations, opportunities for cooperation and collaboration between governments and NGOs, as well as operational space for NGOs, are limited (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2002; Coston, 1998). Moreover, governments frequently see the roles played by NGOs as a means to damage state hegemony (Bratton, 1998; Fowler, 1991).

Besides, a shortage of financial resources is also a concern for NGOs to bring about effective operation. In developing and transitional economies, most NGOs are supported by international donors (Antlöv et al., 2008; Cheema, 2011; Mercer, 2002). In such conditions, they have often been observed to apply an upward approach which prioritises their accountability to funders, rather than be responsive to the demands of local community (Fisher, 1997). Therefore, as claimed by Malena and Chhim (2009), their roles in improving democracy or good governance are limited since they are not built on the basis of grassroots participation, voluntary movements and social activism. At the same time, sustainability is not secured because funders may withdraw or limit their support. As such, to ensure their strength and sustainability NGOs need to have a strong connection with the general mass inside the country.

Additionally, the limited capacity of NGOs themselves negatively impacts on the effectiveness of their performance. Undeniably, NGOs operationalising in emerging democracies lack skills, such as strategic management and planning, fundraising and monitoring, and evaluation (Kim 1997). Importantly, the capability to work collaboratively with the government institutions is still relatively weak, compounded by low understanding of government policy and directions. Lack of access to government held information, and limited capacity to build networks and coalitions with other stakeholders, increasingly make their functions less effective.

2.3. Remaining Unsolved Problems

2.3.1. Theoretical Problems

While there has been much research on corruption in general, the specific area of corruption prevention is relatively under-theorised. Even though corruption is generally considered a problem that has serious impacts, and there are significant global efforts being undertaken to promote good governance, democracy and human

rights, corruption prevention has attracted relatively little interest from the academic community. Currently there is no specific theory of corruption prevention in its own field. The majority of corruption research tends to test existing theories borrowed from other disciplines. For example, sociological-based theories such as contingency theory have been used to test the effect of human development and national culture on corruption (Sims et al., 2012), and institutional theory has been used to analyse the interaction of culture and corruption (Pillay & Dorasamy, 2010). Economic theories such as a principal-agent model have also been applied to political corruption (Groenendijk, 1997), to test the relationship between party system competitiveness and corruption (Schleiter & Voznaya, 2014), and the use of game theory to examine the relationship between natural resources, democracy and corruption (Bhattacharyya & Hodler, 2010), and the inability of Chinese authorities to deter corruption (Zhu, 2012). Theoretical perspectives have also been borrowed from criminology, such as a situational crime prevention theory to control corruption (Graycar & Sidebottom, 2012).

As a result of this, research results are fragmented and practitioners find it difficult to gain useful insights from research. This is because early corruption research has largely been atheoretical (Judge et al., 2011) and the research that does adopt theory tends to be confined to silos of particular disciplinary perspectives. It is no surprise then to see that economists work on economic causes, effects and solutions; law academics focus on legal antecedents and legal solutions; and ethicists research moral behaviours and solutions, and so on. As a result, research tends not be truly cumulative, leading to a lack of the development of a coherent body of models and theories that explain corruption and ways to prevent it occurring (Judge et al., 2011). Further, due to the disparate nature of research, those theoretical assumptions and frameworks that are employed often conflict, and the constructs and variables applied appear as antecedents and effects.

The few studies that do attempt to establish a specialised perspective tend to still borrow from other disciplines. For example, by combining game theory with the institutional perspective (Collier, 2002), and the examination of corruption from the combined perspectives of political science and economics (Nas et al., 1986). This lack of theory about corruption prevention not only poses hurdles to corruption study, but also to policy makers and practitioners. Therefore, more theory development to curbing corruption is needed to help address this complex social

virus. Due to corruption attacks on political, legal, economic, managerial and administrative contexts, at a minimum level, future research should pay considerable attention to building theories around these contextual themes. For example, it is essential to develop a theory about political corruption prevention, and a theory about legal corruption prevention, or something similar. At a higher level, corruption prevention should have its own principal theory. Any attempt to develop a theory of corruption prevention would be of great value to corruption research and the crusade against corruption.

Since corruption affects all segments of society, attempts at researching how to combat it by looking at each context individually, for example political, legal, and economic, may not be enough to provide an effective solution. Research that informs the fight against corruption should be conducted on a multi-disciplinary basis. One example is Rothstein (2007) who suggests a 'big bang' approach to understanding corruption prevention. Rothstein argues that the 'big bang' approach does not give higher value to any single institutional change than the other. This means, for example, the court of law is not better or inferior than civil society or the mass media, and therefore must be examined simultaneously. However, up to the present, Rothstein's suggestion has gained little interest from researchers. Nonetheless, research such as this though might address some of the concerns expressed by authors (e.g., Judge et al., 2011) about the fragmentation in corruption research findings.

Apart from this, there are many problems which remained unaddressed. For example, the role of a value-based approach in controlling corruption (Ian, 2013), the role of NGOs in channelling political participation (Boulding, 2010), the determining factors associated with the success or failure of anti-corruption strategies (Abdulai, 2009), and the lack of integrity by the top political elites (Batory, 2012).

2.3.2. Methodological Problems

In addition to theoretical problems, there are also a number of methodological issues. So far, much of the corruption research effort has been quantitative. Bose, Capasso, and Murshid (2008) warn that the existing data on corruption has a number of shortcomings that pose hurdles for empirical research. This is probably because of the sensitive nature of corruption. Sending out questionnaires for respondents to

complete in the form of, for example, close-ended questions, Likert-type scale questions or pre-determining responses will not yield profound perspectives of what is really happening on the ground. Respondents are reluctant to give complete responses and, at times, the provided response-space is not enough for them to share their life experiences with corruption. On the contrary, qualitative of inquiry is more appropriate; it offers the researcher flexible techniques to obtain in-depth responses from participants, and an actual contextual situation on the ground. Without predetermined questions means that participants are allowed to speak their own minds which is crucial for gaining their life experiences and how they interpret their experiences. Additionally, researchers and the participants meet face-to-face in a two-way communication from which researchers can unearth unexpected thoughts from the participants, and the participants are able to make inquiries and clarify any information that they are unclear about.

The literature on corruption studies is replete with review papers which offer an overview of the published materials. This means that the papers are produced without any grounding in data. For example, "Doing good? The politics and antipolitics of NGO practices" (Fisher, 1997), "A model and typology of government-NGO relationships" (Coston, 1998), "Corruption and its control in the development context: An analysis and selective review of the literature" (Doig & Mclvor, 1999), "The fight against corruption and its implication for development in developing and transition economies" (Ampratwum, 2008), "Natural resources, democracy and corruption" (Bhattacharyya & Hodler, 2010), and "NGOs, civil societies and democratisation" (Mercer, 2002). As such, the results are not up-to-date and are not relevant to the current situation due to the fact that corrupt practices evolve over time and differ from one setting to another. Therefore, the papers may not offer concrete and current solutions to inform policy makers and practitioners in the fight against corruption due to the lack of connection to current situations and different geographical settings.

This does not mean that existing review papers are not important as they do provide significant insights and guidance for further empirical, contextual research that may assist in the current war against corruption. Academically, the extant literature expands knowledge relating to corruption, informs researchers of available information in the field of study, provides considerable discourses about corruption war, and opens the door for future study. Without the extant literature thus far,

researchers may have nothing to support their claims; indeed, without previous studies, current research lacks strong evidence, and arguments are considered to be base-less.

Practically, regardless of whether the studies are relating to causes of corruption, or its effects or remedies, they are important. I think, at least at a minimum level, the more we understand the root causes of the disease, the better we are able to prescribe or develop appropriate medicines to cure it; the more we understand the effects of the disease on society, the better we are able to set out appropriate strategies to protect it from becoming more widespread, as well as to mobilise the masses to support and participate in the fight against it; the more we understand different strategies to combat corruption suggested from previous research, regardless of whether they are applied in different settings, the better they inform policy makers and practitioners to readjust them to best fit to their contextual conditions in the fight against corruption. As is claimed by de Gaaf (2007), for example, the more we understand the causes of corruption, the better we can understand how to control it.

Therefore, inquiring into these unanswered problems will be a significant step toward resolving this devastating social disease. However, within a framework of a doctoral thesis, I cannot deal with all of the unsolved issues. Thus, in this study I aim to explore the role played by NGOs in promoting good governance, as well as preventing corruption. I look specifically at the Cambodian context where there is no prior research on this particular issue, and the methodology used will be different from previous research which mostly utilised a traditional, deductive approach in the form of testing theories or hypothesis. In this study, I employ a qualitative approach of inquiry with the intent to develop an integrated substantive theoretical framework inductively.

2.3.3. Overall Thematic Problems

The major focus of the existing literature is on three broad themes: causes, effects and remedies. However, these studies have issues since they are mainly fragmented and lack convergence. This means that some researchers focus on causes, some on effects, while others concentrate on solutions. Put simply, previous research investigates the three themes separately. For example, Graaf (2007) and Treisman

(2000) focus on causes of corruption; Bose and Murshid (2008) and Bayley (1966) on effects of corruption; and Doig and Riley (1998) and Grabosky (2001) focus specifically on corruption prevention strategies. More specifically, the major focus of the causes of corruption, the most focus of corruption research, is on political, legal, economic, social/cultural and managerial; however, they lack of convergence. Some authors focus on political causes (see Evertsson, 20013; Mistree, 2015); some on legal causes (see Campbell & Saha, 2013; Meagher, 2005); some on economic (see Barr, Lindelow & Serneels, 2009; Rama, 2012), some on social/cultural (see Khera, 2001; Rose-Ackerman, 1999), and others on managerial (see Biron, 2010; Ashforth & Anand, 2003).

Similar problems arise within the research on the effects of corruption. The main focus is on political, legal, socio-cultural and economic effects, but there is still a lack of convergence. The majority of them are studied individually, meaning that some authors focus only on political effects (see Xin & Rudel, 2004; Chang & Chu, 2006), some researchers on legal (see Graycar & Sidebottom, 2012; Evertsson, 2013), and others on economic and so forth (see Rose-Ackerman, 2002; Menzetti & Blake, 1996). The area of solutions, the one area with the least amount of focus within the contemporary corruption literature, also has problems. The main focus of this variable looks at solutions from political, legal, social, managerial and market-based perspectives, however, they are studied separately. Some researchers are interested in political solutions (see Abdulai, 2009; Ve´ron & Williams, 2006), and some concentrate on legal approaches (see Salifu, 2008; Lederman, 2005), some on administrative strategies (see Rose-Ackerman, 1978; Persson et al., 2010), some on managerial measures (see Mckusker, 2006; Banfield, 1975), and others on market-based approaches (see Otusanya, 2012; Rose-Ackerman, 2002). This demonstrates that there has not been an intensive attempt within contemporary research to pull together and place these elements into a coherent set.

There have been some attempts to pull together the causes, effects and solutions and put them into a single paper, however they tend to be confined to the grey literature. For example, in the 2002 IMF book by Abed and Gupta: *Governance, Corruption and Economic Performance*, there are 18 research studies (Abed & Gupta, 2002) but only one of them discusses the three themes together, namely a research study by Tanzi titled: "Corruption Around the World: Causes, Consequences, Scope, and Cures". A journal article by (Judge et al., 2011)

investigates the antecedents and effects of corruption, however it says very little about the solution. These studies highlight the lack of convergent research within the established literature. Also, a book edited by Gupta and Bist (2007) titled: *Corruption in India: origin, causes and solutions,* consists of a number of articles discussing causes, effects and solutions. For example, "Corruption: causes, consequences and prevention" (Gupta & Birdi), "Corruption: causes, consequences and cure" (Dikshit), and "Corruption: origin, cause and solution" (Partasarathy). However, these articles appear to be just perspectives of the authors, rather than peer-reviewed papers and actual empirical research.

2.3.4. The Silo Problem

Research into individual disciplines of existing literature also diverges and there is a significant lack of multi-level research. The key focus in the study of political causes of corruption is on, but not limited to, political will, democratisation, political funding and public oversight. This means that previous research addresses these variables separately, ranging from macro to micro levels. At the macro scale, for example, the main focus is on the roles of political parties in government systems (Blechinger, 2005), the prevalence of party-directed corruption (Mistree, 2015), political will (Abdulai, 2009; Mishra, 2006), excessive government discretionary authorities over the allocation of goods and services (Habib & Zurawicki, 2002; Morris & Klesner, 2010; Tanzi, 1998), problems around democratisation processes (Otusanya, 2012), government attitudes towards democratic institutions, such as media and CSOs (Anderson & Tverdova, 2003), and social oversight systems (Manzetti, 2000; Tulchin & Espach, 2000). At the micro scale, for example, the major problem is associated with political power-brokers granting contracts to electoral funders in return for money and favours (e.g., Apollonio & La Raja, 2004; Austen-Smith, 1998; Evertsson, 2013; Gordon, 2001; Grossman & Helpman, 1994; Harstad & Svensson, 2011; Hart, 2001; Kaufmann & Vincente, 2011; Stratmann, 1992; Zullo, 2006). These examples hightlight a significant lack of convergence within the existing literature regarding political causes of corruption. It appears that the majority of researchers confine their study around the areas of their expertises and experiences, and thus lack any interest in looking beyond their own borders.

Such fragmentation impacts on the current state of understanding of the established literature since it has not better informed both pratitioners and researchers.

In the legal realm, the connection between corruption and weaknesses in a legal system (Jain, 2001) has received significant research attention. The main focus of the extant literature is on the the complexity and ambiguity of laws, oversight bodies, and law enforcement. Still, there are problems in this individual discipline since previous researchers tend to focus on them individually. Some researchers focus on the ambiguity and complexity in the creation of laws and lack of law enforcement as the legal causes of corruption, whereas some authors concentrate on the absence of oversight body. For example, an investigation of structural and institutional aspects of corruption focuses on causes of corruption associated with the complexity and ambiguity of laws (Campbell & Saha, 2013; Lapalombara, 1994), and deficiencies of law enforcement (Albrecht et al., 2012), while some researchers focus on the absence of an oversight mechanism, especially the anti-corruption bodies (Salifu, 2008).

Moreover, previous research into the legal causes of corruption lacks agreement about the existence of rules and regulations and the widespread nature of corruption. Some researchers argue that the lack of legal instruments results in corrupt transactions, while others claim that this is not the case. For example, Bardhan (1997), in a review about corruption and development, emphasizes that many legislations and rules bring about more corrupt tendencies. More regulations may create more bureaucratic red-tapes which contribute to more corrupt acts. The presence of strict and fixed legislations may not ensure that they are obeyed if they are not consistent with the social norms of a society. Some researchers postulate that deficiency in law enforcement leads to corruption (e.g., Lapalombara, 1994), while others argue that corruption leads to lack of law enforcement. For instance, Robbins (2000) finds that the lack of enforcement in forest administration is fuelled by corruption among foresters which then leads to substantial habitat destruction. Therefore, the fragmentation in the individual silo perspective in corruption research, along with the conflicting research findings, impacts on our current understanding and do not serve to inform practitioners and researchers.

Turning now to economic causes of corruption, which are not altogether different from political and legal factors, also has its problems. The focus here is on poverty and the low wages of government officials as a root causes of corruption

(e.g., Barr et al., 2009; Blechinger, 2005; Husted, 1999; Judge et al., 2011; Paldam, 2001; Serra, 2006; Soot, 2012; Xin & Rudel, 2004). However, the problem in researching about economic causes of corruption is the inconsistent cycle of the poverty and corrupt phenomenon. According to Rama (2012), for instance, poverty encourages corruption, while corruption brings about poverty, which make variables applied appear as antecedents and effects. Also, there has been a problem regarding the inconsistency of the research findings. For example, Sosa (2004) argues that tackling corruption through public officials' increasing wages may not discourage corrupt favours; instead, they may demand higher bribes. Similarly, USAID and various studies highlight that increasing a public official's salary is unlikely to minimize corrupt practices (Ampratwum, 2008).

Regarding socio-cultural factors, the focus of the existing literature is on trust, social and cultural norms, family relationships and ethics. However, they remain fragmented. Some researchers focus on social and institutional trust, some on family relationships, and others on ethics. For example, many authors (e.g., Chang & Chu, 2006; Davis et al., 2004; Gavor & Stinchfield, 2013; Heidenheimer, 1996; Xin & Rudel, 2004) concentrate on the cyclical relationships between trust and corruption: corruption generates distrust, and distrust generates corruption, whereas some researchers (e.g., Graaf, 2007; Hofstede, 1983; Khera, 2001; Rose-Ackerman, 1999) focus on cultural and family relationships as the associated causes of corruption, and others highlight the associated causes to be social norms (e.g., Caiden & Dwivedi, 2001; Klitgaard, 1988; Mishra, 2006). Also, some researchers emphasize the relationships between ethics and corruption (Nas et al., 1986; Soot, 2012; Tanzi, 1998), whereas others stress the unclear cut between individual's roles in public and private life as factors contributing to an increase in corrupt-related behaviours (Rose-Ackerman, 1999). Therefore, the focus on individual silos demonstrate the fragmentation of the established literature.

Research into management and organisational causes of corruption are also of significant interest within contemporary literature, however these areas are largely underdeveloped. It appears that previous research favours the connection between management and organisational culture and corruption, rather than attempting to discover them in detail, and converge them into a coherent whole. For example, corruption in an organisation may result from the inconsistency between: an organisation's declared values and its manager's actual behaviour (Biron, 2010),

professional deficiency and poor ethical behaviours of employees (Tanzi, 1998), lack of organisational initiatives and appropriate inducements (Mishra, 2006), or the presence of a culture of overlooking corrupt practices by organisational leaders (Ashforth & Anand, 2003).

Again, although there has been a range of research into the causes of corruption, they remain fragmented in different ways. One explanation is that the extant research appears to be confined to each individual discipline rather than looking beyond the border of expertise and experiences. For example, within political causes of corruption, some authors focus only on political will and others on the democratisation processes. There is also a controversy between findings. For example, more laws and regualtions deter corrupt behaviours while, for some researchers, more laws and regulations contribute to more corrupt tendencies. The existing literature reveals the discrepency between attecedents and effects, for example poverty causes corruption and corruption causes poverty.

Turning to the effects of corruption, the main focus of the existing literature is on political, legal, economic, socio-cultural, and administrative aspects. However, the research results remain largely lack of convergence even within each individual silo. Regarding the political effects of corruption, the major focus is on, but not limited to, the effects of corruption on the development of political and democratic institutions, the legitimacy and stability of the government, and the values of democracy. Many aspects of the findings relating to political effects are suggested in separate papers. For example, in the studies relating to the effects of political corruption on democratic institutions, some researchers focus on the media and CSOs (Anderson & Tverdova, 2003; Johnson, 1997), inequality in political affairs, the growth of political parties, and active political involvement (Enderwick, 2005); whereas others concentrate on the effects of corruption on public involvement in political, or policy development, processes (Theobald, 1989).

In terms of the effects of corruption on the legitimacy and stability of the government, while some authors emphasise the impacts of corruption on the legitimacy of emerging democracies and transitional countries (Xin & Rudel, 2004), and political trust and regime legitimacy (Chang & Chu, 2006), others underline the effects of corruption on the stability of governments (Grabosky, 2001), such as the overthrow President Tolbert of Liberia, and a number of ministerial levels in Syria from offices as part of an intensive campaign against graft and corruption (Macrae,

1982). More recently, in North African nations, there were a series of events of angry people against corrupt governments which led to the transforming of the regimes (Graycar & Sidebottom, 2012). Regarding the impacts of corruption on democratic values, the findings are also varied. For example, some authors assert that corruption strongly impacts on the basic principles of democracy like accountability, equality, and openness (e.g., Anderson & Tverdova, 2003; Seligson, 2002), and on democratic participation which is the foundation of a strong government (Migdal, 1988). This discussion highlights the lack of convergence of the extant literature within the individual silo of political effects of corruption.

Also, existing research into the impact of corruption on a nation's legal system is somehow underdeveloped. For example, some authors focus on the effects of corruption on government efforts to enhance rule of law and good governance (Graycar & Sidebottom, 2012), such as in the form of designing policies and projects to benefit their partisans and supporters, and on the legitimacy and accountability of governments (Evertsson, 2013), whereas others concentrate on the impacts of corruption on the formulation of laws and regulations (Austen-Smith, 1998; Grossman & Helpman, 1994; Harstad & Svensson, 2011; Kaufmann & Vincente, 2011). This individual perspective focus makes previous research, with its lack of convergence, less informative.

Research evidence reveals the fragmentation in the individual discipline of economic effects of corruption studies. Of course, there has been a range of studies into the impacts of corruption on the economy; however, it is relatively divergent. Many authors focus on the effects of corruption on economic growth, for example corruption lowers the level of investment (Rose-Ackerman, 2002), drives away foreign investment (Mauro, 1995), discourages the creation of new businesses (Albrecht et al., 2012), while others focus on the loss of government revenues through tax evasion and embezzlement (Tanzi, 1998), and the distorting effects on government expenditures (Tanzi & Davoodi, 1998; Zelekha & Sharabi, 2012) which makes some governments unable to function properly (Tanzi, 1998). In this particular area of research, the established literature also reveals an inconsistency in the research results. For some researchers, for example, corruption promotes economic growth since it relaxes the rigidity of bureaucracy (Huntington, 1968), reduces inefficiency and prolonged judgments (Leff, 1964), and stimulates foreign direct investment (Eggera & Winner, 2005).

Further, there have been problems with previous research regarding the effects of corruption on the socio-cultural aspects of a nation. Within this individual disciplinary perspective, some scholars highlight that corruption increases poverty (Judge et al., 2011), since it reduces the fair and efficient distribution of wealth (Rose-Ackerman, 1997), and reduces resources available for infrastructure, public services and anti-poverty programmes (Robinson, 1998). Furthermore, some scholars argue that corruption breeds injustice and unfair treatment in societies (Graycar & Sidebottom, 2012), and others claim that it spawns distrust in social interactions (Enderwick, 2005; Morris & Klesner, 2010; Seligson, 2002), as well as reducing public trust in a regime's ability to respond to citizens' concerns (Chang & Chu, 2006).

The existing literature also shows a lack of convergence in the study of the effects of corruption on public administration. For example, while some authors focus on the impacts of corruption on the ability of administration to deal with public interest, such as poor public services delivery owing to the bureaucratic agencies lacks of resources (Salifu, 2008), some researchers are concerned with the impact of corruption on priority issues such as health and education because officials divert administrative resources to projects where they are able to steal more (Chang & Chu, 2006; Goldsmith, 1999). This highlights problems within the individual silo of previous corruption research into the effects of corruption since different researchers appear to be more interested in the single discipline focus, rather than multiple focuses.

Regarding solutions, the major concentration of previous research is on political, legal, administrative, managerial and market-based approaches to corruption control. However, it lacks of convergence, even within each individual silo. Regarding the political approach, for example, some authors look into the role of political competition as an approach to corruption prevention (Chang and Golden 2010), democratic decentralisation (Ve´ron & Williams, 2006), and civic organisations (Xin & Rudel, 2004), such as NGOs and free media (Albrecht et al., 2012), whereas some suggest the role of human capacity development (Hakhverdian & Mayne, 2012; Tavits, 2010). These examples show the different focuses of corruption researchers which constitute the fragmentation of the existing literature.

In terms of the legal approach, research evidence also receives a significant interest in anti-corruption studies. The major emphasis in this area of research is on

the establishment of new laws, law enforcement and oversight bodies. However, it remains, to a certain extent, fragmented since some researchers tend to focus on law establishment and enforcement. For example, Salifu (2008) and Graycar and Sidebottom (2012) argue that creating new laws and regulations, such as accounting rules (Sun, 1999) and audit regulations (Albrecht et al., 2012), and putting them into real practise, is an effective way to deter corrupt practices. Others may concentrate on the creation of an oversight body (e.g., Lederman et al., 2005; Shleifer & Vishny, 1993), and issues around the power and the independence of this agency (Albrecht et al., 2012; Grabosky, 2001) as a cure to the epidemic of corruption, whereas some pay special attention to external checks and balances on public institutions and officeholders (e.g., Kaufmann et al., 2004) as an approach to prevent corrupt tendencies. There is also the problem relating to the inconsistency in the findings of the study of the legal approach to corruption prevention. For example, the author like Bardhan (1997), argue that lots of legislations and rules bring about more corrupt tendencies. These examples highlight just some of the problems of the established literature regarding the legal approach to corruption prevention.

The review also reveals the fragmentation in the study of the administrative approach to corruption prevention. The problem within this area of research is the division of focus of the existing literature, administrative reform and anti-corruption reform. For example, authors who pay attention to administrative reform suggest minimization of government monopoly and discretionary authorities in distributing goods or services (Graycar & Sidebottom, 2012; Xin & Rudel, 2004), creation of competition between officials and job rotations (Rose-Ackerman, 1978), strengthening civil liberties and public participation in administrative processes (Ve´ron & Williams, 2006), and enhancing meritocratic recruitment and decentralisation (Persson et al., 2010); whereas some researchers concentrate on anti-corruption reform, for instance, by attempting to eradicate corruption networks rather than individual behaviours (Nielsen, 2003), and the elimination of the patronage system (see Soot, 2012).

The management approach has also been suggested by the contemporary literature as a strategy to prevent corrupt practices. The problem in this area is the lack of multi-level research in the existing literature. The majority of authors focus their attention on promoting organisational management systems as an approach to prevent corrupt tendencies, for example clear goals and missions, and performance

monitoring (Banfield, 1975), clear rules of recruitment (Soot, 2012), good communication, and information sharing (Niehoff & Paul, 2000). Others concentrate on individual behaviours of organisational employees. According to some authors, managers' reputation of integrity may minimize corrupt favours (Carvajal, 1999), as well as role-modelling, openness and the strictness of leaders (Huberts et al., 2007), employee ethical code of conducts (Matei & Matei, 2011), employee reward systems (see Salifu, 2008), and motivation (Banfield, 1975). Different focuses of previous research into the managerial approach to corruption prevention just makes its results remain fragmented.

The market-based approach also gains special attention of existing literature in resisting corruption. The focus is on economic liberalisation and market deregulation (Otusanya, 2012). For example, privatisation can reduce corrupt transactions by removing certain assets from state control (Rose-Ackerman, 2002), competition can act as a vehicle to constrain economic malfeasance (e.g., Ades & Tella, 1999; Serra, 2006; Treisman, 2000), and deregulation may eliminate, or minimise the state regulatory power over certain industries or markets, as well as the allocation of economic resources (Mishra, 2006; Rose-Ackerman, 1996). However, the established literature shows the inconsistency of the findings relating to this area of research. The process of transferring assets to private ownership is fraught with corrupt opportunities. For example, instead of bribing a state agency to obtain contracts and favourable treatment, bidders can bribe officials in the privatisation authority or at the top of government (Manzetti & Blake, 1996), the privatisation process generates incentives for more corruption (Rose-Ackerman, 2002), and bureaucratic red-tape, patronage and "rent seeking" still exist (Ades & Tella, 1999; Jessop, 2002; Rose-Ackerman, 1996; World Bank, 1997).

2.3.5. Lack of Finding Solutions from Non-state Actor Research

The literature has shown that there are several reasons regarding the growth and awareness of the important roles of NGOs in corruption prevention. The growth of this sector, some argue, is the result of state policy deficiency (Biswas, 2009), others point to state and market failure (Yaziji & Doh, 2009), while others refer to the lack of attention paid by nation states to the social issues associated with corruption (Fisher, 1997). Noticeably though, economic and social development, and

regime change have proven to have the closest connection with the growth of NGOs. Since the 1990s, NGOs have become important non-state actors in promoting governance and controlling corruption (Transparency International, 2002; United Nations, 2002), particularly in developing countries.

However, the role of NGOs in corruption prevention has been largely ignored within the academic community, although their prominent roles are widely recognised by practitioners. This means that research into the roles of NGOs in corruption prevention remains largely confined to the grey literature. Few papers that focus on NGOs and corruption prevention appear in the peer-reviewed literature. Notably, recent exceptions include Aderonmu (2011) and Carr and Outhwaite (2011) who focus on NGOs and corruption prevention, Boulding (2010) who examine NGOs and political participation, and Jenkins and Goetz (2010) who explore NGOs and access to information. Thus, research into the roles of NGOs is underdeveloped and there remains a significant number of yet to be answered research questions and unaddressed research problems and theoretical puzzles. For example, little is known about the role of NGOs in stimulating public participation in controlling corruption, or how NGOs go about lobbying political elites in order to promote the political will to fight corruption.

Anti-corruption research thus far fails to help because it provides only partial explanations about public sector problems without considering the involvement of non-state actors in the processes. It provides explanations of 'what should be done' but provides limited discussions of 'how it should be done'. In the area of public sector reform, for example, there has been the lack of inclusion of independent non-state actors, particularly NGOs. Bearing in mind that in developing as well as less democratic countries, in general, the governance, legislative and judicial systems are fragile. The power is in the hand of the executive, and thus a check and balance mechanism is mainly disabled. Within such circumstance, the government usually, if not always, has no real political will to make changes to the system from which they receive benefits, unless there is pressure from outsiders. Thus, the involvement of NGOs is of great significance, not only to help control corruption in the public sector on their own endeavours, but also, at the same time, to empower the public to actively participate in corruption prevention, and put more pressure on government to make changes. As such, research that attempts to develop a collaborative approach between state and non-state actors in corruption prevention would be of great value.

There are also important questions about the factors affecting the effectiveness of NGOs in their efforts to control corruption in nations where democracy is fragile, nascent or non-existent. As long as governments on their own are unable to address corruption, have no real commitment to change without outside pressure, and are less effective when they act both as a corrupt player and anti-corruption enforcer, collective action and responsibility is paramount in addressing corruption. Research attention to the role of NGOs in the fight against corruption will help greatly in the anti-corruption endeavour. Given the relative lack of research in this area, one source of ideas could be the existing, wider literature on corruption and corruption prevention. It is to this that we now turn to.

2.4. Chapter Conclusion

This review found that corruption research evolves around the causes and effects of corruption and its remedies. The causes of corruption fall within five major contextual variables: political, legal, economic, socio-cultural and managerial. Moreover, the effects focus on five major contextual issues, including political, legal, economic, socio-cultural, and administrative, and stray around the loss of capital, the impact on growth and social development and, lately, on the concept of good governance, democracy and human rights. Corruption prevention measures also evolve around five major contextual approaches, such as political, legal, administrative, managerial and market-based. The review also found that there are a range of measures that NGOs can take to resist corruption. These include raising public awareness, building coalitions and networks, policy advocacy and civic mobilisation, monitoring and access to information, and research on corruption/governance.

However, previous corruption research is underdeveloped in at least five crucial areas. First, existing corruption literature is still fragmented. The majority of researchers continue working in the area of their expertise and fail to take into consideration other disciplines. Second, corruption prevention research is under-theorised. Researchers pay little attention to developing theories of corruption prevention in their own field, rather, they test theories borrowed from other disciplines. This brings about a shortage of corruption prevention theory to inform both researchers and practitioners. Third, previous corruption prevention research

reveals a great deal about 'what should be done' but not much about 'how it should be done'. Fourth, corruption prevention research thus far focuses on finding solutions from within the state actors, without the inclusion of the independent non-state actors in the process. Fifth, research into the role of NGOs in corruption prevention remains grey in the literature which means that the study into the functions of NGOs in corruption prevention is largely ignored within the academic community.

All of these points are reasons why this thesis begins to address these remaining unresolved problems by developing an integrated substantive theoretical framework to help inform research and practice which is grounded in qualitative data, by looking into the roles of governance-oriented NGOs in Cambodia. Therefore, as a direction, future research should attempt, but not be limited to:

1. Conducting more empirical research into the roles of NGOs in the fight against corruption and how these functions can be intensified to improve their effectiveness, and suggest an integrative theoretical framework, or model, to improve their operations.
2. Discovering an appropriate approach that makes this independent, non-state actor become more effective in stimulating public participation and political will among government elites in combating corruption. Developing any kind of theoretical framework or model is of great benefit.
3. De-fragmentising the silo-effect of previous corruption research into a coherent whole by taking into account other fields and conducting a multi-level research. Experts should look beyond their own disciplines and establish a multi-sectoral approach to combat corruption.
4. Developing corruption prevention theory within its own field, rather than borrowing from other disciplines, and introducing, for example, a theory in relation to political corruption prevention and a political will theory to combat corruption in developing countries, may help in reducing a mere political rhetoric.
5. Exploring more into the 'how it should be done' approach to corruption prevention by considering the inclusion of non-state actors into the reform and decision-making processes, and how operational space for NGOs that work on governance issue could be improved for their effectiveness.

6. Redirecting the methodological approach towards anti-corruption studies by conducting more empirical research. Consideration should also be taken when choosing a methodological approach of inquiry. By its nature, corruption is a very sensitive and complex issue; thus, employing a qualitative approach of inquiry seems more appropriate to studying the behavioural phenomenon of human beings. This does not mean that a qualitative approach is more important than the quantitative. The traditional approach seems less suitable to the sensitivity of the topic of corruption, and the sending out of questionnaires with predetermined questions as a means for data collection may not obtain in-depth responses from respondents. Instead, qualitative approach is just like a mutual discussion, rather than just a one-way interview, and it provides more flexibility and scope for researchers to explore more interesting and unexpected views from the respondents which may dig up rich information from the sharing of life experiences of the participants. Furthermore, the participants are able to make inquiries and clarify certain issues with the researcher, so as to avoid misunderstanding.

The next chapter deals with research methodology. This covers the rationality of choosing the research paradigm, starting with a description of ontology and epistemology, through to a discussion of the qualitative research paradigm, its phenomenological approach, and the methods and techniques utilised in this study. It also discusses the rigours and ethical issues of the study.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

The aim of this chapter is to describe the research methodology used for this study. The chapter is divided into three parts. Part One is concerned with the methodology, which basically discusses the rationality of choosing the research paradigm. It begins with a brief description of the philosophical foundations of research, ontology and epistemology, and continuing on to discuss the qualitative research paradigm, followed by its phenomenological approach. Part Two discusses the methods and techniques used. This includes the explanation of how I approached the organisations, how participants were selected, data collection tools, and how data was collected and analysed. Part Three covers a description of the rigours of qualitative research and the ethical considerations of the study.

3.2. Methodology

This part discusses the methodological foundation for this study. It is concerned with how and why this research paradigm is employed for this particular phenomenon. Specifically, this covers the rationality for selecting qualitative research inquiry, beginning with the philosophical, ontological and epistemological foundation for research, through to an exploration of the qualitative, phenomenological approach.

3.2.1. Rationality of Choosing Qualitative Research Paradigm

Overall, the rationale for choosing the qualitative research paradigm is based on, but not limited to, the consistency between the research questions and the philosophical foundation upon which the research is built. Many researchers claim that the selection of a method for any research project does not happen by default, and that the selection process is based on the research question (Punch, 2005; Richards & Morse, 2007). The selection of whether quantitative or qualitative research methodology is used is dependent on their fit to the research questions asked, meaning that quantitative questions require quantitative methods, and qualitative questions require qualitative methods to answer them (Punch, 2005). The link between the question and the method chosen will determine the types of results

obtained and, ultimately, the usefulness of the results, or the pragmatic application of the study findings (Morse, 1998). The research question of this study is: *How can NGOs become more effective in preventing public sector corruption in Cambodia?* As such, it is clear that this research question requires a qualitative method, since it aims to 'explore' the ways that NGOs may effectively prevent public sector corruption in Cambodia. This aligns with the literature in that terms like 'to discover', 'to seek to understand', and 'to explore' are typically used with the qualitative method (Punch, 2005). Similarly, the "How" questions in qualitative research aims at discovering, explaining and generating ideas or theories about the phenomenon under investigation (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

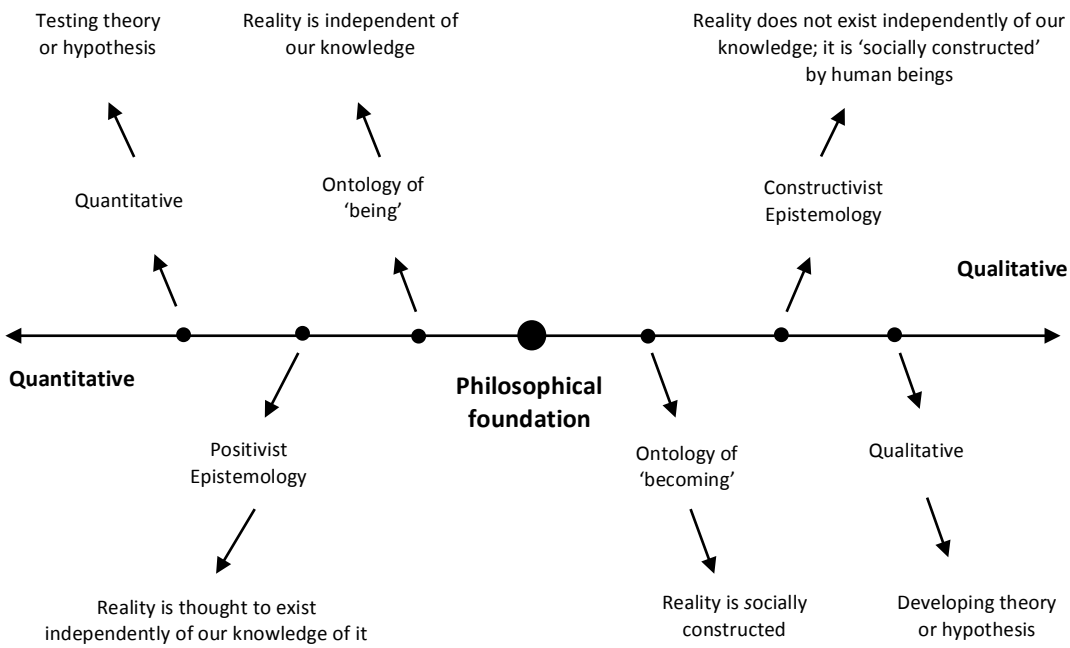
Usually, the choice of qualitative research is dependent on assumptions made by inquirers. These philosophical assumptions consist of a stance toward the nature of reality (ontology), and how the researcher knows what they know (epistemology) (Creswell, 2013). In relation to this connection, the philosophical perspective of this research is the 'ontology of becoming,' as this research is interested in the understanding of how people construct social reality. This means that it takes on a constructionist, ontological perspective which views reality as constructed by human beings, rather than positivist ontology which views reality as independent of social actors (Grix, 2010). As noted by Connolly, "…belief and affect are intertwined in a world of becoming, with neither being entirely reducible to the other" (Connolly, 2011, p. 10). Based on this ontological reasoning, interpretivist epistemology (Morgan & Smircich, 1980; Suddaby, 2006) is appropriate since this research attempts to generate knowledge grounded in the interactions of human beings and the meaning people bring to the social world (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006; Neilsen, 1990).

Qualitative inquiry allows researchers to understand the contexts or settings in which participants in a study address a problem or issue; indeed, it cannot separate what people say from the context (Creswell, 2013), and human action could not be understood devoid of the meaning attached to it (Schutz & Luckmann, 1974). This means that through qualitative methods, the perceptions, beliefs and meanings of participants (Patton, 2002; Punch, 2005) can be unearthed because, with the qualitative approach, researchers are involved directly with the participants.

With this in mind, the phenomenological approach sounds more appropriate since researchers enter the world of the individuals to gather their lived experiences

about a phenomenon. A phenomenological approach of inquiry describes the meaning of the lived experiences of multiple individuals and their interpretations about a concept or a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). It is a theoretical perspective used for generating knowledge based on people lived experiences (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006), and the most commonly used phenomenological techniques to collect such experiences is the in-depth interview (Orbe, 2000). Overall, this is the basic reason for why a qualitative paradigm is employed for this research. The following illustration (Figure 2) summarises such logic.

Figure 2: Basic rationality for using qualitative inquiry rather than quantitative



Beside the connection between the research question and the philosophical foundation, there are some other considerations on which the utilisation of the qualitative paradigm is based. On the basis of experience with this study, before conducting the study, the researcher (myself), come up with some ideas about the research project. At a minimum level, these ideas were with regards to, for example, the topic area to be studied, the objectives of the study, and type of data to be collected. All of these ideas also connected to the choice of the methodology and methods to be used. It should be acknowledged at this point that some topics may be more appropriate for a qualitative, rather than a quantitative, approach. In this case,

corruption is recognised as a complex and sensitive issue. As such, qualitative is a better fit because rich information could not be dug out by employing a traditional research paradigm by way of sending out questionnaires for respondents to fill in with predetermined questions, or just Yes/No question choices. A qualitative mode of inquiry, on the other hand, involves direct and face-to-face communication between the researcher and the participants, which allows for trust to be established between them. This is a technique through which the researcher is able to gather in-depth responses. Furthermore, non-predetermined questions allow participants to speak their own voices, which then allows researchers to gain insight into the attitudes, beliefs, motives and behaviour of participants (Patton, 2002; Punch, 2005). Therefore, the researcher clearly captures the lived experiences of participants and how they interpret their experiences.

Consideration is also made in connection to the purpose of the research project. In this study, the major objective is to develop a substantive theoretical framework. As such, a qualitative research paradigm is appropriate, meaning that it aims at developing a theory grounding the data on the lived experiences and voices of participants. It is not to test existing theories or hypothesises, which are basically the foundation of quantitative research inquiry and which stands on a deductive approach (Punch, 2005). The major objective of quantitative inquiry is to test or verify a theory rather than develop it; the researcher advances a theory, collects data to test it, and reflects on the confirmation, or disconfirmation, of the theory (Creswell, 2003). With qualitative inquiry, on the other hand, data are worked out inductively, starting from actual words used by the participants, to the abstract level of theory building (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

3.2.1.1. Ontological Reasoning

Ontology is referred to as "what is out there to know about" (Grix, 2010, p. 8). Therefore, in order to study "what is out there (in the social world) to know about", researchers usually make theoretical assumptions about the nature of society and the people within it. These assumptions are called "ontological assumptions" and are concerned with what one believes to constitute social reality (Grix, 2010). Put simply, it is about how one views social reality. The researcher's ontological perspective initially shapes the way the researchers go about conducting their study.

Therefore, the way the researcher views the real world (object) is independent of our knowledge, meaning that the researcher's philosophical perspective is one of 'being' and is guided by positivist ontology. By contrast, if researchers view the real world as one of 'becoming', this means that reality is constructed by human beings. It is about understanding and interpretating of the world. These are the two contrasting point of views: positivist vs constructivist standpoints, concerning ontological philosophy in research. The researcher's ontological position, whether positivist or constructivist, initially determines how the researchers are to go about selecting methods for their study. Grix (2010) refers to these two standpoints as foundationalism and anti-foundationalism. According to Grix (2010), central to the foundationalist view is that social phenomena and their meanings have an existence that is independent of social actors. This is a starting point for positivist and realist traditions of research. On the other hand, the anti-foundationalist does not believe that the world exists independently from our knowledge of it; instead, reality is socially constructed by human actors. This implies that constructivist ontology did not separate reality from individuals (Weber, 2004), and social phenomena are produced through social interaction (Bryman, 2004) which is able to be constructed in different ways (Klein & Myers, 1999). Reality, in the interpretivist's mind, is therefore socially constructed and the researcher is the means of the perceived reality (Andrade, 2009; Walsham, 1995).

Aligning these philosophical assumptions within this research study, it provides a clear structural road map to best address the research problems and questions. Constructionist ontology is appropriate, as the study seeks to comprehend the contextual situations where governance-oriented NGOs fulfil their functions. A constructionist approach will helps to portray the viewpoints of people working in NGOs which will allow the researcher to understand the development of what is happening within their working environment in terms of tackling corruption in an emerging democratic society. Thus, the analysis on the basis of participant's perspectives of their contextual and lived experiences will appropriately address the research objectives. The ontological perspective adopted in this research has a close connection with an epistemological standpoint, grounding the relationship between the researcher and the researched to be consistent with its ontological view (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). An interpretive ontology informs an epistemological standpoint of a deep insight into the world of lived experience and the perceptions and points of

views of those who live it (Glesne, 2006; Schwandt, 1994). Accordingly, if ontology is about what we may know, then epistemology is about how we come to know what we know.

3.2.1.2. Epistemological Reasoning

Ontology and epistemology can be considered as the foundations upon which research is built. According to Grix's logical reasoning, "Ontology is the starting point of all research, after which one's epistemological and methodological positions logically follow" (Grix, 2010, p. 59). So, what is epistemology? An epistemology is "a theory of knowledge" (Harding in Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006), and "a theory of knowledge embedded in a theoretical perspective" (Creswell, 2003). It is "a process of gathering and generating knowledge, and explanations about the ontological components of the social world" (Mason, 2002, p. 16). With epistemological assumption, conducting a qualitative study means that researchers try to get as close as possible to the participants being studied. In practice, qualitative researchers conduct their studies in the "field" where the participants live and work, seeking to understand what the participants are saying about the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Epistemology focuses on the knowledge-gathering process and is concerned with developing new models or theories that are better than competing models and theories (Grix, 2010). Notwithstanding its link to the philosophy of knowledge-theory, it is also concerned with how a researcher understands reality and the different possibilities of knowing (Rawnsley, 1998; Solem, 2003; Willig, 1998).

Interpretivist epistemology does not hold that the world exists independently of our knowledge of it; reality is socially constructed by human beings (Grix, 2010). Constructivism is on the opposite end to objectivism on the epistemological continuum; it challenges the concept of truth and replaces 'truth' with 'reality' (Murphy, 1997; Peters, 2000). Constructivism focuses on an individual's experience and is concerned with how individuals make meaning of the social phenomenon (Ireland, Tambyah, Neofa, & Harding, 2009). Constructionism forms pragmatic views in which knowledge is intertwined with social action (Wellington, 2000). The interpretive epistemology is based on the interpretation of interactions and the social meaning that people assign to their interactions (Neilsen, 1990). This epistemological perspective argues that social meaning is created during interaction (Hesse-Biber &

Leavy, 2006). Social constructivism turns its attention outward to "the world of inter-subjectively shared, social constructions of meaning and knowledge" (Schwandt, 1994, p. 127). Individuals seek understanding of the environment they live in and develop subjective meanings via social exchange and their experiences (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Knowledge and social processes go hand in hand (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Young & Collin, 2004) and they are influenced by cultural factors, historical factors, and discourse communities (Creswell, 2003; Peters, 2000).

The importance of interpretivist epistemology is for social scientists to grasp the subjective meaning of social action (Grix, 2010). Research of a social constructivist nature intends to uncover complexities and different meanings of a field of inquiry, rather than be narrowed down to a few interpretations (Creswell, 2003). Social reality is not conceived of as "out there" waiting to be discovered and measured, but rather it is relational and subjective, produced during the research process. The researcher is not assumed to be value-neutral and "objective," but rather an active participant, along with the research subjects, in the building of descriptive, exploratory, and explanatory knowledge (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). The goal of the research is to place as much possible emphasis on the participants' views of the study at hand (Creswell, 2013). The views expressed by participants are formed through interaction with others, and through historical and cultural norms that operate in individuals' lives (Creswell, 2013). Inquirers interpret what they find and, thus, are able to generate a theory, or develop meaning, derived from the other's interpretation of the world (Creswell, 2013).

Accordingly, constructivist epistemology is relevant to this project as the researcher assumes that human beings do not passively react to an external reality but, impose their internal perceptions and ideals on the external world and in so doing, actively create their realities (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). The interpretivist position is concerned with 'subjectivity', with 'understanding', with 'agency', and the way people construct their social world, which introduces complexities and involves elements of uncertainty (Grix, 2010). Therefore, this philosophical assumption is best suited to this research of inquiry which attempts to construct realities from NGOs lived experiences, and how they interpret social contexts.

A researcher's theoretical perspective on how one goes about producing knowledge of the chosen topic of study determines the strategy one uses to collect data, which is referred to as 'methodology'. Methodology, methods and sources are

closely connected to, and built upon, our ontological and epistemological assumptions (Grix, 2010). Following a discussion of the methodology will be an exploration of the research method (see Section 3.3). 'Research method' is simply defined as the techniques or procedures used to collect and analyse data (Blaikie, 2000), and the choosing of the research methods and techniques is closely connected to the research questions posed, and to the sources of data collected (Grix, 2010).

3.2.1.3. Qualitative Inquiry

Based on the logic of the above philosophical positions discussed, this research adopts a qualitative research methodology. Given that there is little research on corruption prevention and NGOs, qualitative research will be used to elaborate on and develop existing perspectives in the corruption research literature. Richards and Morse (2007) claim that the selection of a method for any research project does not happen by default, that it is based on the research question. Qualitative research properly seeks to answer questions such as these by examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit those settings. In qualitative research, the "how" questions focus on how meaning is constructed by participants within a given setting through everyday life experiences (Gubruim & Holstein, 1997). It allows researchers to share the understanding and perceptions of others and to explore how people structure and give meaning to their daily life (Berg, 2004). Qualitative research will offer specialised techniques for obtaining in-depth responses about what people in governance-oriented NGOs think and how they feel. Through direct communication, it enables the researcher to gain insight into the attitudes, beliefs, motives and behaviour of the target participants (Patton, 2002; Punch, 2005).

According to Creswell's definition of qualitative research, "it is an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of inquiry that explore social and human problems. The researcher builds a complex, holistic picture, analyses words, reports and detailed views of the informants and conducts the study in a natural setting" (Creswell, 2013, p.249). Qualitative research adopts an interpretive, naturalistic approach to subject matter, intending to interpret and make meaning of phenomena (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). It refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of things.

In contrast, quantitative research refers to the counts and measures of things (Berg, 2004).

Qualitative procedures provide a means of accessing unquantifiable facts about the actual people researchers observe and talk to. Researchers use qualitative techniques to examine how people learn about, and make sense of, themselves and others (Berg, 2004). Qualitative researchers stress the socially constructed nature of reality, the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied. Such researchers emphasise the value-laden nature of inquiry. They seek answers to questions that stress how social experience is created and given meaning (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Qualitative researchers believe that rich descriptions of the social world are valuable, whereas quantitative researchers, with their etic, nomothetic commitments, are less concerned with such detail (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

In general, qualitative researchers tend to be working within an 'interpretivist' philosophical position, using methods of data generation which are flexible and sensitive to social context in which the data are produced, as opposed to the more 'deskbound' calculations of some quantitative analysis (Grix, 2010). Therefore, methods associated with qualitative research, such as interviews and observations, are used frequently by researchers working within a positivist or realist research paradigm (Grix, 2010). Qualitative research involves the interpretation of data, whereby the researcher analyses cases, usually a few in number, in their social and cultural context over a specific period of time, and may develop grounded theory (Grix, 2010). Qualitative research is seen by many as almost the complete opposite of quantitative research. It usually involves an in-depth investigation of knowledge through, for example, participation observation (as in anthropological fieldwork), employing the interviewing techniques, archival or other documentary analyses, or ethnographic study (Ragin, 1994). Again, the quantitative method is a poor fit to this research phenomenon as quantitative measures and statistical analyses simply do not fit the problem (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative is about understanding social meaning, while quantitative focuses on patterns and predictability (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Qualitative researchers are also concerned with text and words, as opposed to numbers. In addition, qualitative researchers search for meaning and the development of themes and thematic categories is a way that qualitative researchers try to extract meaning from the data. Qualitative research produces meaning that does not result from the quantitative surveys (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

Specific to this study, qualitative inquiry is more appropriate since it intends, but is not limited, to build theory inductively from data, look into a topic of research of which little is known, explore a complex situation and phenomenon, and is involved directly with, and seeks to understand, participant's experiences. Theoretically, qualitative researchers are interested in generating theory. With this in mind qualitative researchers often rely on inductive models where the theory develops directly out of the data. As is claimed by Richards and Morse (2007), if the purpose of the study is to construct a theory, or a theoretical framework, that reflects reality rather than the researcher's own perspective or prior research results, researchers may need methods that assist the discovery of theory in data. A qualitative approach is further useful when existing theories on the subject do not adequately capture the complexity of the explored problem, or when inadequate previous theories exist for the target populations or samples (Creswell, 2013). With qualitative inquiry, researchers collect open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data (Creswell, 2003; Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). The logic that qualitative researchers follow is inductive, from the ground up, rather than handed down entirely from a theory, or from the perspectives of the inquirer (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative researchers inductively analyse the data by building their patterns, categories and themes from the "bottom-up," and then organise the data into increasingly more abstract units of information. This inductive process involves researchers working back and forth between the themes and the database until they establish a comprehensive set of themes (Creswell, 2013). A qualitative approach is one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives (i.e., the multiple meanings of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed, with the intent of developing theory or patterns) (Creswell, 2003). Qualitative research is an exciting interdisciplinary landscape, rich with perspectives on knowledge construction and enabled by a multitude of techniques available for generating knowledge (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Qualitative researchers use inductive analysis, which means that categories, themes and patterns emerge from the data. The categories come from the field notes, and documents and interviews are not imposed prior to data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

Another major reason for employing a qualitative research methodology for this study is relating to the complexity and sensitivity of the phenomena under

investigation. According to Richards and Morse (2007), if the purpose is to make sense of complex situations and changing phenomenon, researchers need ways of simplifying and managing data without destroying complexity and context. Qualitative methods are highly appropriate for questions where pre-emptive reduction of the data will prevent discovery (Richards & Morse, 2007). A qualitative paradigm provides greater understanding and focus on these complexities to clarify qualities and characteristics associated with the phenomenon, and to discover precise problems (Zikmund, 2003). Qualitative methods are the best way of getting the insider's perspectives, the participant's definition of the situation, and the meanings people attach to things and events (Punch, 2005). This means it can be used to study the lived experience of people, including people's meanings and purposes. Qualitative data has a holism and richness, and is well able to deal with the complexity of social phenomena. This is what is meant when qualitative researchers talk about data providing thick descriptions (Punch, 2005).

Another fundamental rationale for the utilisation of a qualitative approach is that the phenomenon under investigation is little known and needs to be deeply explored. As noticed by Richards and Morse (2007), if the purpose of the study is to understand an area about which little is known, or where previously offered understanding appears inadequate (thin, biased, partial), researchers need research methods that help them see the subject anew and which will offer surprises. If the researchers don't know what they are likely to find, they need methods that will allow them to learn what the question is from the data. As such, a qualitative approach is essential to investigate phenomena that are little, or insufficiently understood, to discover and identify its contributing variables, to develop ideas and theories, and form groundwork for subsequent inquiries (Stebbins, 2001). Similarly, according to Creswell (2013), qualitative research is employed because a problem or issue needs to be explored. This exploration is needed, in turn, because of a need to study a group or population, identify variables that can then be measured, or hear the silenced voices. It is used because researchers need a complex, detailed understanding of the issue. They conduct qualitative research because they want to understand the contexts or settings in which participants in a study address a problem or issue. Researchers cannot separate what people say from the context (Creswell, 2013). This detail can only be established by talking directly with people, going to their home or places of work, and allowing them to tell the stories (Creswell, 2013).

Another reason for employing a qualitative paradigm is concerned with the direct involvement of the researcher and the subject of analysis. The claim made by Richards and Morse (2007) is that if the purpose is to learn from the participants in a setting or a process, the way they experience it, the meanings they put on it, and how they interpret what they experience, researchers need methods that will allow them to discover and do justice to their perceptions and the complexity of their interpretations. Qualitative methods have in common the goal of generating new ways of seeing existing data (Richards & Morse, 2007). The closer the researchers' relationship with participants, the more likely they are able to fathom inconspicuous features and details of phenomena and events, and acquire a good knowledge background to derive insightful interpretations (Murray-Thomas, 2003). Irrespective of whether the researcher's presence in the study is sustained or intensive, brief or very personal in nature, the researcher always "enters into the lives of the participants" (Marshall & Rossman, 1995, p. 59). This participant methodology offers an insider's view and forms an instrument (the researcher himself/herself) that is capable of comprehending and learning about human existence (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2000). A qualitative approach is sensitive to context and process, to lived experience and to local groundedness, and the researcher tries to get closer to what is being studied. It aims for an in-depth and holistic understanding, in order to do justice to the complexity of social life (Punch, 2005).

Another feature of qualitative inquiry is that it empowers the subject of analysis to have their voices heard. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research is conducted when researchers want to empower individuals to share their stories and hear their voices. It is unique in its applicability to the research of complex nature, when the aim of the research is to empower individuals and draw attention to their points of view, and minimise power relationships between the researcher and the study participants (Creswell, 2013). Qualitative research describes a methodology that examines a social human problem by capturing its whole and complex representation, and insights into the informants' words and views (Andrade, 2009; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Qualitative investigators think they can get closer to the actor's perspectives through detailed interviewing and observation. They argue that quantitative researchers are seldom able to capture the subject's perspectives because they have to rely on more remote, inferential empirical materials (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). Qualitative research properly seeks answers to questions by

examining various social settings and the individuals who inhabit these settings. Qualitative researchers, then, are interested in how humans arrange themselves and their settings, and how inhabitants of these settings make sense of their surroundings through symbols, rituals, social structures, social roles, and so forth (Berg, 2004).

3.2.1.4. Phenomenological Approach

Grounded in the above rationality, the phenomenological approach is appropriate for this study. Originating from the work of Husserl (1859-1938), phenomenology is not only a philosophy but also a research approach (Richards & Morse, 2007). It is a form of inquiry that is concerned with the constitution of meaning and the acquisition of knowledge. Phenomenological research derives from first person accounts and descriptions of human lived experiences. Husserl's intention was to create a 'life world', an accumulative term that describes and classifies subjective experiences (Goulding, 2005). This philosophy was advanced by Schutz (1967) into a method that includes the ordinary experiences in the day-to-day lives of people. The 'life world' then is defined as a world in which people "experience culture and society, take a stand with regard to their objects, are influenced by them, and act on them" (Goulding, 2005, p. 302). The basic purpose of this strategy was to engage with peoples' lived experience in the context of the phenomenon and uncover common meaning (Creswell, 2013). To this end, qualitative researchers identify a phenomenon, for example material objects, social institutions, or perceptions, and develop a composite description of the essence of the phenomenon via people who have experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2013; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011; Moustakas, 1994; Schipper, 1999). Phenomenology attempts to enlarge and deepen understanding of a range of human experiences, and critically reflect on those experiences in relation to a phenomenon (Spiegelberg, 1982). In other words, it aims to get a "grasp of the very nature of the thing" (van Manen, 1990).

Phenomenology gives researchers insight into the meanings or the essences of experiences that we may previously have been unaware of (Richards & Morse, 2007). According to Richards and Morse (2007), there are two major assumptions which underlie phenomenology. The first perception is relating to the presentation of the evidence of the world—not as it is thought to be, but as it is lived. The lived

world, or the lived experience, is critical to phenomenology. The second assumption is that human existence is meaningful and of interest in the sense that we are always conscious of something. Human behaviour occurs in the context of four existentialisms: relationships to things, people, events and situations (Richards & Morse, 2007). Creswell (2013) identifies two approaches to phenomenology: hermeneutic and psychological. Hermeneutic phenomenology is based on van Manen's work and describes research focussed on lived experiences (the phenomenology) and making meaning of the 'texts' of life (hermeneutics) (van Manen, 1990). Studying the phenomenon is not confined to a description, but to an interpretive process with the researcher 'mediating' between different meanings and lived experiences (Creswell, 2013; van Manen, 1990). Psychological or transcendental phenomenology on the other hand, places the interpretations of the researcher second to the actual descriptions of experiences by participants (Moustakas, 1994). Although a phenomenology emphasises the meaning of an experience for a number of individuals, the intent of a grounded theory study is to move beyond description and to generate or discover a theory, an abstract analytical schema of a process (Creswell, 2013).

As a research method, phenomenology is a useful technique for capturing the lived experiences of individuals (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). The purpose of phenomenology is not necessary to deal with what actually exists but with the essence of what exists. As claimed by Ezzy, qualitative research engages with the complexity of analysing human action in terms of meaning (Ezzy, 2002). It is the study of phenomena or, in other words, the study of the way in which things or events and matters appear. Phenomenology attempts to 'revive our living contact with reality… as it is lived' (Moran, 2000). For a phenomenologist, lived experience refers to the everyday, practical experience, though not in the guise of 'what do we experience but what is experience' (Rodgers, 1983, p. 35). A phenomenological study describes the meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon. Phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon (Creswell, 2013). Although a grounded theory researcher develops a theory from examining many individuals who share in the same process, action or interaction, the study participants are not likely to be located in the same place, or interacting on so frequent a basis that they develop shared patterns of behaviour, beliefs and language

(Creswell, 2013). Focusing on experience as it is lived demonstrates that experience is not isolated or self-contained (Rodgers, 1983). Lived experience can still be interpreted. By stressing the significance of lived experience, phenomenology provides an explanation as to how experiences are always forms of interpretation. Lived experience, within a phenomenological framework, is interpretive in the constitution of meaning.

Phenomenological inquiry requires a form of abstention which Hussurl termed the 'epoche'. This involves putting out of action the general thesis of the natural attitude (Husserl, 1973). It requires that a phenomenologist must put aside their preconceived ideas about the world when conducting research. It calls for a suspension of belief in the world in order to open a researcher to whatever appears in his or her consciousness. This putting aside, or bracketing, of prejudgments enables objects of analysis to be presented as pure phenomena, or known as they are given. Epoche does not encourage any position to be taken up or a conclusion drawn. In the entire research process, the researcher keeps a focus on learning the meaning that the participants hold about the problem or issue, not the meaning that the researchers bring to the research or writers from the literature (Creswell, 2013). In addition, this approach to the phenomenon under examination places the researcher's own experience aside (Creswell, 2013), and adapts an almost transcendental perspective in which everything is perceived freshly, as if for the first time (Moustakas, 1994). Bracketing means putting the researcher's personal knowledge, and the knowledge gained from the literature aside, so that the researcher can see the research problem, the setting and the data with fresh eyes, and work inductively, creating understanding from data (Richards & Morse, 2007). For some qualitative researchers, an accurate understanding of other's perspectives is best achieved if the researcher brings to the research setting as few preconceived theories or ideas about measurements as possible (Chardwick, Bahr, & Albrecht, 1984). Rather, the ideal approach is for the researcher to immerse him or herself in interaction with the research subjects and their surroundings, and let the language of description and an awareness of social patterns emerge from deep involvement with the subjects. The researcher must suspend personal values, perceptions and feelings and try to experience the world from the viewpoint of the selected others (Chardwick et al., 1984). Discussions relating to qualitative phenomenology sample selection and size, data collection and analysis are outlined in the section below.

3.3. From Methodology to Methods

In this part I shift from the discussion of the broad concepts of qualitative inquiry and the rationality of choosing it, to the actual methods used in my study. Overall, it is about the techniques used to collect and analyse the fieldwork data. This covers what has actually been conducted before, during and after the data collection process, and how data are synthesised around the aim of the research project.

3.3.1. Data Collection

A significant departure relating to the utilisation of qualitative phenomenological approach to data collection could be in-depth interview and observation. In-depth interview uses individuals as the point of departure for the research process and assumes that individuals have unique and important knowledge about the social phenomenon that is ascertainable through verbal communication (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Qualitative interviews are thus a special kind of knowledge-producing conversation that occurs between two parties. The relationship between the interviewer and interviewees is critical to the process of constructing meaning (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Observation is also considered important during interviews, as the gestures and body language of the participants is also considered important in qualitative research methods (Angrosino & Kimberly, 2000). According to van Manen (1990), in fieldwork observation it is important for the researcher to enter the world of the individuals to capture their experiences.

In this context, data collection includes prior data collection, during data collection, and data analysis. Prior data collection encompasses organisational screening, sample section and sample size, interview preparation guide, and paperwork preparation. During data collection is composed of organisational access and participants, forms of data which include primary data and secondary data. Primary data consists of interviews and fieldwork memos, and secondary data comprises NGOs documents and reports, government associated documents, and newspaper articles. For data analysis, the associated tasks cover coding (theory building processes), and post-coding, the write-up.

3.3.1.1. Prior Data Collection

There were a number of actions taken prior to data collection. Four of the noticeable measures encompass organisational screening, sample selection and sample size, interview preparation guides and paper work preparation. All of these are presented below.

Organisational Screening

Before moving on to describe the way I approached the target NGOs for interview during my fieldwork, let me explain how I selected the organisations. Initially, I contacted an NGO in Phnom Penh to ask for a list of NGOs that work on governance or corruption issues in Cambodia. As a result, I received a reply with a list of twenty-five NGOs. I thought that twenty-five would not be enough because not all would accept the researcher's request to be granted an interview. Then I started to go on Google search for more active organisations. Finally, I came up with a list of 49 NGOs, all of which work on governance-oriented issues.

Sample Selection and Sample Size

In the qualitative approach, sample selection is as important as it is in quantitative research. In actual practices, according to Punch (2005), we cannot study everyone, everywhere or do everything. As argued by Denzin and Lincoln (1998), qualitative researchers design a study with real individuals in mind, and with the intent of living in that social setting over time. They study a social setting to understand the meaning of participants' lives on the participants' own terms. Sampling decisions are required, not only about which people to interview or which events to observe, but also about settings and processes (Punch, 2005). A good informant is the one who has the knowledge and experience the researcher requires, has the ability to reflect, is articulate, has the time to be interviewed, and is willing to participate in the study (Morse, 1989). The researcher purposefully uses his or her expertise to select subjects who represent the population being studied (Chardwick et al., 1984). The primary feature of all these methods of sampling is that the situation of the sample is determined according to the needs of the study, and not according to

external criteria, such as random selection. Participants are representative of the same experience or knowledge; they are not selected because of their demographic reflection of the general population (Morse, 1998). In qualitative study, samples are usually small, and its sampling is guided by theoretical, rather than probabilistic, considerations (Punch, 2005). Quantitative methods are studies in which the researcher does not physically interact with the subject of analysis (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Grix, 2010). On the contrary, qualitative researchers are not detached from, but positively interact with, the object of study (Grix, 2010). On this basis, I employed the purposive sampling by choosing participants from a number of NGOs that work on governance or corruption issues in Cambodia. These key informants have the contextual knowledge and lived experiences which provide reliable and rich information on situations and what has been happening on the ground.

I conducted interviews with fourteen NGOs staff members. This sample size was not pre-determined, rather it was based on the idea of data saturation, meaning that I did not see any new ideas emerge from the last couple of interviews. This sample size parallels with previous research findings. For example, according to Guest et al. (2006), the sample size in qualitative interviews is determined by the concept of "data saturation" that is, the point where data gathered in subsequent interviews no longer produces new thematic insights. They further claim that data saturation is generally reached after 12 interviews and that major themes are presented after six.

Of the participants in this data collection process, two are from international NGOs and the rest within local-based NGOs (Table 1). Among these participants, ten of them are executive directors of the organisations. Others include decentralisation and governance programme director, secretariat coordinator, research and information manager, and operations officer. They all have at least two to 17 years of experience working on governance or corruption issues in Cambodia.

Table 1: A list of NGOs interviewed

No	Name Code	Organisation Code	Position	Gender & Age	Interviewed Date	Interviewed Time
1	P1	A01	Executive Director	Female 50-59	16/06/14	1:41 minutes
2	P2	A02	Executive Director	Male 40-49	18/06/14	1:26 minutes

3	P3	A03	Executive Director	Male 30-39	19/06/14	52 minutes
4	P4	A04	Executive Director	Male 40-49	19/06/14	60 minutes
5	P5	A05	Executive Director	Male 30-39	20/06/14	1:21 minutes
6	P6	A06	operations officer	Male 50-59	20/06/14	1:06 minutes
7	P7	A07	Executive Director	Female 50-59	24/06/14	1:31minutes
8	P8	A08	Decentralisation and Governance Programme Director	Male 40-49	26/06/14	1:41 minutes
9	P9	A09	Executive Director	Female 30-39	27/06/14	1:47 minutes
10	P10	A010	Executive Director	Male 40-49	01/07/17	1:37 minutes
11	P11	A011	Research and Information Manager	Male 40-49	04/07/14	1:13 minutes
12	P12	A012	Executive Secretary/Chief of Secretariat	Male 40-49	11/08/14	1:24 minutes
13	P13	A013	Secretariat Coordinator	Male 40-49	15/08/14	1:17 minutes
14	P14	A014	President and Principal Consultant	Male 30-39	22/08/14	1:36 minutes

Note: P: Stand for name of participant
A: Stand for name of organisation

Interview Preparation Guide

In this phase, the interview guide was developed. As claimed by Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2006), the interview preparation guide is essential to a successful interview. The topics covered for the interview includes: (1) the roles and functions of governance-oriented NGOs, (2) perceptions of NGOs on governance and corruption issues, (3) the credibility and contributions of NGOs, and (4) a way forward for NGOs. Based on these subjects, thirteen open-ended interview questions

were developed (Appendix 6). This allowed participants enough time to describe their life experiences as well as perceptions on issues associated with governance and corruption in Cambodia. Probing questions followed after each predetermined question, depending on how much rich information each individual interviewee shared. The interview preparation guide was discussed with my supervisors several times to make sure that they were quite right, meaning that they were on the right track and be able to gain rich information and effectively correspond to the research aim. The anticipated time set for each interview was 60 minutes, including time for establishing rapport. However, most of the actual interviews lasted longer and only one of them was less than one hour (see Table 1).

Paperwork Preparation

Major paperwork that was done before the fieldwork includes:

- Ethics' approval. This research involves human beings, which is considered serious and, thus, it falls into a form A category. I submitted the application form 18 March, 2014 which was approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC), Office of Research and Development of the university on 12 May, 2014 (Appendix 5).
- Travel approval. This includes a fieldwork plan, fieldwork travel checklist, and a health and safety risk assessment. After a couple of communications, all forms were accepted and approved by a senior health and safety advisor on 14 March, 2014.

Subordinate paperwork was comprised of:

- Informed consent form (Appendix 1),
- Information sheet (Appendix 2),
- Letter of introduction (Appendix 3),
- Letter of invitation (Appendix 4), and
- Name card (Curtin University PhD candidate).

All the subordinate paperwork is translated into Khmer (my local language).

3.3.1.2. During Data Collection

Organisational Access and Participants

During the fieldwork, I approached each of the three NGOs in person during the fieldwork, as set forth in the Ethics Application form. The purpose is to make an introductory statement to convince them to participate in my study and to make a positive initial connection for the real interview, and also have a chance to observe the way each organisation works. This strategy did not work. All of the front desk staff suggested to me to make an appointment first, whether via email or telephone, explaining that their bosses are busy. However, before I left the premises, I left a set of documents relating to my research project with the front desk staff, including my student name card for their information. The three organisations later granted me an interview.

Next, I started to use my second option of approaching the organisations. This time I emailed to invite them to participate in my research project. Within the email I attached all relevant project documents. Overall, I contacted 33 NGOs. The invitation and interviewing were simultaneous and cyclical. There was substantial mutual communication (emails and phone calls) between myself and the organisations. This means that I was not able to gain their consent for an interview after my first attempt. Among the 33 contacted NGOs, 14 agreed to grant me the interview, three had a couple of mutual contacts, although were later silent, two replied but rejected the request, and no reply was received at all from the remainder. Interestingly, one among the 14 interviewed participants wanted to meet me in person to talk about this research project before granting me consent.

Primary Data: Interviews

In this study, I employed a semi-structured, face-to-face interview mode of data collection. There are a couple of reasons why this method was used. First, a semi-structured interview allows a researcher to prepare a pre-determined set of questions on relevant topics which is key to a successful interview (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2012). Second, it allows a certain degree of flexibility (Grix, 2010;

Saunders et al., 2012). This means that the researcher is at liberty to omit or skip some of the pre-determined set of questions. Third, semi-structured mode allows for the pursuit of unexpected lines of inquiry during the interview (Grix, 2010; Saunders et al., 2012), which means the interviewer is permitted to explore far beyond the responses of participants to unearth rich information. Fourth, un-structured interview is consistent with the tenet of phenomenological approach which requires the researcher to become involved with the participants and their work settings.

Besides, qualitative researchers view social reality as complex and multidimensional, and this shapes how they think about the interview process (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Qualitative interviews differ from quantitative interviews, which consist of standardised questions (often closed-ended, meaning that they have a finite range of possible answers) in search of standardised data (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Basically, qualitative research questions are open-ended, evolving and non-directional (Creswell, 2013). Most qualitative researchers think of in-depth interviews as an opportunity to allow the worlds of the respondents, and his or her experience and perspective, to shine through (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). Semi-structured interviews rely on a certain set of questions and try to guide the conversation to remain, more loosely, on those questions (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006). It allows participants some latitude and freedom to talk about what is of interest or important to them, and allows the conversation to flow more naturally, making room for the conversation to go in new and unexpected directions. Interviewees often have information or knowledge that may not have been considered in advance by the researcher (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

In terms of the interview questions, I designed them to be as open-ended and simple as possible, centred on the roles played and barriers encountered by NGOs in promoting good governance and preventing corruption, as well as on factors that support or hinder the effectiveness of their operations, with particular focus around how NGOs can become more effective in promoting good governance, as well as preventing corruption in the Cambodian public sector. These questions allow participants to articulate their responses without explicit boundaries and without imposing pre-conceived categorisations that may inhibit responses (Fontana & Frey, 2005). The semi-structured interview method allows for the probing for more details and for new questions to emerge during the interview (Fay, 1996). Thus, this data collection approach allows the researcher to capture people's perceptions, meanings,

beliefs, attitudes and definitions of the phenomena (Patton, 2002; Punch, 2005). The interview structure is also based on the view of Bruner (2004), who argues that only through narrative can lived experiences be revealed.

The interviews were conducted in both Khmer (local language) and English. The interviews took place at the office of the participants. Of the 14 interviews, 13 were in Khmer. The duration of the interview ranged from 52 to 107 minutes in length. All the interviews were recorded by using two modes of recording devices—Olympus voice recorder and IPhone. This was to make sure that I did not lose the data if one of the devices failed to work properly. I conducted the interviews with all of the participants who provided consent, although I felt that I had reached data saturation after conducting 13 interviews. This means that no new ideas or concepts emerged from the last interview, however they did provide more supporting ideas to support those from the previous interviews.

Primary Data: Fieldwork Memos

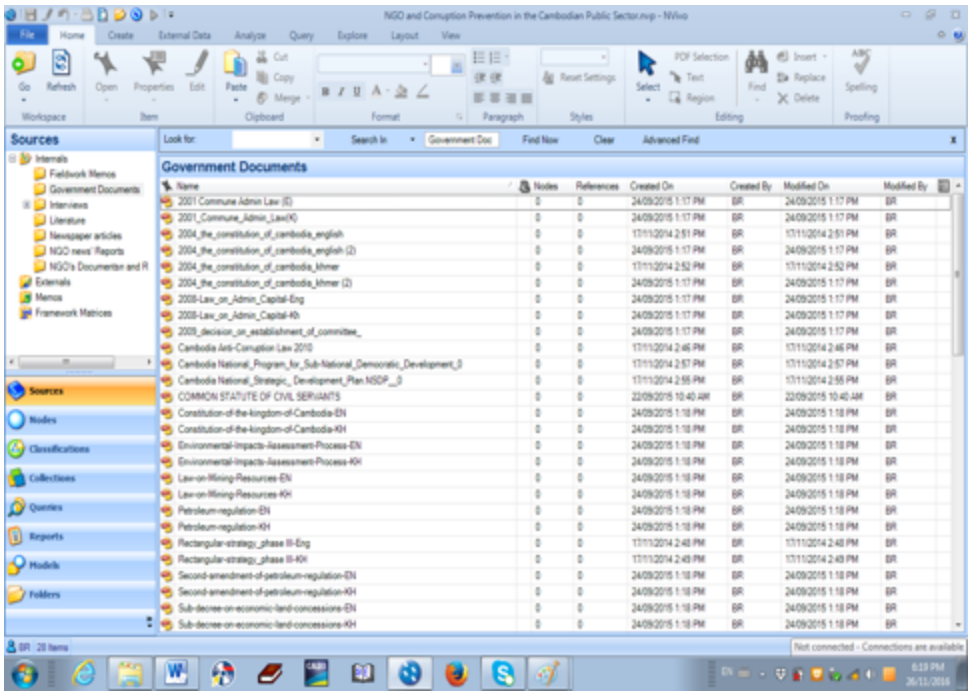
Fieldwork memos were created soon after each interview. They include key ideas or concepts which I noted during the interview, as well as what went well and what did not during the interview, so that I could work on making improvements at a later stage. It also contained my general observations during the fieldwork process. I found that fieldwork memos are important because I used them to summarise the key ideas and/or emerging concepts which made them easier to remember, and this helped a lot during coding. They were also important as the way that I created them I maintained focus on key emerging ideas and their relevance to my research questions and objectives. As noted above, for example, some of the key concepts have become the parent nodes or child nodes and, thus, this guided me throughout the actual coding. Details about the use of fieldwork memos were discussed in Section 3.3.2.1. Coding: Theory building processes.

Secondary Data: Documents

Most of the secondary data were retrieved from the websites of NGOs, except for literature articles that were accessed via the Curtin University library. After each interview with the participants, when asked for relevant documents, all participants

referred the researcher to their website. Documents retrieved were mostly annual reports of NGOs and research documents. Some NGOs post government documents relating to their work on their website and some government documents also were gathered from the web portals of NGOs. Newspaper articles relating to corruption were also collected though NGO websites. They were used for data triangulation. They were all imported and stored in NVivo, as illustrated in Figure 3 below. However, related newspapers and NGO documents are not illustrated here to protect anonymity.

Figure 3: Related government documents



3.3.2. Data Analysis

In this study I employed the NVivo programme for data coding and analysing. This software package was not only used for analysing the data but also for data management, including storing and retrieving information. It was also utilised to transcribe the interview audio recordings. The analysis began simultaneously during data collection, starting from the first interview (through note-taking on emerging ideas/concepts relating to the objectives of the research project) and continued throughout the process of data collection. This practice is supported by

Morse (1998) who claims that data analysis begins concurrently during data collection and this allows the analyst to guide data collection to ensure that unnecessary data are not collected. Simultaneous data collection and analysis can help researchers go further and deeper into the research problem, as well as engage in developing categories (Charmaz, 2006). The constant comparison method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) was employed to find out the correlations, as well as the differences and similarities, between data (Charmaz, 2006), as well as between the emerging themes or concepts of the participants, and followed throughout the coding processes (theory building processes). As claimed by Morse, researchers must verify and cross-check information including notes and other collected data on an ongoing basis to make sure that they are not stymied by ambiguity (Morse, 1998). Data interpretation and the writing in this study were subservient to the participant's words, meaning that the emerging themes were grounded in the data. According to Richards and Morse (2007), phenomenologists reflect on personal experiences, observations and the experiences of others. Simply observing and interviewing does not ensure that the research is qualitative; indeed, in qualitative study researchers must interpret the beliefs and behaviours of participants. In this sense, while in the field, the researcher is constantly immersed in a combination of deliberate decisions about hypotheses generated and tested on the one hand, and intuitive reactions on the other (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

3.3.2.1. Coding: Theory Building Processes

Within this context, the theory building processes covers three stages. Stage One explains the tasks undertaken before completing coding which includes dealing with the interview transcripts and fieldwork memos. Stage Two is about the actual coding process and Stage Three describes how the coding results are to be organised and written-up.

3.3.2.1.1. Pre-coding

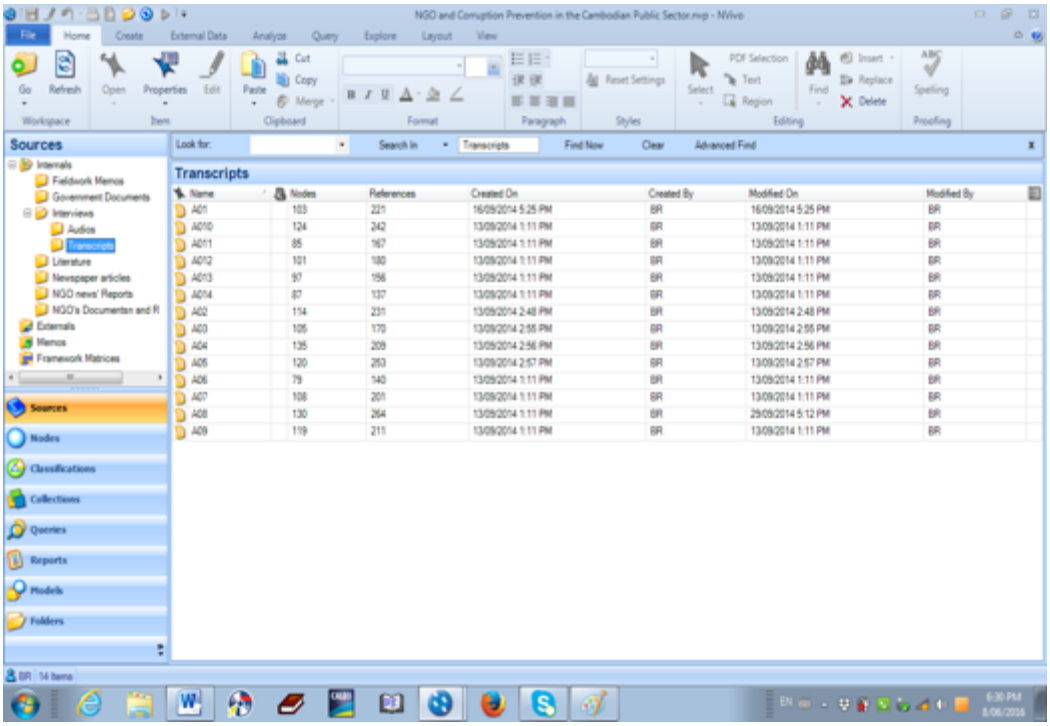
Interview Transcripts

The interview audio recordings were transcribed directly from Khmer (my

local language) into English because the NVivo programme does not recognise Khmer. The transcriptions have had most of its 'uh', 'ers', 'meaningless words' and 'repetitive words' deliberately removed from its text to make it more comprehensive, however, some remain to make sentences or phrases sound fit. Of the total interviews conducted, 13 were conducted in Khmer, and one was conducted in English. Although I translated them directly from Khmer into English, I tried to reflect the words of the interviewees verbatim.

Each interview audio recording was imported into the NVivo software soon after each interview. The transcription (Figure 4) was completed soon after each interview by me (the researcher). I found this step to be very important. The strength of transcribing the audio recordings soon after the interviews was that it kept the data fresh and, to a certain extent, reduced the time that it took, as I did not need to rewind them as often as I would have if they were transcribed at a later stage. Also, the strength of transcribing the interviews by myself helped me remember the context quite well. In addition, I found that self-transcribing facilitated my work when I came to coding and analysing afterwards. This process is supported by some authors who argue that transcribing research data is interactive and engages the researcher in the process of deep listening, analysis and interpretation; it is not a passive act, but instead provides researchers with a valuable opportunity to actively engage with his or her research material right from the beginning of data collection (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2006).

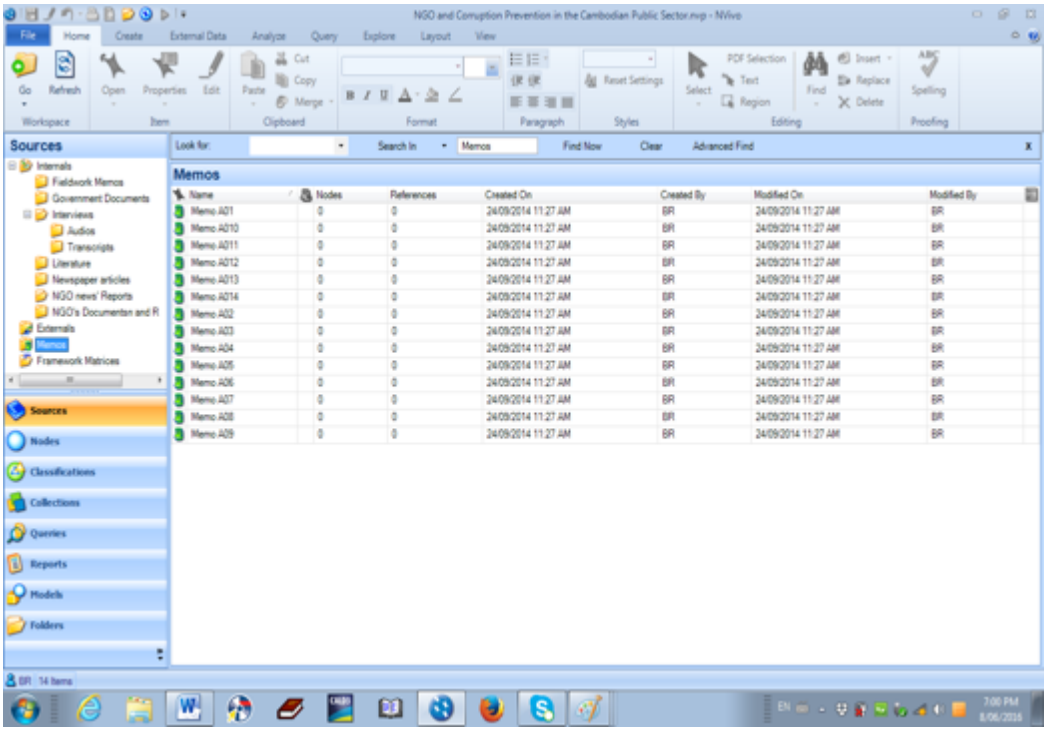
Figure 4: Interview transcripts



Fieldwork Memos

Along with interview transcripts, fieldwork memos were also imported into NVivo shortly after each interview (Figure 5). Details of how fieldwork memos were used are described in the subsequent section.

Figure 5: Fieldwork memos



Likewise, at this stage, interview transcripts and fieldwork memos were read, re-read and reviewed to familiarise myself with the data, as well as the key ideas and concepts that emerged.

3.3.2.1.2. During-coding

Codes, in their simplest sense, are tags, names or labels and coding is the process of putting tags, names or labels against pieces of the data (Punch, 2005). It is a way of 'tagging' text with codes, of indexing it, in order to facilitate later retrieval (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013, p. 71). For example, labelling jam or preserves so that it will help researchers to later find whatever they are searching for (plum jam or any other variety) (Richards & Morse, 2007). At a higher level, it is not that simple. It is about linking more than just labelling. It leads researchers from data to idea, and from the idea to all of the data pertaining to that idea (Richards & Morse, 2007). It is the pivotal link between collecting data and developing an emergent theory to explain these data. Through coding, researchers define what is happening in the data and begin to grapple with what it means (Charmaz, 2006).

Coding is the analytic processes through which data are fractured, conceptualised and integrated to form theory (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). Richards and Morse (2007) describe it as a theorising activity. Coding means naming segments of data with a label that simultaneously categories, summarises and accounts for each piece of data (Charmaz, 2006), and as a way of fracturing data and breaking data up (Richards & Morse, 2007). It is also an abstract representation of a phenomenon (Strauss & Corbin, 2008), and a way of 'fracturing' or 'slicing' the text, of resolving data into its constituent components (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). Data are broken down into discrete incidents, ideas, events, and acts and are then given a name that represents, or stands for, them (Strauss & Corbin, 2008).

There are no rules of how data are coded. Coding can be undertaken line-by-line in the beginning of a study, or the researcher might also code by analysing a whole sentence or paragraph (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). It can be applied to a word, phrase, sentence, paragraph, long passage, or a whole document (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). During initial coding, researchers study fragments of data closely—words, lines, segments, and incidents— for their analytic import (Charmaz, 2006). The length of the passage to be coded is totally dependent on context and analytic purpose. The bottom line is that researchers need to include a sufficient length of passage for the coded segment to 'make sense' when they retrieve it (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013).

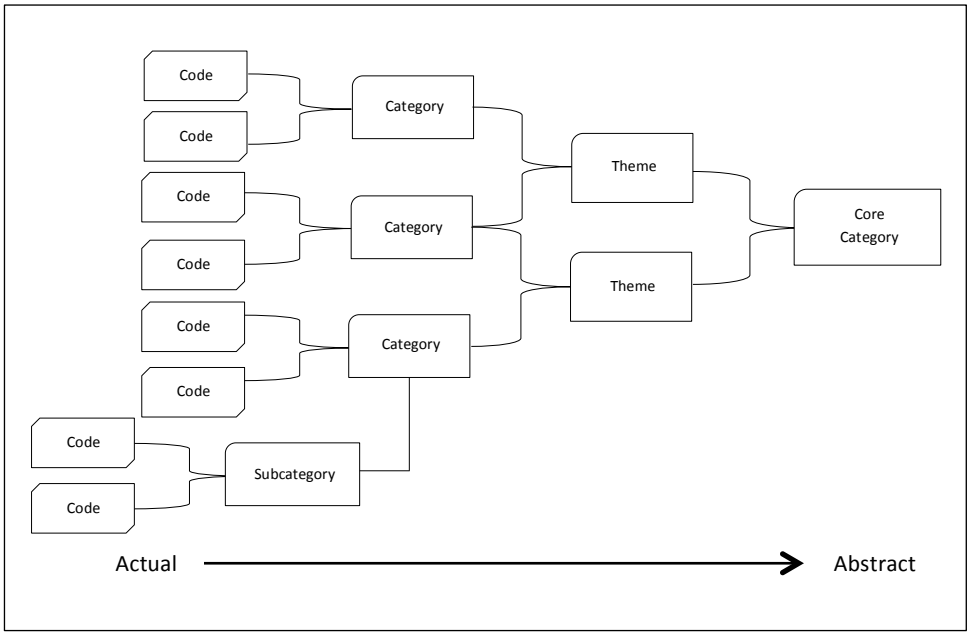
The purpose behind naming phenomena is to enable researchers to group similar events, happenings and objects under a common heading or classification (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). One of the major aims is to move from unstructured and messy data, to ideas about what is going on in the data (Richards & Morse, 2007), to make discoveries and gain a deeper understanding of the empirical world (Charmaz, 2014), and to reduce large amounts of data to smaller, more manageable pieces of data (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). In qualitative coding, researchers work with data to pave the way to abstraction (Richards & Morse, 2007). Richards and Morse (2007, p. 146) further that the analysis does not stop with coding. "Coding is putting interpretive structure on the data." There is no point in making categories for their own sake—they are for linking to data and to each other (Richards & Morse, 2007), with the final target of building a theory (Strauss & Corbin, 2008).

In this study, I employed the two cycle coding method suggested by Saldana: first cycle and second cycle coding (Saldana, 2013) for theory building processes.

The first cycle coding method consists of three phases. Phase One is concerned with the creation of categories, known as nodes in NVivo terminology, grounded from fieldwork memos. Phase Two involved reading through the interview transcripts where more categories were added, and some were changed or merged. During this phase, each category was supplied with quotes from the transcripts. Phase Three involved, where appropriate, the sub-categorisation of the established categories. For second cycle coding, the analysis was divided into two different phases. The first phase related to moving the analysis to a higher level of abstraction to create themes. Second was the phase of the analysis processes, concerned with the creation of core categories. Both first and second cycle coding were repetitive processes, the details of which will be explained in subsequent sections.

The following illustration (Figure 6) demonstrates the adherent rule of the process of theory building that was incorporated into a concise framework. At the lowest level the coding process started with actual codes and then progressed to the complete abstract level.

Figure 6: Data coding scheme: From actual to abstract



First Cycle Coding

First cycle coding methods are fairly simple and direct (Saldana, 2013), which means they require a low level of interpretation of the data. First-level coding mainly uses low-inference codes which are very useful in summarising segments of data, and which provide the basis for later, higher-level coding (Punch, 2005). In this cycle, two coding methods were used: initial coding and in vivo coding. These coding methods are appropriate since they are a starting point to provide the researcher with analytic leads for further exploration (Saldana, 2013). All of these will be expanded on in subsequent sections.

Initial Coding

Initial coding, sometimes called open coding (Saldana, 2013), is a primary starting point of the data analysis process that provides researchers with analytic leads for further exploration and "to see the direction in which to take a study" (Glaser, 1978, p. 56). It intends to break down qualitative data into discrete parts, with a thorough examination of the data and comparison for similarities and differences (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). The objective of initial coding is to remain open to all possible theoretical directions indicated by a reading of the data (Charmaz, 2006).

Initial coding entails a close reading of the data by studying the fragments of data, words, lines, segments and incidents, closely (Charmaz, 2014). This can be done by scrutinising the fieldnotes, interviews, or other documents very closely, either line by line, or even word by word. The aim is to produce concepts that seem to fit to the data (Strauss, 1987). At this initial stage, events, happenings, objects and actions/ interactions that are found to be conceptually similar in nature, or related in meaning, are grouped under more abstract concepts termed "category" (Strauss & Corbin, 2008, p. 102). Initial codes are provisional, comparative and grounded in the data. They are provisional in the sense that researchers may reword them to improve their fit with the data. Part of the fit is the degree to which they capture and condense meanings and actions (Charmaz, 2014). In short, initial coding is the primary analytical direction in moving researchers toward later decisions about defining their core conceptual categories (Charmaz, 2014).

Turning to actual practices, fieldwork memos, which included mainly key ideas and/or concepts, emerged during the interview and were initially coded by using NVivo. Basically, in NVivo terms, I started creating initial nodes—parent nodes (categories) and child nodes (subcategories) (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). For example, by reading through the first memo, I came up with a list of provisional categories, such as *lack of political will* and *lack of law enforcement,* and subcategories like *limited openness of state institution toward non-state institutions,* and *limited actions on corrupt allegations,* as factors contributing to the generation of corrupt tendencies. This is, according to Coffey and Atkinson (1996) for example, an approach commonly used to start by creating some general categories before coding in more detail. This process was followed through for the rest of the memos, which means that some categories were added and some were changed or merged together to capture the common ideas. I did this systematically with all the remaining memos to compare the concepts which emerged from each interview. Although these memo-created categories are initial and temporary, they became the building block when I came to the next coding processes with the interview transcripts. Throughout the process, I compared data with data, and then data with codes (Charmaz, 2006).

Next, I did the coding by reading through all the interview transcripts. This stage progressed from the previous stage, which means that the categories (parent nodes) and subcategories (child nodes), created during the review of the fieldwork memos, were still in place if they were deemed to fit. However, they were changed or reworded if they were deemed unfit. This analytical process was more comprehensive because categories, subcategories and actual codes were added. During this process I frequently did a constant comparison (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) to look for the similarities, differences and patterns by checking back and forth between the new and the old transcripts. For example, comparing interview statements and incidents within the same interview, and comparing statements and incidents in different interviews (Charmaz, 2006).

Example 1: Category creation

In the following piece of data extracted from the interview transcript, I called it "*unilateral advocacy*" (Category).

Excerpt: *Previously we conducted a campaign, match something like that, and asked the government to implement the anti-corruption law correctly. Sometimes we had a press conference to react to that issue. (P10)*

Example 2: Subcategory creation

Similarly, in the following chunk of data extracted from the interview transcript, I called it "*political vested interest*" (Subcategories).

Excerpt: *If government is transparent, open and enforces the mechanisms as it has created it, this affects financial benefits of leaders and its ability to hold power. (P9)*

The above examples simply highlight the way in which categories and subcategories were created and supported by actual excerpts. On reading through the remainder of the transcripts, everything relating to "unilateral advocacy" and "political vested interest" was coded under that category, and subcategory, respectively. This process applies systematically for other categories and subcategories of this study. Again, it should be noted that on reading through the rest of the interview transcripts, new ideas or concepts emerged, and thus new categories and subcategories were added and, at the same time, changes in established categories or subcategories for their fit to the data was natural.

In Vivo Coding

In vivo coding, also known as "literal coding," "verbatim coding," "inductive coding," "indigenous coding," and "emic coding" (Saldana, 2013), refers to codes that use a word or short phrase for the actual language found in the qualitative data record used by participants (Strauss, 1987). Charmaz (2006) refers this to codes of participants' special terms. These terms provide a useful analytic point of departure, help researchers to preserve participants' meanings of their views and actions in the coding itself, and serve as symbolic markers of participants' speech and meanings (Charmaz, 2014, p. 134).

The following example is a piece of information extracted from a research interviewee expressing his opinions relating to the relationships between the government and governance-oriented NGOs.

Excerpt: *We have supporting evidence that all parties accuse us, this indicates that we are an independent organisation. We know the government, any organisations that work on advocacy, human rights, corruption the government wraps up and accuses them of bias to the opposition party. We cannot ban the government but we know ourselves that we are not relevant and we have proper policy… (P3)*

The extracted passage above was coded under subcategory *"limited government openness toward NGOs"*, as seen below.

In vivo code*: Any organisations that work on advocacy, human rights, corruption, the government wraps up and accuses them of bias to the opposition party. (P3)*

The above examples show how I undertook the coding of my recorded data to create categories and subcategories, and how in vivo codes were used to support them. My rule is that when I work on my data I always do it with purpose, which means that I keep my research questions and objectives in mind, and then code based on their relevance. The above code was just an example; actually, the code can be a word, a phrase, a sentence, or a paragraph. I describe this as purposive reading and coding. In this study, In vivo coding was mainly used as a quote to support the established categories or subcategories, as seen in Example One and Two above.

▒ Second Cycle Coding

Moving on from first cycle coding, in this cycle three coding methods were employed: axial coding, pattern coding and theoretical coding. Second level codes are more inferential, requiring some degree of inference beyond the data (Punch, 2005). It is to reorganise and reanalyse data coded through the first cycle coding, aiming at developing a sense of categorical, thematic, conceptual, and/or theoretical organisation (Saldana, 2013). In so doing, data were recoded for their fit; for

example, some codes were merged together due to their similarity, and some codes were dropped off to reduce redundancy (Lewin & Silver, 2007).

Axial Coding

Axial coding extends the analytic work from initial coding. The goal is to strategically reassemble data that were "split" or "fractured" during the initial coding process (Strauss & Corbin, 2008, p. 124), which means that it helps researchers to reassemble the data they have fractured during initial coding to give coherence to the emerging analysis (Charmaz, 2014). It becomes increasingly prominent during the normally lengthy period of open coding, before the analyst becomes committed to a core category or categories and so moves determinedly into selective coding (Strauss, 1987). Axial coding moves the focus around a concept (Richards & Morse, 2007) and, during this cycle, "the code is sharpened to achieve its best fit" (Glaser, 1978, p. 62). It is the process of linking categories to their subcategories as well as describing properties and dimensions of each category (Charmaz, 2006; Saldana, 2013; Strauss & Corbin, 2008).

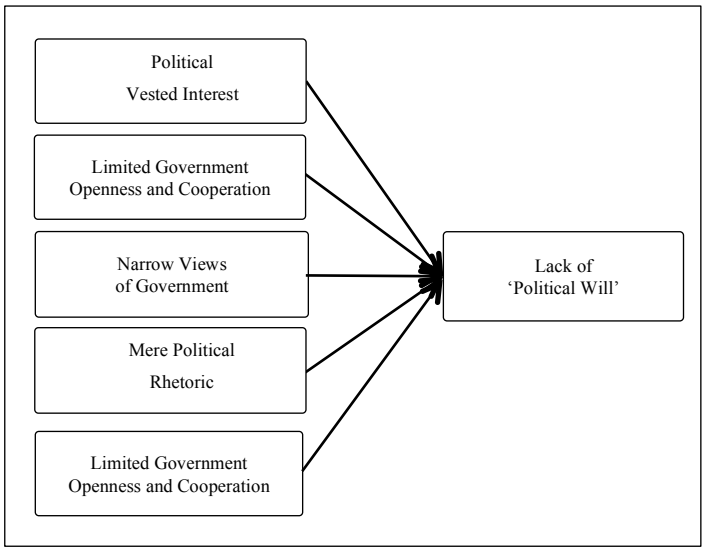
In this particular data analysis process, axial coding was used to fine-tune what has been done in the first cycle coding, and make the connection between categories and subcategories. This was done by reviewing the previous coding cycle and rearrange, reclassify, change, add new categories and subcategories, and even drop off altogether where necessary, with the purpose of making them fit to the data (Saldana, 2013).

First, for example, on further reviewing the first cycle codes, the created category *"corruption, a way of life"* was renamed as *"social norms"*, and subcategory *"social learning process"* was changed into *"social construction"*. Some subcategories were moved up to become categories, such as *"substandard anti-corruption law and unit"*. Some categories were dropped off, for example, *"fragile governance system"* and, at times, some categories developed during the first cycle coding were downgraded into subcategories, such as *"weak legislative and judicial check and balances"* and others. Indeed, this activity was not completed on the first or second shot; it was done repetitively until I was satisfied with the result.

The next and final stage in the axial coding process was the link between categories and subcategories, referred to as "tree nodes" in NVivo term (Bazeley &

Jackson, 2013; Richards, 1999). Again, this was not a one stop shop. I did several reviews. The following illustration (Figure 7), for example, highlighted the connections between categories and subcategories.

Figure 7: An example: The connection between category and subcategory



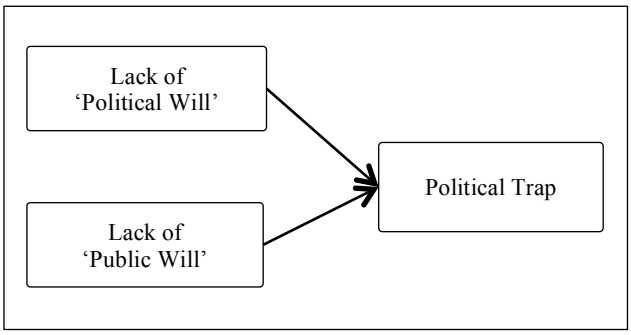
Pattern Coding

According to Saldana (2013), pattern coding develops the "meta-code" – the category label that identifies similarly coded data. Pattern codes are explanatory or inferential codes, ones that identify an emergent theme, configuration or explanation. They pull together a lot of material into a more meaningful and parsimonious unit of analysis (Saldana, 2013). Pattern codes pull together material into smaller and more meaningful units (Punch, 2005). Pattern code is a way of grouping those summaries into a smaller number of set, themes or constructs (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

In this context, I used pattern coding to create themes, which is the next level of abstraction from categories. As claimed by Miles and Huberman (1994), pattern coding is suitable for the establishment of major themes grounded in the data. I did this by coding the codes I established earlier. At this stage, I grouped all established categories into a list, which was automatically done by NVivo since the beginning of the coding process. I started by putting similar codes (categories) into groups and gave it a name (theme). The theme runs right through the data and is not necessarily

confined to specific segments of text (Richards & Morse, 2007). It is an outcome of coding, categorisation, or analytic reflection, not something that is, in itself, coded (Saldana, 2013). Overall, a theme is an extended phrase or sentence that identifies what a unit of data is about and/or what it means (Saldana, 2013). For example, these two categories *"Lack of 'political will'"* and *"Lack of 'public will,'"* which were created during the previous stage, were coded as *"Political trap"*. The following illustration (Figure 8) indicates this abstraction development.

Figure 8: An example: From category to theme



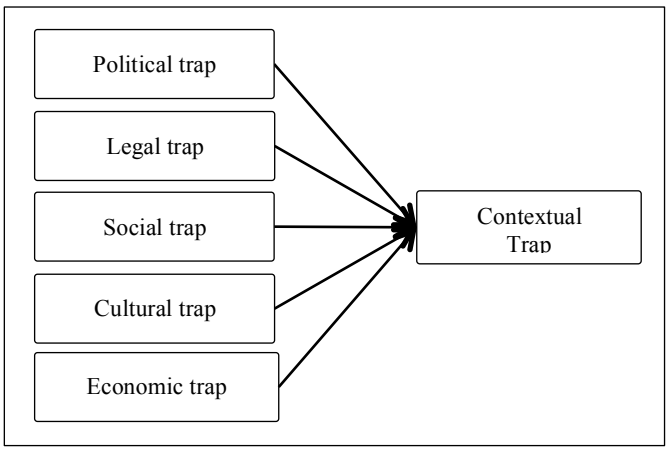
Theoretical Coding

According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), theoretical coding, sometimes called selective coding or conceptual coding (Saldana, 2013), is the process of selecting the core category that represents the main theme of the research. Theoretical codes 'weave the fractured story back together' (Glaser, 1978, p. 72). Theoretical coding functions like an umbrella that covers and accounts for all other codes and categories formulated thus far, meaning that all categories and subcategories now become systematically linked with the central/core category (Saldana, 2013). This is because the core category is more likely to have the utmost relevance to the phenomenon under study (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). Theoretical codes not only conceptualise how the substantive codes are related, but also may move the researcher's analytic story in a theoretical direction (Charmaz, 2006). Strauss (1987) mentions that the core category is potential to generating theory because other categories and their properties are related to it. According to Strauss (1987 p. 36), a core category should fulfil the following criteria:

- "It must be central, that is, related to as many other categories and the properties as is possible…"
- "The core category must appear frequently in the data…"
- "The core category relates easily to other categories…"
- "A core category in a substantive study has clear implications for more general theory."
- "As the details of a core category are worked out analytically, the theory moves forward appreciably."
- "The core category allows for building in the *maximum variation* to the analysis, since the researcher is coding in terms of its dimensions, properties, conditions, consequences, strategies and so on."

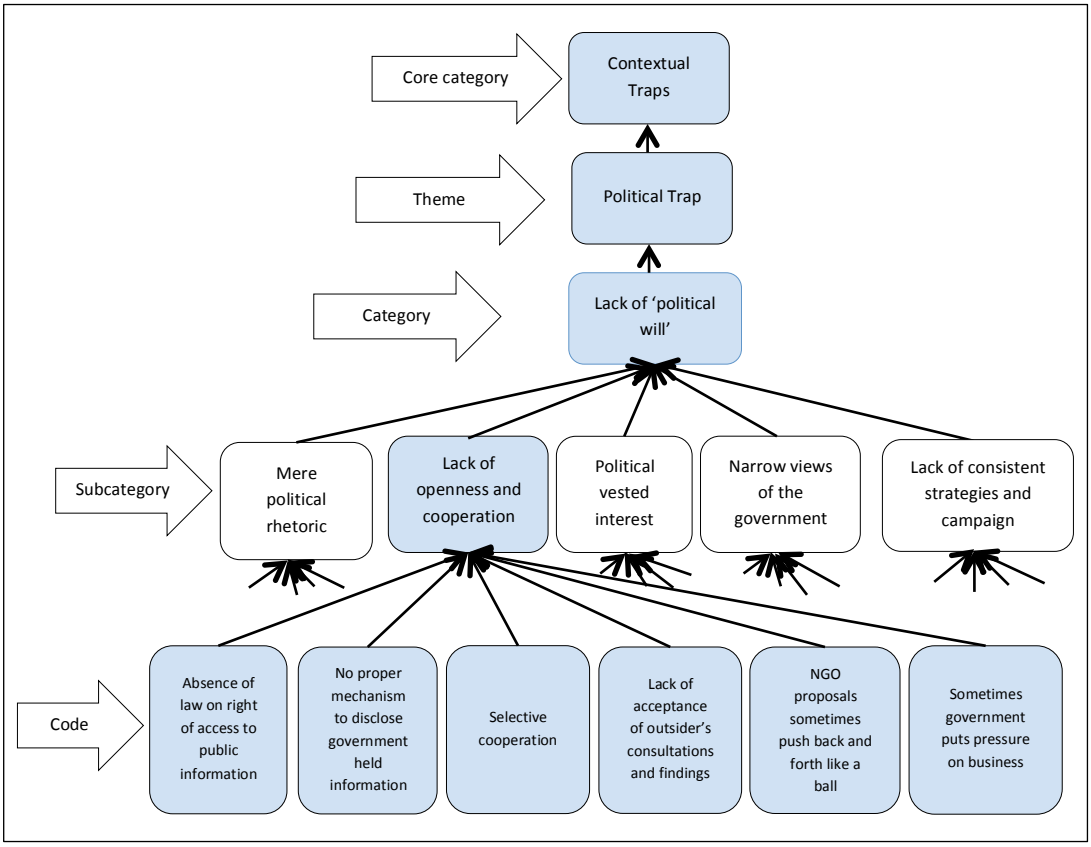
Parallel with the literature, I employed theoretical coding to create core categories, the highest abstraction level of this analytical process. I started by re-examining all the themes developed in the pattern coding method. Next, I put themes with similar contexts into groups and then gave them a name (core category). The core category has to have high relevance to the topic under study and relate to other categories and their properties, as mentioned by some authors above (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 2008). For example, these five themes *"Political trap", "Legal trap", "Social trap", "Cultural trap"* and *"Economic trap*" were labelled as *"Contextual trap"*, a core category. The illustration (Figure 9) below highlights this process.

Figure 9: An example: From themes to core category



To recap, the following diagram (Figure 10) illustrates and summarises the coding process toward the establishment of a core category in this study from actual to abstract.

Figure 10: An example of coding process: From actual to abstract



To sum up, through these coding processes, I was able to reduce the redundant codes to a smaller number. As a result, the final product of data analysis came up with 722 actual codes which were aggregated into 76 subcategories under 40 categories. These categories were then integrated into 16 emerging themes to reflect a higher level of abstraction. The emergent themes were found to fit under five core categories. These were summarised in Table 2 below. This is an analysis process (theory building process) where the level of data started with the actual codes into a more abstract level (actual codes, subcategories, categories, themes and core categories). This aims at developing a substantive integrated theoretical framework from the practice-based knowledge and the perspectives of the participants of this study that will help inform research and practices.

Table 2: Summary of the final product of the coding processes

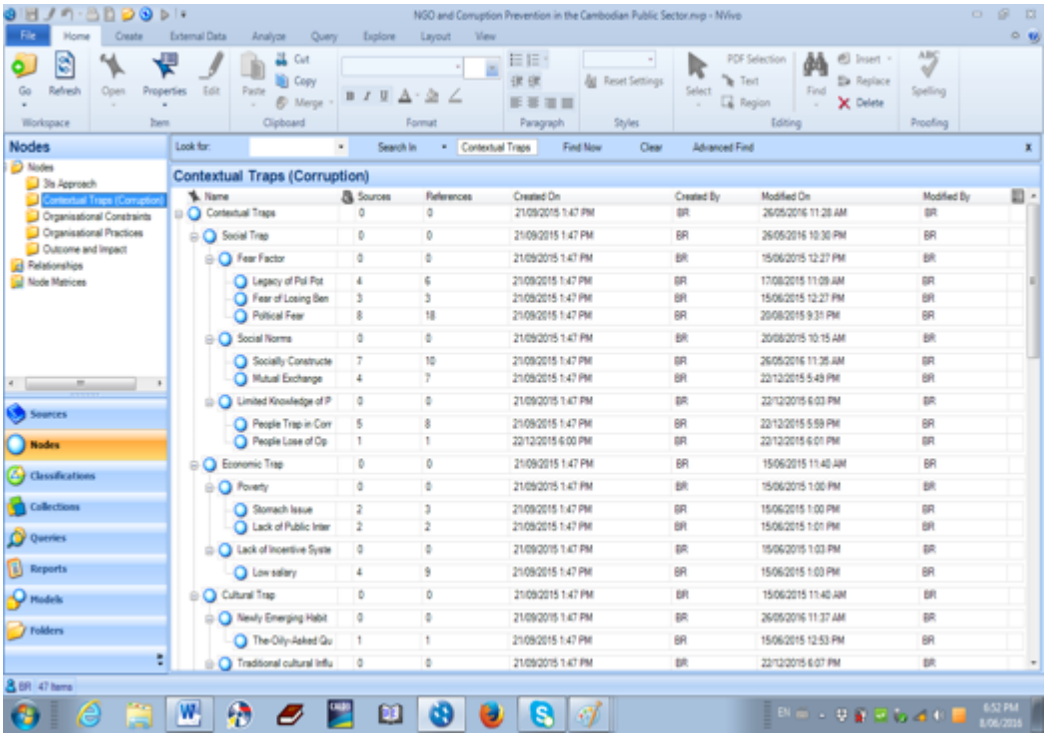
Codes	Subcategories (1st level code)	Categories (2nd level code)	Themes (3rd level code)	Core Category
67	- Political vested interest - Limited government openness and cooperation - Narrow views of government - Mere political rhetoric - Lack of consistent strategies and campaigns	Lack of 'Political Will'	Political Trap	Contextual Traps
31	- Lack of public trust - Limited public participation - Public involvement in corruption	Lack of 'Public Will'		
3	- Weak legislative and judicial checks and balances	Separation of Powers	Legal Trap	
11	- Substandard anti-corruption law - Substandard anti-corruption unit	Substandard Anti-Corruption Law and Unit		
31	- Double standard actions of ACU - Limited actions on corruption allegations - Limited actual, regular operations of ACU	Lack of Law Enforcement		
14	- Legacy of Pol Pot regime - Political fear - Fear of losing benefits	Fear Factors	Social Trap	
11	- Mutual Exchanges - Social constructions	Social Norms		
10	- The public may be trapped in corrupt practices - The public loses of opportunity to participate in corruption	Limited Knowledge of the Public		
6	- Hierarchical & paternalistic tradition - Respect of authority and rich people - 'Egg vs rock' mindset	Traditional Cultural Influence	Cultural Trap	
1	- The-oily-asked questions	Newly-Emerging Habits		
6	- Stomach issue - Lack of public interest in social issues	Poverty	Economic Trap	
7	- Low salary	Lack of Incentive Systems		
33	- The public - CSOs - State authority - Business	Education and Awareness Raising	Civic Empowerment	Organisational Practices
24		Civic Mobilisation		
22	- Citizens and government - NGOs and government - Citizens and political parties - CSOs and CSOs	Bridging and Facilitation		
8		Bilateral Advocacy	Civic Advocacy	
9		Unilateral Advocacy		

32	- NGOs monitor government actions - The public monitors government actions	Monitoring	Civic Oversight	
23	- Research to inform and advocate - Research to disseminate	Research		
14	- Dissemination of information to the public - Demanding for disclosure of government-held information	Promoting Access to Information		
13	- Limited management capacity - Limited leadership capacity	Limited Knowledge and Experiences	Management and Leadership Constraints	Organisational Constraints
7		Lack of Staff		
13	- Corruption involvement of NGO - NGOs bribe authority to conduct their activities - Political and business-like NGOs - Differences among NGOs	Scandals involving NGOs	Corruption and Governance Constraints	
7		Limited governance capacity of NGOs		
2	- Shrinking in donor's support on governance issues - Media NGOs lose incomes from advertisement	Political Influence	Financial Constraints	
1	- Lack of local connections	Lack of Local Fundraising		
6	- Limited activity - Limited human development - Lack of interest of skilful people	Reduce Strength and Influence		
16		Civil Society Level: Increased Public Awareness	Outcomes	Outcomes & Impacts
7		State Level: Contributed to Policy Development		
7		State and Civil Society Level: Bridged between State and Non-state Actors		
17		Gradual Changes of Public Perception and Actions	Impacts	
25		Gradual Changes of Authority Perception		
30	- Fiduciary safeguard - Personnel policy - Complaint mechanism - Other Policy Measures	Reinforcing Organisational Policy	Organisational Reinforcement	3Is Approach
22	- Organisational structure and management systems - Human resource development	Reinforcing Organisational Management Systems		
13	- Information disclosure systems - Monitoring & feedback systems	Reinforcing Information & Monitoring Systems		

59	- Cooperation with government - Cooperation with CSOs - Cooperation with the public - Cooperation with partners	Cooperation and Coordination	Work Reinforcement	
25	- Increasing cooperation with extant networks and coalition - Creating and working with new networks	Networking & Coalition Building		
11	- Adaptation to contextual Situations - Evidence-based interventions	Evidence-based Intervention and Adaptation		
41	- Being a role model - Anti-misconduct - Mainstreaming anti-corruption into NGO projects	Demonstrating Good Governance Practices	Promoting Institutional Recognition & Support	
37	- Being neutral - Being professional - Being pragmatic	Building Institutional Trust		
Total				
722 codes	76 subcategories	40 categories	16 themes	5 core categories

The subsequent illustration (Figure 11) provides a snapshot of NVivo coding, the actual example of the coding process and how data is reduced. It is noteworthy that the coding process is complex and multi-layered. It was conducted in a reiterated and cyclical manner which means it was completed and then reviewed again and again, until I was satisfied with the intended result.

Figure 11: A snapshot of data coding process



3.3.2.2. Post-coding: The Write-up

The write-up of the findings of this study (Chapter 4) is structured around the coding processes, as seen in the figure above. I began by grouping the connection between codes, subcategories, categories, themes and core categories together and then unpacked them, starting from the abstract level down to the actual, meaning that it commenced from core categories, themes, categories, and subcategories to actual codes. For example, the first core category becomes Section One in the Findings chapter and the second core category two becomes Section Two. Themes become subsections, category becomes subsequent lower level in the hierarchy, and some of the actual codes become quotes to support the arguments. This rule applies to other core categories, themes, categories, subcategories, and codes throughout the Findings chapter (see Chapter 4 for details). These processes are underpinned by Saldana (2013) who advises using code, category and theme to serve as organising frames for the development of the research story, and using them often keeps the reader on track with the linear units of the write-up. Finally, the connections between these concepts were reorganised to develop an integrative theoretical framework.

3.4. Rigour and Ethical Considerations

3.4.1. Rigour in Qualitative Research

Both qualitative and quantitative researchers claim the responsibility for ensuring rigour in their research process. Rigour remains a criterion for ensuring reliability and validity in qualitative research (Morse, Barret, Mayan, & Spiers, 2002). They further claim that without rigour, research results lose its contributing value. However, according to some authors (e.g., Lincoln & Guba, 1985), reliability and validity should have no room in qualitative research (Richards & Morse, 2007), and suggest its replacement with the five aspects of trustworthiness; namely, credibility, authenticity, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Creswell, 2013). Similar to this, some other researchers argue that in the qualitative context, the criteria for reliability and validity must be different from those used in the quantitative context (e.g., Leininger, 1994). I am in a position of supporting the argument made by Richards & Morse (2007, p.189-90) that, "We have no quarrel with the suggestion that reliability and validity are determined differently in qualitative inquiry than in quantitative work, but we regard it as essential that determining reliability and validity remains the qualitative researcher's goal" To me, the essence is actual 'action' rather than the 'word' of the researcher's research protocol in which readers are able to judge whether or not their research is truly rigorous (reliable and valid) from the start to finish. Richards and Morse (2007) describes this in three phases: planning the project, conducting the study and bringing the study to completion.

Reliability in qualitative research is concerned with the consistency of the data collection methods of a study and its degree of dependability (Altheide & Johnson, 1994; Morse et al., 2002). Reliability can be enhanced if the researcher obtains detailed fieldnotes by employing a good quality tape for recording and by transcribing the tape (Creswell, 2013). In qualitative inquiry, validation is an attempt to assess the accuracy of the findings (Creswell, 2013; Franklin, Cody, & Ballan, 2001; Long & Johnson, 2000). Validity requires that the results accurately reflect the phenomenon under study (Maxwell, 1992; Richards & Morse, 2007). It is the extent

to which the findings are sufficiently authentic that they can be trusted to form decisions and take action (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005).

In this section I did not attempt to intensively discuss the literature relating to rigour in qualitative research in general; rather, I focus on the explanation of what makes this study rigorous. To ensure rigour, this study employed strict self-regulatory rules throughout the three phases of the project cycles: designing, implementing and completion.

3.4.1.1. Ensuring Rigour in the Preparation Phase

Rigour is always essential for any project. In this preliminary phase, rigour was ensured through, but not limited to, the following:

- Thorough, thoughtful and appropriate design of the research objectives and questions, and this was consistent with some authors (e.g., Richards & Morse, 2007) who claim that as the instrument of the study, researchers have to be well-prepared before starting a project.
- Rigorous review of relevant literature relating to the topic of research. According to Richards and Morse (2007), for example, surveying the literature allows researchers to get a grip on what is known, and to learn more where the holes or weak areas are in the current body of knowledge.
- Key informants with years of experiences were pre-determined to be requested for participation in the study. As is claimed by Spradley (1979), the use of purposive sampling allows investigators to select participants that are able to provide the information required, are willing to reflect on the phenomena of interest, have the time, and are willing to participate (Richards & Morse, 2007).
- Thoughtful and objective design of the interview guide and semi-structured interview questions (Appendix 6), as well as the application of the idea that all participants were asked the same questions in the same order to ensure the consistency of patterns of answers (Richards & Morse, 2007).
- Employing appropriate methods and design, as were discussed in detail in section 3.2 and 3.3 above. Richards and Morse (2007) refer to this as methodological cohesiveness which ensures the best fit of the research

question with the assumptions, strategies, types of data and analysis techniques.

3.4.1.2. Ensuring Rigour in the Implementing Phase

There were various criteria which ensured rigour in the implementation phase of this study, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Interviews were audio recorded and notes were taken. Transcription was verbatim to ensure the reflection of interviewee's spoken words. As is argued by Creswell (2013), taking detailed field notes, recording the interviews with good quality tape-recording and transcribing them to indicate the trivial, but often crucial, pauses and overlaps enhance reliability of the research result.
- Putting aside (bracketing) preconceived knowledge to avoid unintentional bias. As is argued by Whiteley (2012), the researcher is the instrument of data collection, which may introduce unintentional bias (Alvesson, 1996). Bracketing means that researchers have to put their personal knowledge and the knowledge they gain from the literature aside, so that the researchers can see the research problem, the setting and the data with fresh eyes, and work inductively grounded in the data (Richards & Morse, 2007).
- Conducting interviews with equality and reciprocal respect between the researcher and the researched. Interviews were conducted with an epistemic ethos of equality and reciprocal respect (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2008) which may enhance the reliability of the data.
- Maintaining a data-centric approach to the development of a substantive theoretical framework, meaning that interpretation is subservient to the voice of the participants. Lincoln and Guba (2000) referred to this form of rigour as being essential to the validity of interpretation. Other methods include cross-checking data, consistent analytical methods, and staying close to empirical data (Franklin et al., 2001). Hammersley (1992) provides a qualitative perspective on validity, arguing a 'truthfulness', if the researcher's interpretation accurately represents the features of the phenomenon via description, explanation, or theory. In qualitative terms, this is centred around the "degree to which researchers' claims about

knowledge correspond to the reality being studied" (Cho & Trent, 2006, p. 320). These activities were maintained throughout the research processes.

- Being responsive to strategies that are not working (Richards & Morse, 2007). In this study, for example, the first option to approach participants and organisations to request their consent to take part did not work. As such, the second option was employed which worked satisfactorily (see Section 3.3.1.2).
- Appropriate pacing of the project (Richards & Morse, 2007) which means that from start to finish, the project was conducted at a pace that allowed saturation of data to be ensured. This ranged, for example, from prolonged engagement in the field (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985), to building trust with participants, learning the culture, and checking for misinformation that stems from distortions introduced by the researchers and informants (Creswell, 2013), and to coding reliably (Richards & Morse, 2007) as explained in the previous section (see Section 3.3.2.1.2). The experience and prior knowledge of the researcher (myself) within the NGO sector assisted in verifying facts. Also, this allows researcher to makes decisions about what is salient to the study, relevant to the purpose of the study, and of interest for focus (Creswell, 2013). Appropriate pacing of the project provided researchers sufficient time and opportunities in data analysis, discussing and comparing the findings with the established literature, the write-up and others so that the findings are valid and reliable.
- Using multiple sources of information for data triangulation (i.e., interviews, reports and newspapers). According to many researchers, for example, in triangulation researchers make use of multiple and different sources, methods, investigators, and theories to provide corroborating evidence (Creswell, 2013). Yin (1994) claims that the findings and conclusions of a study appear to be more convincing and accurate when they are triangulated with several different sources of information. For instance, the comparison of interview transcripts with the published documents, or statistics derived from a local investigation which are compared with other national, statistical sources for accuracy (see Grix, 2010).

- Meeting regularly with supervisors to discuss the emerging constructs and theory as well as the accuracy of the findings. This was consistent with perspectives of many researchers in that peer review, or debriefing, provides an external check of the research process which ensure validity (Creswell, 2013).
- Fulfilling detailed or thick descriptions of the phenomenon under investigation (Shenton, 2004), through prolonged engagement (interviewing) in the field (Erlandson et al., 1993; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In this study, prolonged engagement is achieved by allocating sufficient time in the field, and allowing sufficient time for participants to speak their voices, as well as sufficient time for the researcher to probe and expand on responses. According to some authors, with such detailed description, the researcher enables readers to transfer information to other settings and to determine whether the findings can be transferred based on their shared characteristics (Creswell, 2013). Through the detailed thick description of the data, including extensive time spent in the field and the closeness of the researcher to participants in the study, constitutes a strength of the qualitative research which adds to the value, or accuracy, of a study (Creswell, 2013).
- Applying a bottom-up approach to data collection and analysis (see Section 3.3). Richards and Morse (2007) describe this as working inductively. This means that the researcher analyses the data inductively to build their patterns, categories and themes from the bottom-up by organising the data into increasingly more abstract units of information (Creswell, 2013), and that data are not imposed prior to data collection (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998).

3.4.1.3. Ensuring Rigour in the Completion Phase

According to Richards and Morse (2007), ensuring rigour in the completion phase of qualitative inquiry can be demonstrated through: (1) reaffirming legitimacy following completion, (2) triangulating with subsequent research, and (3) reaffirming through implementation. In point (1), Richards and Morse focus on implementation which means whether or not the findings of the project work when they come into real practices and on replication, meaning whether someone else finds something

similar to the project results. They also focus on incorporating the research findings into a meta-synthesis which means the findings fit into a conceptual scheme. At this stage, it is too early to affirm the project legitimacy since the project has not been put into practice. What I can confirm at the moment is that the project findings are highly likely to gain their legitimacy following completion through the rigour (reliability and validity) maintained during the phases of preparation and conducting the study, as discussed earlier.

For point (2), triangulating related projects after the completion of the first project can provide validity for the first project because it provides a foundation for the second study (Richards & Morse, 2007). With prudent project design, conducting the study, and reliable coding, the outcome of this study is highly likely to be the basic, initial findings that can be verified through subsequent research studies. Regarding point (3), reaffirming through implementation, Richards, and Morse are interested in implementing changes suggested by the results of the study to provide further testing, and often an assurance of the correctness of the results. Two different points of view to be noticed here: if the recommendations of a study suggest a particular intervention for a certain problem work, it provides further credence for the original qualitative study. But if the intervention does not work, it does not provide absolute proof of the research results and, thus, careful investigation should follow. Theory-practice gaps can be an issue that could be taken into consideration when it comes to the assessment of the contribution of the research results.

3.4.2. Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues influence all forms of social research (Grix, 2010; Orb, Eisenhauer, & Wynaden, 2001; Punch, 2005). The main reason is that the research involves gathering information from people and about people, and thus, to a certain extent, meddles in people' lives, particularly when dealing with the most sensitive, intimate and innermost matters in people's lives (Punch, 2005). Ethical issues can arise anytime during the research process, including during field data collection, at the stage of analysis of the data, and during the dissemination of the research reports (Creswell, 2013). As such, ethical issues need appropriate consideration and careful measures to protect the welfare of the researched over the interests of the researcher.

In so doing, diverse sets of standards were created. Lipson (1994), for example, proposes ethical considerations with a number of principles, such as informed consent, deception, confidentiality, and benefits of research to participants over risks. Similarly, Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, (1997) suggest a set of moral principles, such as confidentiality, anonymity, legality, professionalism and privacy when dealing with people in research, whereas Miles and Huberman (1994) present a list of ethical issues relating to: worthiness of the project, competence boundaries, informed consent, benefits, costs and reciprocity, harm and risk, honesty and trust, privacy, confidentiality and anonymity, intervention and advocacy, research integrity, and quality, ownership of data and conclusions, and the use, and misuse, of results.

Similar to the above suggestions, some researchers (e.g., Davies & Dodd, 2002) focus on trustfulness, openness, honesty, respectfulness, carefulness and constant attentiveness. Davis and Dodd (2002) further that ethical considerations should not be just a form filled out for the ethics committee and subsequently forgotten. Smythe and Murry (2000) put the basic principles and standards governing the ethical treatment of human participants in social science research into: free and informed consent, privacy and confidentiality, protection from harm, avoidance of conflict of interest, and avoidance of deception. For Bryman (2004), ethical concerns include harm to participants, lack of informed consent, invasion of privacy, and deception, and for (Saunders et al., 2012), considerations are on issues such as privacy of the participants, the voluntary nature of participants, the use of collected data, and the interaction between researchers and participants. For Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2007), the focus is on the effects of the research on participants and to act in such a way to preserve their dignity as human beings, and Patton (2002) propose that the researchers needed to implement a technique of empathic neutrality, whereby they engaged empathically with the participants' experiences, but maintain their neutral position towards the content of the material that was generated. However, for Punch (2005), the major concerns are on harm, consent, deception, privacy and confidentiality of data.

As discussed above, ethics in research basically focuses on the welfare and dignity of the research participants. Simply put, it places the interest of research participants over the researcher's. By this it does not mean that the researcher's safety is ignored. In this study, considerations were also made to ensure the security of the researcher. For example, health and safety risk assessment has to be met and

approved by the university representative before the fieldwork data collection is to be conducted. Importantly, in response to the challenges faced by researchers, ethical guidelines outlined in the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Research Involving Humans, specifically pertaining to data collection method, and with consideration of risk given the sensitivity of the inquiry, approval from Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee was obtained for this study. As such, this research was granted ethics approval from the Human Research Ethics Committee of Curtin University on 12 May, 2014 (Approval Number: HR 80/2014) (Appendix 5).

Considering the potential impacts of ethics in social research, this study fulfilled a number of moral principles, verbally and in writing, including:

- Participants were clearly informed about the objectives of the study during the request for participating and during the interview. These were clearly outlined in the information sheet and clarified again during the field work interview. As claimed by Gibbs (2007), the information sheet not only lets the participants know the aim of the research, but also what information is required from them and what will happen to the data they provide after the research is completed.
- Participants were advised of their right of withdrawal from the study at any time if they felt uneasy or insecure, without penalty. According to Kvale (1996), for example, before conducting each interview, interviewees have to be re-informed that their participation is completely voluntary and that they can withdraw from the interview at any time.
- Participant's confidentiality and privacy were maintained at all times by using a coding system; and pseudonyms were used in the final report for both the organisations and participants. Privacy and confidentiality are the right of participants not to have their identifications about them disclosed without prior permission (Smythe & Murry, 2000). Consultations between the researcher and the supervisors that occurred throughout the analytical and writing process also ensure that organisations and participants' identification were maintained.
- Informed consent form (Appendix 1) was voluntarily signed, without any influence or coercion, by the research participants prior the commencement

of the interview. According to Kvale (1996), all interviewees have to be asked to sign the consent forms before conducting the interviews. Smythe and Murry (2000) call this free and informed consent which means that individuals voluntarily consent to participate in research and are not induced to do so using any form of undue influence or coercion, and this consent has to be free from any deception.

- An information sheet (Appendix 2), which clearly outlines such as the roles and rights of participants, ownership and the use of data, was sent to participants for their understanding and briefed with them again before conducting the interview. The information sheet had to be sent to participants to confirm that no information about them would be made available or revealed in the research, or any published material of the study (Kvale, 1996).
- Participants were informed about the voice recording of the interview for transcription and data analysis. The intention was not to scare them; rather, to ensure that their voices were heard on the recording and not missed out unintentionally.
- Participants were told that they were entitled to receive the interview transcripts and analysis report to check for accuracy if they wished.
- Participants were all advised that the method used will be the one that minimizes the participant's effects and complies with the University Ethics Committee Standards. Smythe and Murry (2000) refers to this protection from harm by maintaining that research is considered ethically unproblematic when it poses no more than minimal risk to research participants.
- All information collected in this study was treated with strict confidence and was accessible only to myself and my supervisors, and used only for the purpose of the study. Participants have to be notified that the information obtained from them would not be used for any purpose other than the study (Kvale, 1996).
- The data collected was coded and stored in password protected folders in a portable storage device for seven years, and will then be deleted.

3.5. Chapter Conclusion

This chapter discussed the justification of methodology used for this thesis, and the actual methods and techniques employed for data collection. It described why qualitative inquiry and a phenomenological approach is used as a strategy to explore this particular social phenomenon. The major reason for choosing this approach is basically dependent on the philosophical foundations of research, including constructivist ontology, and interpretivist epistemology, and their fit to the research questions and objective of the study, which is to explore individual's experiences and how they interpret their experiences of the phenomenon under investigation. It discussed the methods and techniques used, such as how the researcher approached the organisations, how participants were selected, data the collection tools, as well as how data was collected and analysed. The chapter also discusses the rigour of qualitative research, and the ethical considerations of the study.

The next chapter provides descriptions to the findings of the study. The whole findings of this study were conceptualised into two different but interrelated frameworks: framework (p) and framework (s). Framework (p) conceptualises the problems of the current practices of NGOs. It basically helps improve understanding of the current state of problems and surrounding environments where NGOs operate, the current state of their strategic actions, and their associated organisational constraints. Framework (s) represents solution to the problems identified in framework (p), through the intervention of the 3Is approach. All of these are discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER 4

THE FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of the study. The chapter consists of two parts. Part One is concerned with problems of the current practices of NGOs that were conceptualised into a framework (p). This part comprises three sections. Section One describes contextual traps, factors contributing to the widespread nature of corrupt behaviours, and also imposing constraints to the growth and endeavour of democratic institutions, particularly NGOs, to promote good governance and prevent corruption. Contextual traps encompass five variables classified as political, legal, social, cultural and economic. Section Two discusses organisational processes of NGOs. This section is split into three subsections. Subsection One conceptualises current practices that facilitate good governance and corruption prevention. These are composed of three strategic actions, including civic empowerment, civic advocacy, and civic oversight, emerging from the data. Subsection Two presents organisational constraints on NGOs, including management and leadership constraints, corruption and governance constraints, and financial constraints. Subsection Three demonstrates the outcomes derived from the strategic actions of NGOs. Section Three describes impacts perceived by participants in this study.

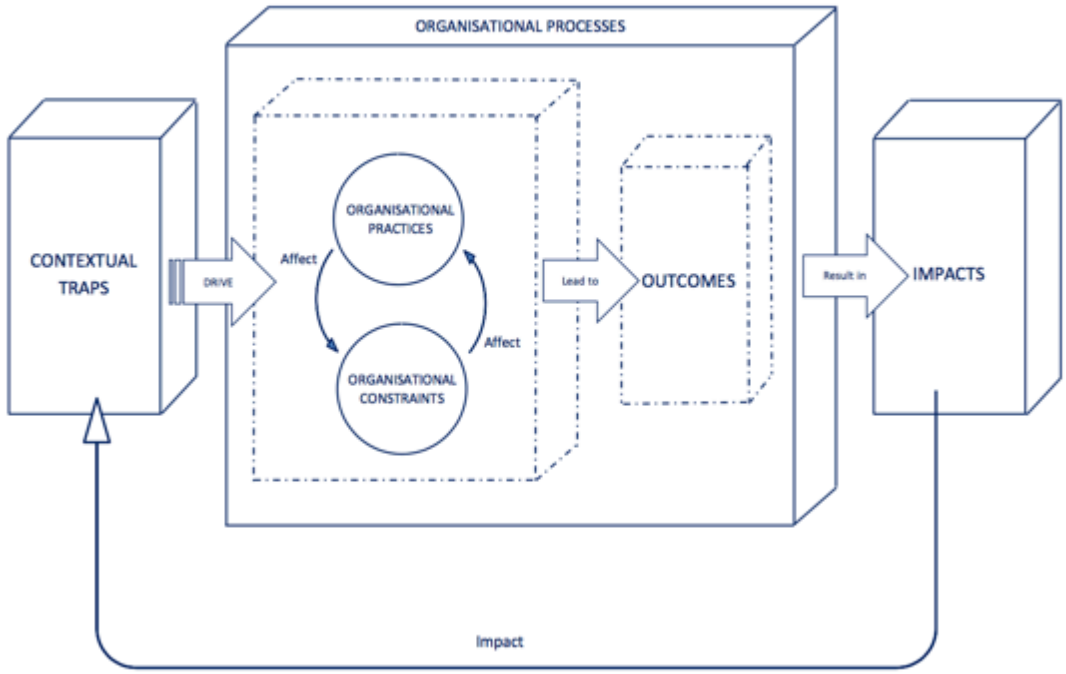
Part Two, grounded in the data, introduces a proposed framework (s): an integrative 3Is approach to corruption prevention. The framework (s) is developed by incorporating the 3Is (Integrated and Intensified Intervention) into the framework (p): problems of the current practices of NGOs, aimed at addressing these problems, improving practices, and thereby reducing corruption. As such, this part basically explains how the intervention of the 3Is helps address these objectives. This part contains three sections. Section One discusses organisational reinforcement of NGOs; Section Two provides descriptions about work reinforcement of NGOs; and Section Three is concerned with promoting institutional recognition and support for NGOs.

4.2. Framework (p): Problems of NGO Current Practices

This part presents problems associated with the current practices of NGOs. The problems are conceptualised into a framework (p). The framework consists of three interrelated dimensions, illustrated as boxes, representing contextual traps

(corruption), and NGO organisational processes and impacts (Figure 12). As illustrated, the arrows represent their connections and influences. The left box represents contextual traps; the big middle box, with its subordinate boxes and circles, represents NGO organisational processes; and the box on the far right represents impacts.

Figure 12: Framework (p): Problems of NGO current practices



The contextual traps act as drivers that generate the increase in corrupt tendencies and pose hurdles to corruption prevention efforts. It also represents the surrounding environment that generates opportunities and constraints to the operational space for NGOs, and 'more or less' is affected by their current practices. The contextual traps are made up of five interrelated environmental variables; namely: political, legal, social, cultural and economic. The organisational processes are embedded with two dash-dotted boxes. The first box contains two subordinate circles, representing organisational practices and organisational constraints. Organisational practices consist of three core strategic actions—civic empowerment,

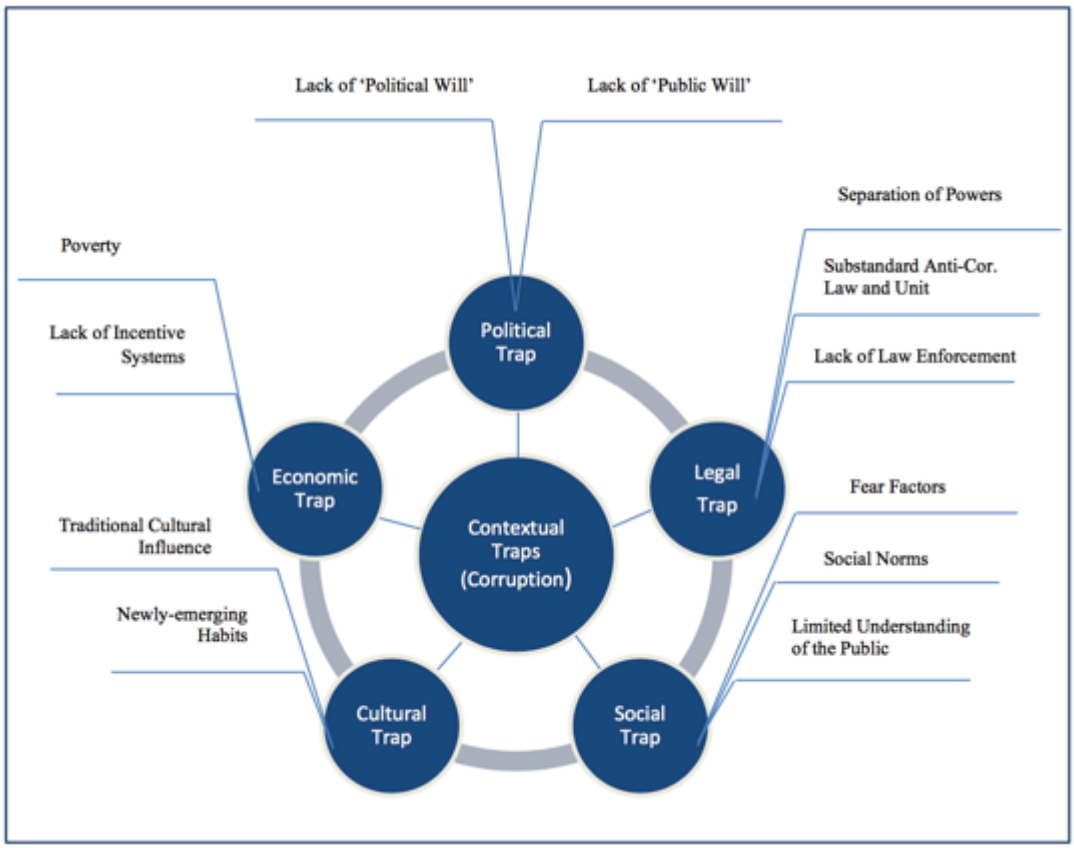
civic advocacy, and civic oversight. Organisational constraints are composed of three components, encompassing the management and leadership constraint, the corruption and governance constraint, and the financial constraint. These strategic actions, along with their embedded components, work together to produce outcomes, as shown in the second dash-dotted box. The box on the far right represents the impacts that result from the organisational processes. As is illustrated in the framework, the organisational processes 'more or less' influence contextual traps, as shown by the elbow arrow.

The rest of this part unpacks these three fundamental dimensions with their embedded components and elements by putting them into three different but interrelated sections. Section One discusses the contextual traps. Section Two describes the organisational processes of NGOs. Finally, section Three presents impacts perceived by participants in this study.

4.2.1. Contextual Traps

Since corruption is endemic (Transparency International, 2015), a key element to better comprehension of corruption practiced in Cambodia is to look at every angle of the contextual conditions of society. The analysis of corruption would be incomplete without looking into these overall contexts. According to fieldwork data, the widespread nature of corrupt transactions in Cambodia, perceived by NGOs who participated in this study, is strongly connected to five contextual traps, including political, legal, social, cultural and economic (Figure 13). I called these 'traps' because these contextual variables are contributing not only to the increase in corrupt practices, but are also limiting the extensive, effective intervention and participation of independent democratic institutions, such as NGOs, media and the general public, in corruption prevention efforts. This section discusses these assumptions and how they lead to the prevalence of corrupt practices in Cambodia.

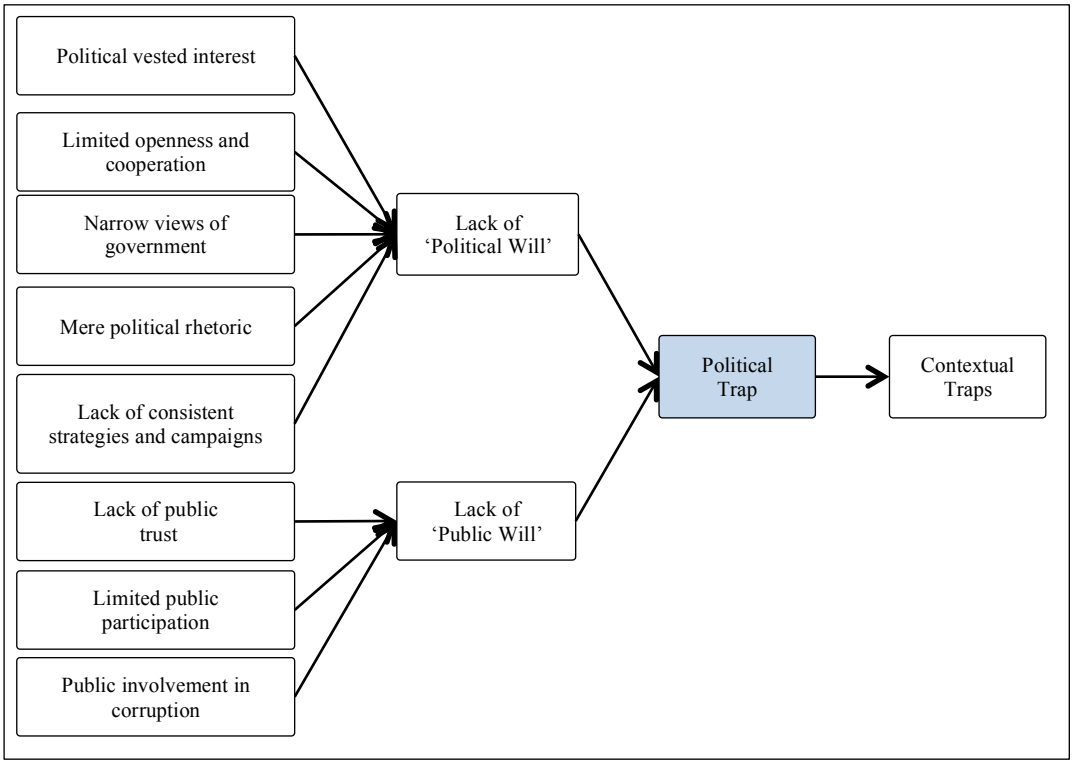
Figure 13: Conceptualising corruption in Cambodia



4.2.1.1. Political Traps

According to the data, among the five contextual variables, the political trap is the foremost driver which contributes to the pervasiveness of corrupt practices in the Cambodian public sector. It is a principal driver that leads to the intensity of corrupt tendencies. From the perspectives of participants in this study, political trap emerged from the integration of two critical categories, including lack of 'political will' among elite officials to fight against corruption, and lack of 'public will' among the general public to actively participate in corruption prevention endeavours (Figure 14).

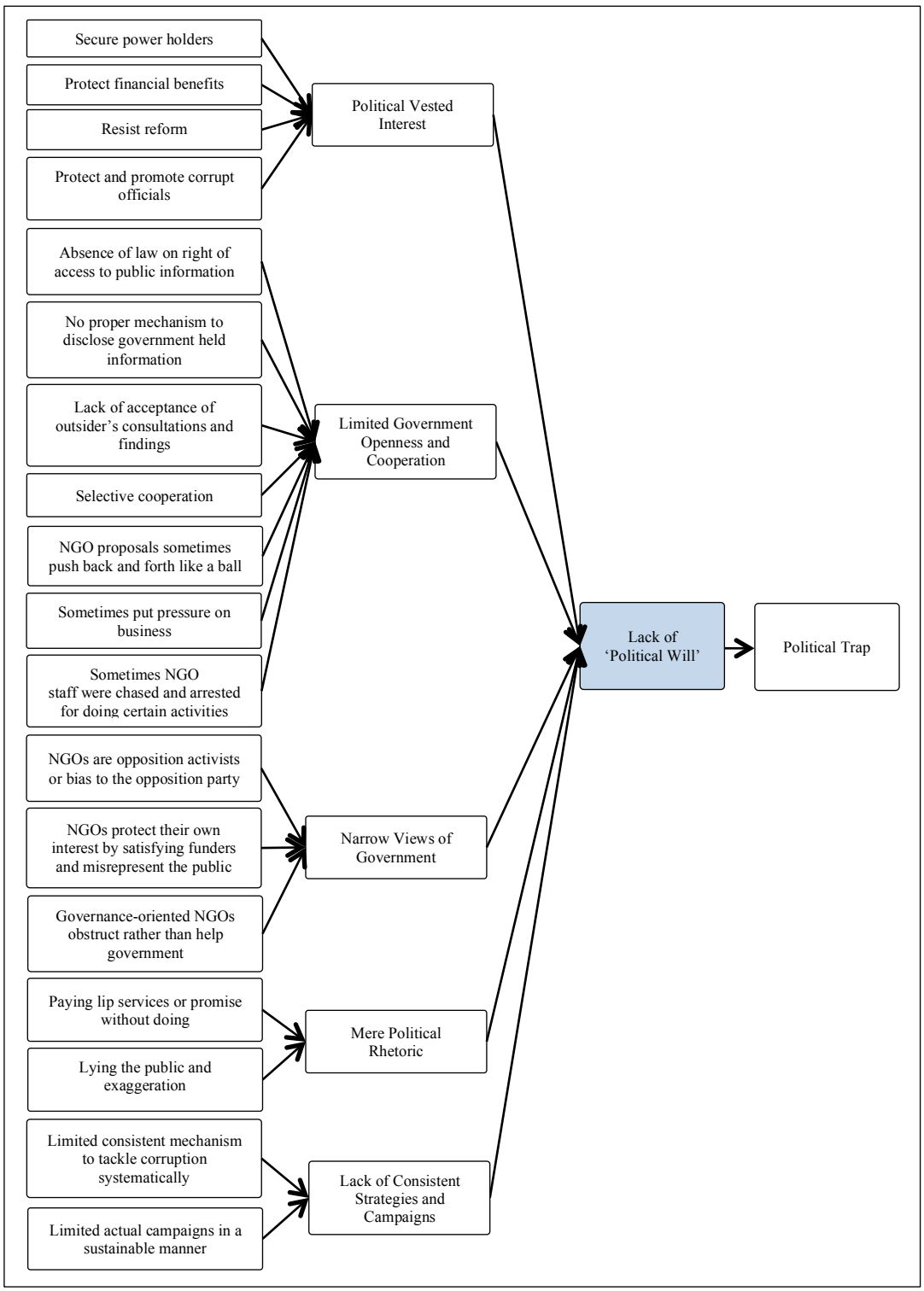
Figure 14: The connection between political context and corruption



Lack of 'Political Will'

The analysis suggests that lack of 'political will' to fight corruption refers to the 'lack of concrete political decisions and actions made by political elites to fight corruption in a systematic and sustainable manner'. 'Political will' is the foremost precondition to effectively fight corruption. Indeed, without political will government strategies to fight corruption will not be effective. This is because, as the data suggest, lack of 'political will' not only generates the growth of corrupt behaviours but also obstructs civil society participation (including NGOs) in corruption prevention. According to the analysis, the lack of 'political will' is composed of five sub-categories: (a) political vested interest; (b) limited openness and cooperation from state actors; (c) narrow views of state actors toward civil society organisations, (CSOs) particularly those that work on governance or democracy; (d) a mere political rhetoric of the state actors; and (e) lack of consistent strategy and campaign (Figure 15). These are discussed in detail below.

Figure 15: The connection between political will and corruption



Political Vested Interest

In this study, political vested interest refers to 'decisions and actions

undertaken to safeguard the interests of the ruling elites and their affiliates, and to maintain, control, or influence a decision or an action, or to resist changes'. According to the data there are two main factors identified by the interviewees that connect political vested interest to lack of 'political will'. The first is money and the second is power. The two are closely connected to one another. Money-power and power-money is a cyclical lifecycle. In this context, money makes people power and, vice versa, power makes people money. This is apparently true where the governing system of a country remains weak. The following were some reasons participants in this study mentioned about the relationships between money-power, power-money and political vested interests. As seen below, Participant 9 and 14 stated that:

> *If government is transparent, open and enforces the mechanisms as it has created, it affects on financial benefits of leaders and its ability to hold power. (P9)*

> *It's about politics, by not be transparent you're lying to people, and why you're lying to people because you want to stay on your position. (P14)*

The above participants emphasised that to safeguard their interests, as well as the interests of elite figures, the government chooses not to be transparent and open, and limits the enforcement of policies, or whatever the government has adopted. By doing this they are able to secure their benefits and power. Political benefits make the government resistant to changes, as explained by Participant 5 below:

> *Political benefits relating to corruption is money which makes it difficult to reform. (P5)*

This demonstrated that reforms can result in the loss of financial benefits that the ruling elites and party are used to earning through corruption. The loss of financial benefit means losing both public support, since the party does not have enough money to gather public support, and important resources, including finance and elite figures for its political party. If the government take actions against corrupt officials it affects the survival of its ruling party because most of them, if not all, are corrupt, as Participant 11 pointed out below:

> *High ranking officials without doubt are corrupt. (P11)*

This is perhaps the reason that the government is reluctant to make significant changes and, thus, turn a blind eye on corrupt high ranking officials because, without a doubt, part of the corrupt earnings have to be shared with the party which makes the ruling party richer than the state, as highlighted by Participant 5 in the following quote.

> *In our country political party is richer than the state [...] When the government officials go field visit to meet citizens […] rarely in the name of the state and during any festivals, such as recently, they gave to members of commune councils […] thousands or millions of dollars was in the name of the party. (P5)*

The same participant also revealed manipulation by the government from state achievements to party achievements, as a means to cheat, and, at the same time, to gather public support.

> *We can see when the government does anything it always says that they are funded by the party [ruling party] although it builds schools actually it is the state money. (P5)*

Public donation is also an attempt to safeguard its political vested interest. In this regard, Participant 4 emphasised that:

> *We see that the government officials mostly serve the people through donations and where the money comes from. Thus they need to suppress on one another. (P4)*

This simply indicated that the ruling party and its political elites earn money through corruption and, to earn more, they have to suppress one another down the hierarchy. To some extent, part of the corrupt benefits is used to donate to the public to show that they pay attention to the well-being of the public and to gather their support. Although such means sounds illegal and unacceptable, it is effective to gather public support in the current Cambodian context. Besides, the data also suggests that the connection between political vested interest and appointment of public officials within the government agencies, as indicated by Participant 7 below:

> *Promoting, assigning of some public officials is based on nepotism, not based on merit. (P7)*

In principle, giving jobs to highly educated and capable people is of great importance to ensure the smooth functioning and effectiveness of an organisation. So one can only imagine what will happen when public employees are selected and promoted without merit, as highlighted above. Again, the main reason behind such an act is to serve the interests of their political party. Further, the exaggeration of productions is also a strategy that the government uses to attract attention and support from the public. For example, Participant 8 stated that:

> *Before they say beautifully, for example, it produced one ton but it claimed that it produced seven tons, produce two, tell produce twenty. (P8)*

Interestingly, one participant in this study apparently chose not to place blame on the ruling party alone. When it comes to the benefits, everyone, or any political party, normally seems to think first about themselves and its group. As demonstrated below with a comment made by Participant 6:

> *In Cambodia, especially within the current system, to say neutrally, the ruling party or the opposition party are the same when something affects on their partisan, they protect without saying that this person right or wrong. They have to protect them first. (P6)*

To sum up, it is apparent that the ruling party pays considerable attention to the benefits of its political party, rather than the interests of the state. That is the reason why the government are reluctant to take action on corrupt officials, or make changes to the current situation, since it impacts on its political interests. This means that a policy or strategy sits nicely on paper and has not been put into real practice. This is because if the government does take action, as they have claimed, they place their power holder at risk. As such, they have to engage in political rhetoric to cheat the general public. The analysis, therefore, shows the cycle of 'money makes power and power makes money' that make them cautious about transforming the current situation, since it impacts on its financial interest and power holding.

Limited Government Openness and Cooperation

According to the data, there are a variety of perceptions associated with lack of 'political will,' and limited government openness and cooperation with non-state

actors. These range from, at the policy level for example, absence of law, on right of access to information to, at a practical level, limitations of operational space for NGO interventions. It is noticed that the draft law on right of access to information has been initiated since mid-1995. However, up to the present, the law has not been passed. There has been an attempt by the government to be transparent through the introduction of e-government; however, this is just for show as Participant 14 mentioned below:

> *The website of the ministry of justice […] it's been four years that...been telling the ministry of justice that the website should be written, in four years nothing happens; it's offline. (P14)*

This same participant indicated that lack of information disclosure not only prevents NGOs to work constructively with the government but also prevents the public to participate in social affairs, as is evident from the following quote:

> *I think that the government strategies to promote good governance is still limited because, first, the important thing is that the government is not broadly open. That allows CSOs or people to participate, access to public information. (P14)*

The above remark indicated that promoting good governance hardly achieves satisfactory results, unless they are inclusive of non-state actors in policy and decision making processes. Disclosure of government held information allows the general public to participate actively in social development and scrutinising government actions. Besides lack of disclosure of government held information, another noticeable aspect is relating to the selective cooperation of the government. This means that it is difficult for NGOs who work on governance-oriented areas, such as democracy and corruption, to gain cooperation from the government institutions compared to those that work on development-oriented issues, as seen in the following quotes:

> *Generally the work relating to governance, cooperation between NGOs and government we see that at some place they need like chilli for their stew then they think it is good. Some places they see that the chilli is too hot they say that it is not good. Because we are like a chilli […] just to put it in the stew to increase taste at some places. (P1)*

We see that the government cooperates by selecting the field […] we have difficulty to have them cooperated when we work on democracy or governance. (P10)

I say various advocacy organisations, the government see that they are not good, but if organisations that work on humanitarian ground or development, the government is happy, but because we are an advocacy actor the government is not happy with. (P11)

The above quotes emphasised that the presence of NGOs is just to demonstrate that Cambodia is a democratic society where any kind of outside democratic institutions enjoys their rights to working alongside the government sectors for national development. However, in practice, this is rarely the case. Working on sensitive issues like democracy, good governance and corruption rarely gets support from the state actors. Instead, the government institutions usually utilise various means to prevent, or delay, NGO interventions. Consider the following explanations given by some participants below:

When I meet them officially they say okay but unofficially first very bureaucracy they require permission letter, formality and so forth…lots of paper work. They say that these are the requirements, the protocol. (P7)

As in the case at Takeo province we organised a forum relating to political party finance. It was almost time to conduct the event but the authority did not give permission. First it said we could do at a festival hall and then it said it was busy at this and that. This made us difficult and the last resort we conducted the forum at the pagoda. (P13)

It is evident from the above quotes that paper work and complicated formality required by some government institutions is a tactic used by the government institutions to hinder, or at least delay, the interventions of NGOs.. Sometimes permission is pushed back and forth, unless there is a green light from the top. Besides, the dispatch of low ranking government representatives to work with NGOs is also noted by participants in this study as a lack of government cooperation:

At national level the government provided a low level representative who cannot make any decision. (P7)

These comments apparently showed that the government has no real intention to work with governance-oriented or advocacy NGOs who criticise the government's

actions or decisions. The government is only open to NGOs that follow its directions, as explained by Participant 10 below:

> *In our country the government wants to partner with CSOs that listen to the government […] for any CSO that sees some wrongdoings and does not say anything the government considers as good. (P10)*

As is evident from the above quote, government-sided NGOs are just NGOs that follow the instructions of the government and rarely make a criticism as an oversight body to make changes, or to demand for government accountability for its inappropriate actions. Government is happy to work with such NGOs. In some cases, the freedom of expression as provided by the constitution of Cambodia is prohibited. In this regard, Participant 12 highlighted that:

> *We want to express our opinion. The government in a certain situation closes the democratic square. This is a challenge that makes us unable to prepare our plan. Actually it is a close society, something like this happens too. (P12)*

This participant indicated that sometimes the government prevents the use of rights and freedom of the public, even though such rights and freedom have been stipulated in the law of the country. In extreme cases, some NGO activities received aggressive response from the state authorities, as seen in the following statements:

> *Formerly we have struggled to collect thumbprints until getting 100 ...1000. At times authorities including the communes chased to arrest. (P1)*

> *We used to get threatened. Also it is not an easy issue; sometimes we have to flee to other countries. (P3)*

Besides, the data also suggest that the government, in some cases, put pressure on the private sector to cooperate with the general public who want to express their voices, as shown in the following quote:

> *The attitude of some businesses... people from the provinces were ordered to leave the guest houses during the night […] when Cambodia hosted the ASEAN meeting in 2013-14. They were forest activists who came to Phnom Penh to protest. Thus the authorities suppress even the businesses. (P5)*

Surprisingly, one of the big examples that polluted the cooperation

environment between NGOs and state institutions was the warning of the government leader regarding non-state sector, as mentioned by Participant 2 below:

> *Recently this year, or last year, I am not sure the prime minister said...it does not need input from CSOs; the government can do it. Just this message pollutes the cooperation from the top to the bottom. Thus the authority bans or interrupts us from operating. (P2)*

Therefore, limited openness and cooperation means the government has no determination to make changes to the current situation where they entertain. Since information is power, the limitation of public access to government held information prevents both NGOs and the general public to get actively involved in social issues and to hold the government responsible for their actions. Actions and position of government are seen by non-state actors as the lack of true 'political will' to promote good governance, which the government itself recognised as an important move to develop the nation.

Narrow Views of the Government

According to the data, there are a number of sentiments associated with the narrow views of the government towards governance-oriented NGOs expressed by participants in this study. These range from classifying NGOs as opponent activists, not recognising NGOs as development partners, NGOs protect their interests and donors, NGOs misrepresent the voices of the public, and NGOs contribute nothing of value. The following observations illustrated this further:

> *Generally all organisations, not just me, that their work relating to human rights, various laws concerning social affairs mostly they [government] consider as an obstruction or as an opponent. (P1)*

> *It seems that the government has no real will to push that issue or to bear real fruit. It is a difficult thing when we work and we see some problems and we raise that problems to the government, it sees us as an opponent actor. (P10)*

Such a view of the government on NGOs is more than a lack of cooperation; instead, it is a deterrence constraining NGOs to work rigorously, as Participant 7

stated below:

> *Political tendency, this is a very big issue when we meet them to tell that we are going to do research, to do advocacy or whatever, they say that are you supporting the opposition party. Just pick up the word opposition party to put in the front, people shrink like pupae. (P7)*

As is described, this participant pointed out that in the current situation in Cambodia the general public, as well as NGOs, are afraid of being painted openly as an opposition activist. Although sometimes NGOs are not called an opposition activist directly, the government accuses them of bias to the opposition party, as Participant 3 highlighted below:

> *We know the government, any organisations that work on advocacy, human rights, corruption the government wraps up and accuses them of bias to the opposition party. (P3)*

Besides labelling NGOs as an opponent or bias to the opposition party, sometimes the government accuses CSOs of attacking the government (within the Cambodian context, CSOs and NGOs are frequently used interchangeably by some individuals) to protect their interests by satisfying donors. Examine the following remarks:

> *Sometimes the government think that CSOs are those who insult the government; CSOs insult the government to satisfy donors, something like that. (P13)*
>
> *In general, the government thinks that NGOs consider only about their own interests, or there are donors behind to push. (P9)*
>
> *The government attacks us that the organisation is not independent, as an organisation that serves foreigners. (P4)*

Therefore, the government does not see that NGOs represent the voices of the public, and seek to serve the public. The government warns that NGOs exist to protect their own interests, and serve foreign interests, as highlighted by Participant 9 below:

Government does not see that NGOs are the voices of the people or not reflect what people need. (P9)

Such views from the government seemed to upset NGOs because of what they have been trying to do; they are not receiving any attention and support, rather they have been accused of obstructing and opposing the government. Participant 1 explained this as follows:

We work to serve citizens, to share with them. Instead of receiving good deeds from citizens and they [government] return back to NGOs as not good. (P1)

Mere Political Rhetoric

Lack of 'political will' of the government has been shown by way of playing with mere political rhetoric. Based on the data, mere political rhetoric refers to a style of political communication attempting to gather the favour of the public by manipulating, persuading or pleasing and, in some instances, by lying and exaggerating. Paying lip service, saying but not actually doing, is a political device used to draw public attention. This device is commonly used by government officials within the Cambodian context. It is sometimes not only used to attract support from within the national community, but also to attract attention and support from the international community, as one participant in the study pointed out below:

The government just do to show international community but it does not do to make positive changes. (P1)

The above example is important to understand the way public bureaucrats and politicians are employed to attract favour and support, although they have no real determination to turn their words into actual actions. Political rhetoric appears to be a common working process which allows the government to win more support since knowledge of the public is still low and, at the same time, they lack information to assess the government actions and their rhetoric. Specifically, according to the data, there are three major issues relating to political rhetoric. The first is promising but not delivering, as some participants expressed below:

Sometimes we see that what the government say in public such as laws, speeches or whatever they broadcast on TV is good, that we want to eradicate corruption, but it is understood that it is just a lip service. (P9)

They have promised but they do not do and if they have promised and cannot do is okay, explain to people, but they do not explain. (P8)

Political will refers to the fight against corruption that have support from leaders, very strong support. It is not just saying to be free from responsibility, and the will refers to openness, push and taking actions. (P3)

The above participants demonstrated that, through broadcast media or speeches, the government usually explains very nicely that it attempts to combat corruption but it takes no actual actions on corrupt practices within its administration. Corruption continues to exist with no sign of going down. Second, to gain political benefits the government hides its wrongdoings and lies from the public, as expressed by Participant 14 below:

It's all about politics [...] you're lying to people and why you're lying to people because you want to stay in your position. (P14)

The above quote showed that in order to stay in power, public bureaucrats or politicians cheat the public. This seems workable for the current situation because people lack information about government projects and knowledge about governance issues. As such, the government is not concerned with what they are saying. It is therefore noticeable that paying lip service remains a powerful weapon for public officials to attract favour and support from the public. Third, sometimes the government plays with political rhetoric by exaggerating what they have done, or produced, as pointed out by Participant 8 below:

Before they say beautifully, for example, it produced 1 ton but they claimed that they produced 7 tons, produced 2 tell produced 20. (P8)

Therefore, it can be concluded that when the government has no political will, whatever they say remains just mere political rhetoric, and vice versa, when the government plays with political rhetoric it has no political will. As is described above, paying lip services, or making promises but not following through, and the use of exaggeration, are seen to be employed by the government officials. No

concrete actions have been taken to improve the situation or to make positive changes.

Lack of Consistent Strategies and Campaigns

The data also suggest that a lack of consistent strategies and campaigns demonstrates the lack of 'political will' to fight against corruption. This means that the war against corruption is not only presented on paper or heard in speeches, but decisions must be made and actions have to be taken in a consistent and sustainable manner, without which the fight against corruption is just a mere political rhetoric, as discussed earlier. As is demonstrated by the label, this subcategory includes the lack of consistent strategies, and the lack of consistent campaigns, to combat corruption in a systematic and sustainable way.

The creation of the anti-corruption law and unit has not fully meant that the government has real commitment to combat corruption. There are numerous criteria which need to be taken into account, such as the quality of law, the power of the anti-corruption unit to investigate corrupt practices, and sufficient resources, including a consistent strategy to attack it from the top, political elites. Absence of consistent strategies demonstrates a lack of 'political will' to address this social problem, as the following participant denoted:

> *I don't see a clear strategy from the government; I don't see a clear strategy saying that we are against corruption. I can see that there are some initiatives I see that there is an anti-corruption unit [...] it's not really dealing with the corruption in the whole system. (P14)*

The above example showed that the government has not become involved in solving corruption by setting up clear and concrete approaches. The government strategies at the present are in their early stages. Unless the government is well prepared and gets ready to attack the whole system, it will bear no fruit from its endeavours. Few actions on corruptors, or actions taken only on low corruption officials, also mean that the government has no real will to fight against corruption. Note remarks made by some participants below:

The government want to crackdown on low level officials, such as teachers, police officers on the streets but the higher levels that have the bigger level of corruption, the amount of corrupt money is not just 5 or 10, but thousands of dollars. The government does not pay attention to eradicate such system. (P9)

I see from time to time there is one or two officers in the news but it's still on the basic. (P14)

The above examples indicated that the actions of the government to curb corruption are at the basic level. A few corruptors were punished; however, this does not mean that the government is determined to fight against corruption. The main reason that the government is reluctant to take action against corruptors is because those who engaged in corruption are mostly high ranking and powerful government bureaucrats and politicians, as Participant 3 highlighted below:

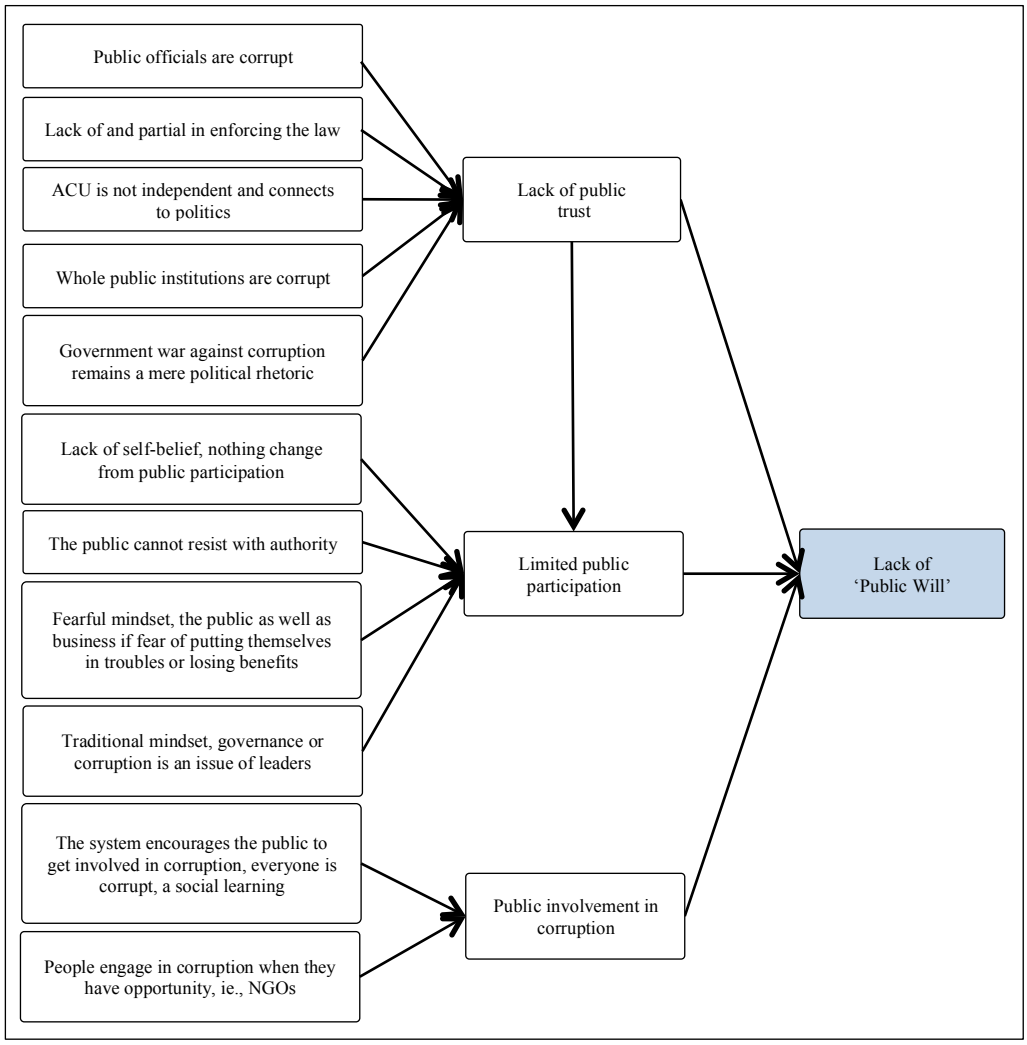
Corruption in Cambodia is complicated, intertwined and relating to powerful officials […] Thus various measures seem to be done in a reluctant manner. (P3)

To sum up, there are five main elements that result in the lack of 'political will' of the government in the fight against corruption. The first and leading factor is political vested interest. This is strongly associated with holders of political power and financial benefits. The second mainly connects to the level of government openness and cooperation with relevant stakeholders. The results found that the government-held information is closed, and there is limited cooperation of the government with non-state actors. The third element relates to the view of the government towards CSOs. The government often accuses NGOs of playing their roles as an opposition activist and obstructing government endeavours, rather than helping them. Fourth the government employs political rhetoric to cheat the public. They usually make promises but do not take concrete action. Finally, the government lacks a consistent, systemic and sustainable strategy and campaign to tackle corruption. One of the major reasons behind the lack of 'political will' of the government to fight against corruption, or to make changes to the current situation, is to protect its benefits, both politically and financially. The data suggest that the lack of 'political will' to fight against corruption strongly influences the lack of 'public will', details of which will be discussed below.

Lack of 'Public Will'

Alongside the lack of 'political will' to fight against corruption sits the lack of 'public will' in corruption prevention efforts. According to the data, the lack of 'public will' refers to the idea that the public lack interest in participating in preventing corrupt practices, such as reporting and complaining against corruptors. This also includes the involvement of the public and business in corrupt instances due to their lack of trust in the government institutions. Lack of 'public will' emerged through the integration of three categories, namely lack of public trust, limited public participation in corruption prevention, and public involvement in corrupt practices (Figure 16).

Figure 16: The connection between public will and corruption



Lack of Public Trust

In a system where public bureaucrats and politicians do not lead by example and public institutions are rampaged by corruption and nepotism, the general public lacks trust in the whole government system. According to the analysis, this includes, for example, government officials engage in corrupt transactions, lack of law enforcement, and that ACU is not independent and connects to politics, and is impartial in enforcing the law. One of the major factors that leads to the lack of public trust in the government system is the connection between ACU and politics, as noted by some participants below:

> *The importance is ACU if this agency is independent with no connection to politics, […] If it is connected to politics […], it leans to one side, it is impossible, it is not better, it is not credible. This makes citizen lack of trust. (P1)*

This participant demonstrated that when the ACU is connected to politics, actions and decisions of this unit are usually made to benefit its political affiliates and groups, and, conversely, impose sanctions on those who are not, as the following participants indicated:

> *The work of ACU, we also see that it only takes actions against the corrupt officials who have no political link that make no shaking to its political party […] or they are not the focal person of the political party but if […] affects on the focal persons, or affiliates, which weakens the political party it can be ordered to postpone. (P6)*

> *The arrest is unlikely to be fair. Some groups that should be arrested it arrests, some groups that it should not arrest, it lets it be. Actually it is a selective arrest/discriminating arrest. (P12)*

As is evident from the above examples, the actions of the government and the ACU are ineffective as they punished a corruption official who does not have strong political links, but they tolerated other corrupt officials who are their affiliates. Such actions and decisions were judged by participants in this study as *'selective actions'*. This results in the notion that the public not only loses trust towards the anti-corruption body, but also the whole governing system of the country.

Another important factor contributing to the lack of public trust towards the

governance system of the government is related to the inconsistency between the spirit of law and actual implementation. For example, Participant 7 emphasised that:

> *The theory and practice must be the same, if they put together there will be no problem, but not the theory one side, the stipulated law is implemented other ways and the practice to the other, thus people will lose trust. (P7)*

The above participant made clear that as long as the theory and practice are separate the situation cannot be enhanced, and, at the same time, it will also make the public lose trust towards the implementing agencies. Likewise, paying lip service may also result in the lack of trust towards government institutions as Participant 5 pointed out below:

> *If the authorities come to say is good, and they do not do as what they said, people lose trust. (P5)*

It is therefore obvious that inaction by the government to control corruption, and its involvement in corrupt practices and the like, set bad examples for the whole society. This makes the public lack trust in the governance system and, thus, results in limited public participation in resisting corruption.

Limited Public Participation

Lack of public trust toward the government apparatus contributes to limited public participation in the crusade against corruption. One noticeable aspect that leads to public distrust is the loss of self-belief among the general public and this limits their participation in the effort to reduce corrupt instances. With relation to the actual experiences of the public and what they see routinely practiced in society, they seem to believe that their participation in any corruption reduction endeavour would not have any influence, make any positive changes, or help to improve the current situation. Participant 7, for example, pointed out that:

> *Some people said there will be nothing changed from that meeting, it remains the same, do not need to join, take the time for listen to music or play card is better. (P7)*

There were many disseminations but asked how many people pay attention to information broadcasted on radios, or TV, how many people read leaflets? How many watch a series movie, how many [people] talk about movie stars, gossip magazines. (P7)

As seen above, people are not interested in social issues because they think they will have no influence on the current situation from the knowledge gained, or from their participation in meetings or any education programmes. This is not limited to broadcast or print media; indeed, the general public also show a lack of interest in attending any event, such as public forums or workshops and meetings, no matter whether they are organised by the state or non-state institutions.

The data also show the connection between lack of public participation and fear. In the current contextual situation people still have a fearful mindset. The fearful perception of the public discourages them from participation because sometimes 'white can be turned to black and vice versa'. Consider the sentiment expressed by Participant 8 below:

Because in our social context citizens still fear, dare not to and do not want to because there is no result from participation. (P8)

In addition, data also suggest that limited knowledge of the public restrains their participation as well. This leads to the notion that social affair, or good governance, is the issue or responsibility of the leaders. It is nothing to do with them. Note remarks offered by Participant 7:

People understand that good governance is the issue for the big leaders, but in fact the issue is for all. (P7)

Participation from people is a challenge for NGOs, government or any sector, it is a big issue but what shall we do, their education is limited, lack of trust is still huge, what level of social justice. (P7)

Another key element which discourages the public to participate in social affair is the traditional mindset of the public that the poor and powerless people are by no means able to resist the wealthy and public officials who are believed to be more powerful. Such a perspective holds strongly within the mindset of the people, as one of the participants in this study pointed out below:

They [the public] still think that they cannot resist with the authority. […] such mind set remains. (P8)

This is because experience teaches them that, within this social setting, justice is only reserved for the rich and powerful people, since money can 'talk'. Resisting those in authority is more likely to put themselves at risk, as Participant 1 indicated below:

Today those who provide information might be end up with crime relating to defamation […] although I am a witness there is no chance to win because the accused is a minister, for example. They are wealthy and have power. (P1)

Being a witness, or a whistle-blower, does not end with who loses and who wins. They may end up as a crime of defamation, for example. A Khmer idiom refers to this as *'sok min sok yuo chor phnov mok tbiet kleak,'* which literally means putting chor phnov (sticky glue fruit) under one's armpit. This means that people do not bring trouble onto themselves. As discussed earlier, good governance is an issue for leaders, they still think that it is not their problem. If they attempt to get themselves involved with it, such as reporting about corrupt officials which they believe is not their problem, this is just like putting chor phnov under their armpit. Chor phnov is just like glue stick, thus putting it under their armpit is never easy. Besides, lack of proper mechanisms also discourages the public to participate. At present there is no proper channel which assists people to actively participate in social affairs. For example, Participant 10 claimed:

The government has not prepared accurate mechanisms for participation from CSOs or people, the mechanism is clearer for commune/sangkat because it has provided in the law. During the commune council meetings people can participate publicly, attend to listen, ask or give opinions. (P10)

The above remark indicated that there is no concrete established mechanism to facilitate CSOs, or the general public, to participate in social affairs. The mechanism is clearer for local administration since there is a channel provided by law that the public is able to attend meetings at subnational levels. It is also noticeable from the analysis that unreliable mechanisms may distract the public from participating. The current legal and administrative system does not guarantee that

those who report on certain issues will receive a proper response by the state authorities. The statement by Participant 4 addressed this:

> *The state system if we are in trouble we do not have any mechanism that we trust, that we are warm that we will get justice or protection. For example, the court is not independent. We file a complaint to police, sometimes police receives, sometimes police does not accept and we do not know how to do, and police accepts but does not investigate. (P4)*

The above excerpt demonstrated that lack of a trustworthy mechanism for people to make complaints discourages them to participate. In a similar vein, the absence of an administrative complaint handling mechanism is also a major challenge to promote good governance. Participant 5 pointed out that:

> *We do not have administrative law to sue the officials who do not fulfil their functions. We do not know where to sue; for example, someone knows the officials that do not fulfil their functions, the official who does not make them a birth certificate, then where they should complaint to. (P5)*

This indicated that lack of administrative law, as well as administrative complaint handling mechanisms, not only makes it difficult for the general public to lodge its compliant to the right competence authority, but this is also a challenge for the NGOs who assist them. Although people are able to lodge their complaints to the general court, the process is complicated and takes times.

Public Involvement in Corruption

Public involvement in corrupt transactions implies the absence of the will of the general public in the fight against corruption, and thus is responsible for the widespread corruption in Cambodia, although the data suggest that the current social context encourages them to get involved. As seen below, Participant 8 put this simply:

> *[…] even cyclos, motor taxis also corrupts everyone can describe. (P8)*

This short quote illustrated the extent of corruption in the Cambodian context, as the participant conveyed that corrupt practice is not only engaged in by the public

authority, but also even very simple people, such as cyclos [tri-cycle taxis] and moto taxis. In a similar vein, one organisation conducted a survey concerning the provision of public services during its public forum and highlighted that every respondent explained that they engaged in corrupt acts. Note the following excerpt:

> *We survey from our forums with people […] all people have experiences, they always pay over as a thankful pay, but when we asked whether they have experiences paying over the official fees. All responded that they did. (P2)*

This example indicated that the level of knowledge of the public relating to the roles and responsibilities of government officials, and the rights of the public itself, is low. They appeared to think that the extra fees they paid to the officials providing public services to them were just money expressing thanks. In fact, they have engaged in bribing the authority for services provided. Surprisingly, even NGOs that work on governance issues also get involved in corruption, as explained by some participants below:

> *The problem that we have seen is that there are some NGOs also corrupt. (P3)*
>
> *There are many NGOs that have been found out that there is internal corruption among NGOs themselves. […] there are many NGOs that cheat donor funds to enrich themselves, it exists the same. (P6)*

The above expressions are absolutely right; NGOs who declare themselves as actors to promote good governance and fight corruption, but who are also themselves involved in corrupt practice, are ultimately worse than those NGOs who do not. Corrupt practices committed by NGOs can start simply, as indicated by Participant 11 below:

> *When we invite speakers [public official speakers] we give them souvenirs and so forth and sometimes we pay them petrol. […] Another when we ask permission to open an organisation, we have to pay; there are middlemen and something like that. (P11)*

As is evident from the above quote, NGOs are involved in corruption, from as simple an act as giving a souvenir or paying for a government representative's petrol that they invite to attend their project activities, to more complex acts, such as asking

permission and opening an organisation. Sometimes NGOs engage in corrupt misconducts by colluding with the public authority they collaborate with. Note the following explanation given by Participant 6:

> *Recently we heard that there is an NGO, along with the ministry of health, is corrupt until the WTO declare cut aid with the ministry of health because the NGO is corrupt, [NGO] that works with the bidding of mosquito net to attack malaria and corruption amount to tens of thousands of dollars, that NGO is detected and order to repay the money immediately. (P6)*

This raises the idea of how NGOs can demand that the government be incorruptible and accountable for their actions when NGOs themselves engage in corruption. In addition, the position of NGOs to stay outside the framework of law also shows that NGOs are not committed and ready to fight against corruption. Consider the following sentiment claimed by Participant 6 below:

> *As far as I remember ACU also proposes that the NGO officials should also declare their assets, the director of an NGO and NGOs immediately reject that proposal, NGOs themselves want to stay outside the law. (P6)*

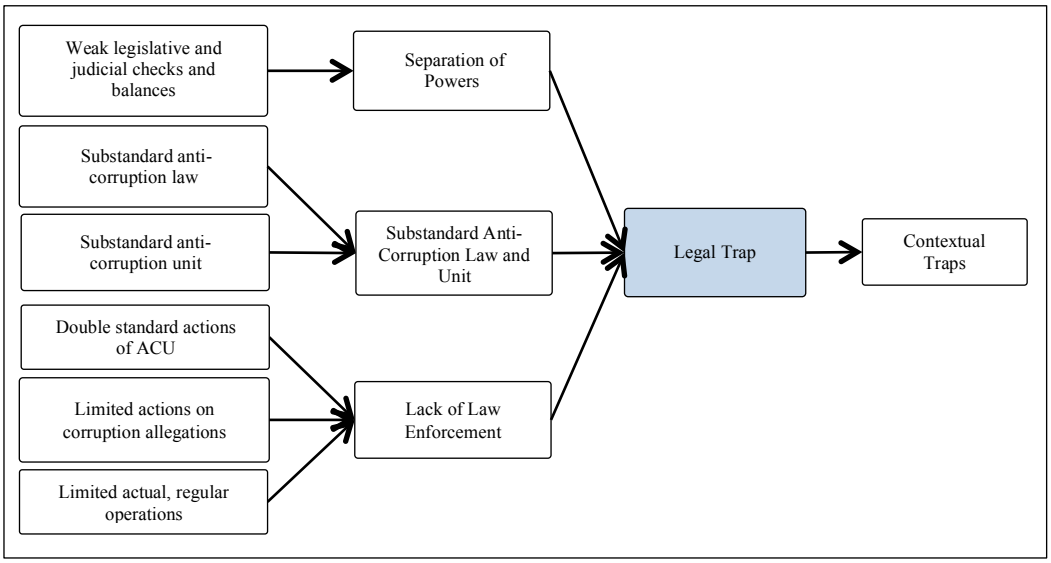
In short, apart from the lack of 'political will', the lack of 'public will' plays its part in widespread corrupt practices, and is also responsible for making corruption become a way of life in Cambodia. Lack of 'public will' to fight against corruption is shown in the form of a lack of public trust in the government system to deal with corruption in its administration, lack of public participation in social issues, and the involvement of the public in corrupt practices.

4.2.1.2. Legal Trap

Grounded in the data, legal trap refers to the 'legislation that is deliberately created or not created and implemented or not implemented to serve the interest of one group rather than the general interest of the society'. Legal trap is comprised of the integration of three emerging categories, including the separation of power, sub-standard anti-corruption law and unit, and lack of law enforcement (Figure 17). Legal trap also associates with, and tends to be strongly influenced by, the lack of 'political will' of top political elites within the government apparatus intending to

leave loopholes in the legal framework during the creation and enforcement of the legislation, so that they are able to interpret it for the benefit of its group.

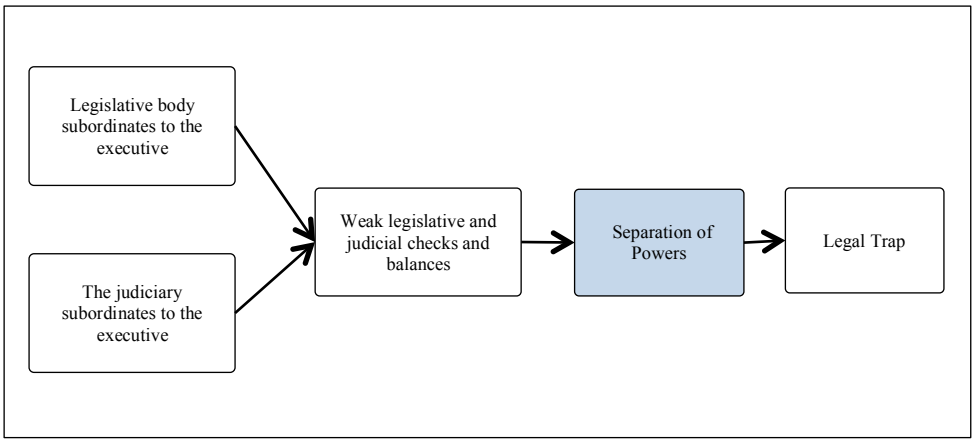
Figure 17: The connection between legal context and corruption



Separation of Powers

In principle, the separation of power within a state—legislative, executive and judicial, is to guarantee the independent use of power of the three bodies, to guarantee that no individual body is subordinate to another, and to guarantee that the three bodies have equal power to mutually check each other to make sure that the power is used for the interest of the nation as a whole, not for the interest of any particular group. In Cambodia, according to the constitution, the supreme law of the nation adopts this principle of separation of power. However, according to the data in this study, this is not the case. Both the legislative and judicial bodies are subordinate to the executive. The legislative obviously has no power to play its role to check the executive use of state power; and the judiciary lacks power and is not independent and is unable to implement laws impartially to protect the general interests. All powers appear to be the under control of the executive alone (Figure 18). This shows a strong link to the prevalence of corruption and abuse of power of the government officials.

Figure 18: The connection between separation of powers and corruption



Weak Legislative and Judicial Checks and Balances

Weak legislative and judicial checks on the executive body open the way for the government to do something arbitrarily. Owing to the absence of intensive check-ups of their actions, public officials do not care much about promoting good governance, or about corruption issues and public concerns. At least one participant in this study seemed to be very interested in the connection between weak legislative and judicial checks and balances, and corruption. Examine the following quote expressed by Participant 9:

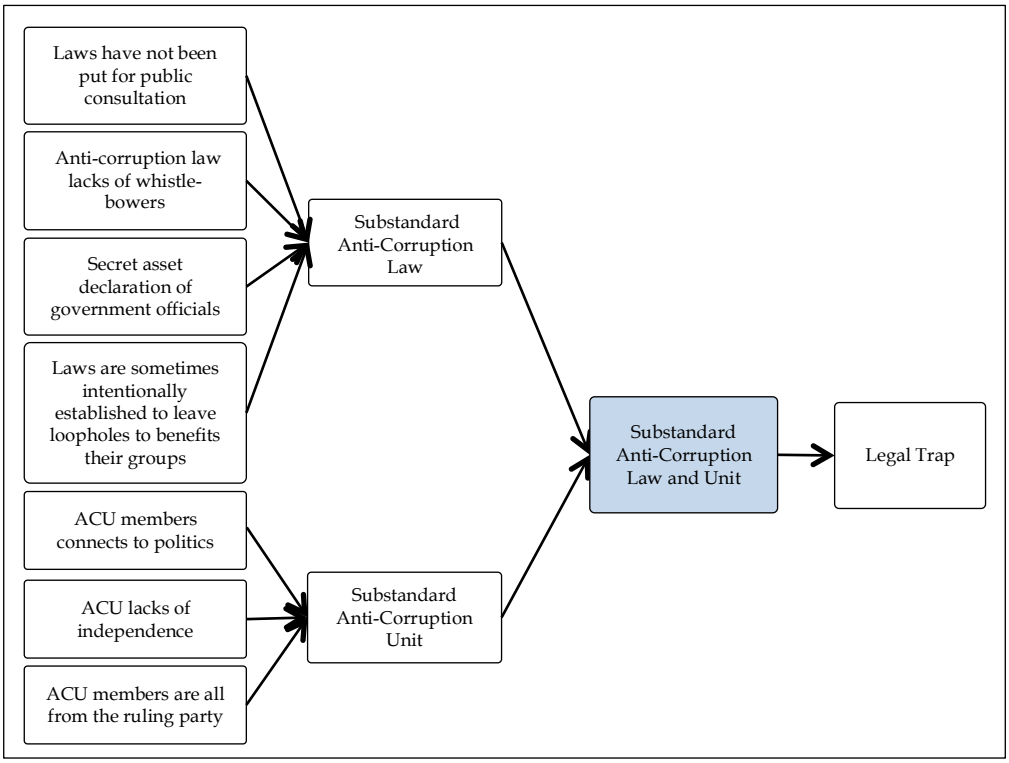
> *We talk about our country, we see that legislative has no power to check and balance or to monitor executive and judiciary do not have power to monitor the executive, the government. This means that today the government decides everything; no one monitors or protects the public interest and people's interests. (P9)*

The weakness present in the legislative and judicial system means they are unable to check and balance the power exercised by the executive which leads to the abuse of public interests and, as such, contributes to the increase in corrupt tendencies.

Substandard Anti-Corruption Law and Unit

The fight against corruption would be fruitless in the absence of the anti-corruption law and anti-corruption body. Similarly, the creation of anti-corruption law and an anti-corruption body, which is substandard, would also be ineffective. Based on the perspectives of participants in the study, the lack of 'political will' is shown by the adoption of the anti-corruption law and unit under an acceptable international standard (Figure 19). Besides, there has been no sign of an intention to propose new bills, and there has been a delay to adopting some essential laws, such as administrative law or law on the access of information, as referred to by some participants.

Figure 19: The connection between substandard ACL and ACU and corruption



Substandard Anti-Corruption Law

Substandard anti-corruption law is a sign of the lack of 'political will' of top political figures in the fight against corruption. Grounded in the data, this basically starts with the adoption of the anti-corruption law without extensive consultation

from the public and relevant stakeholders, to deliberately leaving loopholes and creating ambiguity in the substance of the law, to the lack of protection for whistle-blowers who report on corruption, and to close asset declaration and un-independence of the anti-corruption members. For example, the following were comments made by a group of NGOs on anti-corruption law before it was enacted. Participant 1 stated that:

> *We demanded four other points to be put into the anti-corruption law […], first is relating to the members of anti-corruption Supreme national Council. It must be independent without any link to politics. Second is relating to the protection of witness in order to ensure that the witness free from any charge of crime. Third relating to the declaration of asset in the draft law […], fourth is relating to the budget package. (P1)*

However, only one of the four recommendations had been accepted and put into law. The other three, including the independence of anti-corruption members, open package of asset declaration and protection of whistle-blowers had not been taken into consideration from the state actor. This highlights the loopholes which render the anti-corruption laws ineffective. As such, asset declaration remains a loophole in the anti-corruption law, as shown in the following quotes:

> *We see that the content of anti-corruption law that requires the government officials, members of the government, members of the parliaments to declare their assets are also not effective because the declaration is in a closed package, not open. (P4)*

> *The asset was required to declare as non-universe. CSOs argued that if it is non universe, it is equal to no declaration […] Non-universe means a secret declaration. (P1)*

These comments indicated that the declaration is unlikely to be transparent and, apparently, intentionally leaves venues for corrupt officials to manipulate for their own benefit from the current contextual situation. Corruption may happen in the declaration process, or through the omission of checking up after each mandate of the officials.

Another aspect is the absence of whistle-blower protection provided in the anti-corruption law. This, without doubt, deters the general public from reporting the corruption cases they experience. This is a sign of the lack of 'political will' of top

leaders to tackle corruption. For example, article 41 of the Law on Anti-corruption reads:

> *'Defamation or disinformation complaints on corruption lodged with the Anti-Corruption Unit or judges, which lead to useless inquiry, shall be punishable by imprisonment from one month to six months and fine from one million Riel to ten million Riel.' (Law on Anti-corruption, 2010)*

This clause perhaps deliberately discourages people to report on corruption cases and obviously indicates the lack of determination of the government in the fight against corruption. The anti-corruption law may be used as a deterrent device, instead. No one would be courageous enough to make a report in a situation where the authorities and wealthy people are so powerful they can turn white into black, or black into white, and the judiciary is not independent since it subordinates to the executive power. Some NGOs consider this a great deterrence, as stated by some participants below:

> *The punishment on witnesses that report or file a complaint if they find that the complaint is not correct they will be punished, thus, who dare to sue when the court is not independent and the mechanism is not independent. (P4)*

> *In the law there are some articles encourage people to participate in reporting corruption, if not appropriately report the reporter can be jailed. (P12)*

Within the realm of legislation, another participant in this study claimed that the purpose of the creation of laws in Cambodia is to protect the ruling party and, at the same time, to put pressure on others, rather than to maintain the general interests. Participant 12 pointed out that:

> *The Kingdom of Cambodia at present likes to create laws to protect their wrongdoings. We like to create laws to establish legal ground to support wrong ground […] I see a lot, such as anti-corruption or judicial field and […] freedom of expression […] Thus the government creates laws to have a legal ground to suppress them (P12).*

This participant seemed to be more pessimistic toward the efforts of the government and the advantages of the legal framework that has shared its part to protect the social order and interests. Without the existing legal instruments,

Cambodia would not have advanced to its current state, and NGOs would not have been able to operate as they are entitled to today.

Substandard Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU)

It is undeniable to the significance of the anti-corruption agency in the fight against corruption if it is standardised. This means that the government tries their best to make this agency become truly independent, totally free from political pressure in fulfilling its functions, and powerful and resourceful in both the number of people involved and financially. However, due to the absence of the above elements, the anti-corruption agency ends up with a substandard one, and this may be a sign of the lack of 'political will' of the government towards the corruption crusade. According to the analysis of the data, the main problem of ACU is that it connects to politics. Political connection makes all members of ACU coming from the ruling party and, therefore, ACU lacks the power to perform its functions, since it receives pressure from the party. The following discussion highlights how participants in this study labelled ACU as substandard. To start with, Participant 1 explained that:

> *The importance is ACU if this agency is independent with no connection to politics [...] If it is connected to politics [...] it leans to one side, it is impossible, it is not better, it is not credible. (P1)*

This indicated that as long as the ACU connects to politics it is by no means serving the general interest and, thus, it must be serving someone or any group where they belong. As such, ACU will not fulfil its functions in an independent and impartial way; it must be bias toward its group. This is because the ACU members are all elite figures of the ruling party, as claimed by Participant 5 below:

> *The head of the ACU's is the prime minister; the compositions are all from the government because the government controls it. (P5)*

Corrupt incidences are mostly committed by government employees, with most of them belonging to the ruling party; therefore, ACU, with all of its members, also belonging to the ruling party would, more or less, get pressure from the party.

As such, its actions and decisions must, to a certain extent, be impaired by partiality since one person, or one party, cannot play its role effectively as both a player and a whistle-blower, as Participant 1 emphasised below:

> *The government cannot play alone as a referee, as a player and also as a whistle-blower. (P1)*

Adding to earlier perceptions, some participants even concluded the scenario organised by the government concerning the creation of ACU as just a show. Note arguments made by Participants 1 and 4 below:

> *The establishment of anti-corruption [...] unit is just to decorate Cambodia. It is useless and corruption continues. (P1)*
>
> *The creation of ACU we can see that it is a good image but the establishment remains under the control of the prime minister as such there is no independence. (P4)*

Besides, ACU has no real power to fulfil its functions. The work of ACU is dependent sometimes on the decisions made by the prime minister. The following quote expressed this sentiment:

> *The government official is corrupt or not corrupt sometimes it [ACU] dares not investigate; it depends on the permission from the prime minister. (P4)*

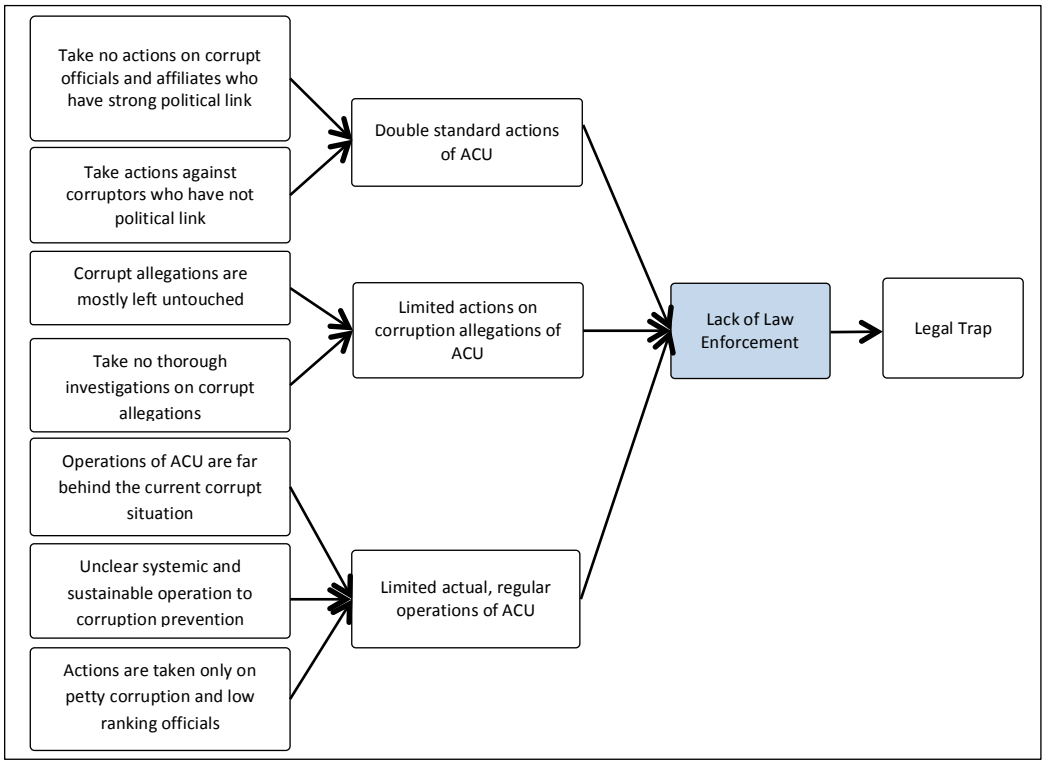
Therefore, it is evident from the analysis that the lack of 'political will' of the government to fight against corruption partly influences the creation of the anti-corruption law and unit. As is discussed above, the creation of the anti-corruption law lacks consultation from the public. The adopted law leaves loopholes in it, such as lack of protection for whistle-blowers and secret asset declaration of government officials. The ACU lacks the independence and power to perform its functions since it connects to politics.

Lack of Law Enforcement

Adding to the substandard anti-corruption law and unit, lack of law enforcement is responsible for the endemic of corrupt behaviours. Lack of law

enforcement is composed of three emerging subcategories; namely double standard actions of ACU, limited actions on corrupt allegations of ACU, and limited actual, regular operations of ACU (Figure 20).

Figure 20: The connection between law enforcement and corruption



Double Standard Actions of ACU

A major aspect of law enforcement is the double standard actions on corruptors of the ACU and the government, since it controls the unit. According to the data, double standard actions refer to the unfair treatment of one person or group against another. It means that some corruptors are punished while others who are their relatives, or important to their group or have strong affiliations to their party, are free of charge. For example, Participant 13 pointed out that:

> *The implementation of law is still in random […] I want to say that there must be no nepotism, such as because of relatives, of high ranking officials are free from charge and charge only the lower officials and so forth. (P13)*

The above participant clearly demonstrated that some people are above the

law. The law is just an instrument to be used to decide whether someone should be put on trial or not. By this the ruling party appeared to be unfair in enforcing laws. The legal instruments have been used as a shield to protect and provide benefits to one group, but also as a weapon to deter and punish the others. Examine the following examples relating to a decision made by the ACU not to punish corruptors because they are important people in their group:

> *Ministry of Economy and Finance found out that…Ministry of Social Affairs lost millions of dollars, however, without any actions taken, the government just orders to pay back the money, then it will be free from charge. Thus we see that there is no political will. (P11)*
>
> *Recently there is corruption in health sector. The money from the Global Fund amount to ten thousands, millions of dollars, indeed if other political groups maybe severe but because the ministry of health is in the same political party there is not a problem. The ACU sees that it is not serious, it can be solved. (P12)*

The above examples clearly showed that the ruling party protected its corrupt officials from being charged, although the amount of corrupt money is huge. The implementation of the anti-corruption law is biased and selective. Such actions appear to encourage the public officials to become involved in corruption because, if they get caught, they just pay back the corrupt money free of charge. If such actions continue to exist, it is seeding corrupt culture, and a culture of impunity, which will be hard to tackle.

At the same time, the participant also claimed that if this kind of corrupt crime is committed by other political members, or any of its party members that are not the focal person and do not hold a strong stance, the punishment would be severe. Note the following quote expressed by Participant 6:

> *ACU […] only takes actions against the corrupt officials who have no political link that make no shaking to its political party like (Name of a corrupt general), but not the focal person of the political party, but if the investigation on corrupt case affects on the focal persons or affiliates which weakens the political party, it can be ordered to postpone. (P6)*

This participant demonstrated the link between political vested interest and party interest. The ACU takes action against the corrupt general because he is of no benefit to its party, and will not shake or defame its party. Instead, it reveals that the

government has committed to tackling corruption to gain more support from the public. This brings to mind a Cambodian idiom: 'One arrow caught two birds'.

Limited Actions on Corruption Allegations of ACU

Limited action taken on corruption allegations also signifies the lack of law enforcement on the part of ACU to deal with corrupt practices. This means that although ACU has many complaints sent to it, it rarely takes any actual action to deal with them. In this regard, Participant 10 made the following observation:

> *We send to ACU and we also follow up. In fact, ACU never take the issue to take action but it notifies us that it has received [the complaints]. (P10)*

With very few cases, ACU did take it a step further and issued a letter to the accused to rectify its actions on receipt of reports about corrupt allegations. For example, Participant 5 spoke about the case of bicycle parking fees, where the contractor demanded fees over the signed agreement, as follows:

> *For example, about bicycle parking fee at markets, the price is 200 or 300R but in fact they take 1000R. In this case some organisations used to send the letter to the ACU, and ACU just issue a letter to the market to recheck, and the market say it does not do, and that's it but actually the market still take 1000R. (P5)*

The above example showed the lack of commitment of ACU to enforce the law, even though it appeared that its concrete actions on corrupt allegations seemed to be more effective to deter corrupt tendencies.

Limited Actual, Regular Operations of ACU

According to the data, all of the participants in this study strongly emphasised that the major cause that contributes to the widespread nature of corrupt practices is the lack of law enforcement resulting from the lack 'political will' of the government to combat corruption in a systemic and sustainable manner. For example, Participants 8 and 11 stated that:

If [Name of anti-corruption officials] hears, he is not happy. He has tried to arrest officials...dishonest officials but catch only the small fish, why not catch the big fish or he himself is also difficult. (P8)

I see that the government has arrested some public officials but there are a lot more as far as I know. Another is that it is not quite right because it catches only the small fish but not the big fish. (P11)

The above quotes implied that the work of ACU has been limited compared to the degree of corrupt practices in Cambodia. Further, its execution has been focused on low ranking officials but higher ranking officials who committed corruption have been ignored. Further to this, Participant 9 added that the operation of ACU shows a lack of commitment to remove corruption on a systematic basis, as highlighted below:

The government wants to crackdown on low level officials, such as teachers, police officials on the streets but the higher levels that have the bigger level of corruption […] the government does not pay attention to eradicate this system. (P9)

Besides the weakness of ACU in implementing anti-corruption law and its unfair arrest of corruptors for political benefit, and instead of taking action against corrupt public officials, the government protects them, and sometimes wrong-doers are promoted to hold higher positions within the government. As seen below, Participants 2 and 3 mentioned that:

We see there are many officials involved in the big issues but […] instead of punishing them it promotes those officials. (P2)

Some officials get accused from many people but three weeks after that they have been promoted to higher position or transferred to hold new position. (P3)

Regarding current law enforcement, some participants simply concluded that the actions of the government, and ACU in particular, not only encourages people to engage in corrupt transactions but also, at the same time, is breeding a culture of impunity in the country, which makes the situation more complex and difficult to deal with, as Participant 1 put it below:

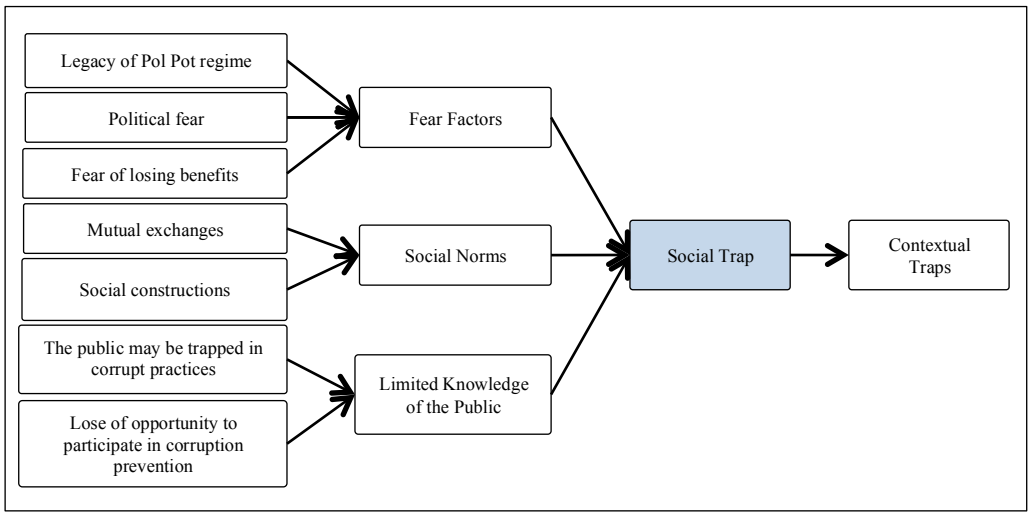
To sum up it negatively affects on order of the implementation of anti-corruption law. It pollutes the society, pollutes the culture of impunity to corrupt people. (P1)

Therefore, it is evident from the data that the lack of law enforcement is strongly influenced by the lack of 'political will' of the government to tackle corrupt practices. This is shown by the actual actions and decisions of the government when dealing with official's misconducts and corruption. As pointed out by most participants in this study, the government, as well as ACU, take no action against corrupt officials and affiliates who have strong political connections to its group, but severe action is taken against others who have no political link to its group. Corrupt allegations are not properly investigated and mostly kept untouched, without further actions. There have been no clear and consistent strategies to fight against corruption in a systemic and sustainable manner, and actions of ACU are taken only on petty corruption and low corrupt officials, not on high ranking officials.

4.2.1.3. Social Trap

According to the data, social trap refers to the social context that frames the behaviours of the public to act in a certain way. It also plays a significant part in contributing to the generation of corrupt practices. The analysis suggested that social trap emerged from the combination of three categories, including fear factor, social norms and limited knowledge of the public (Figure 21).

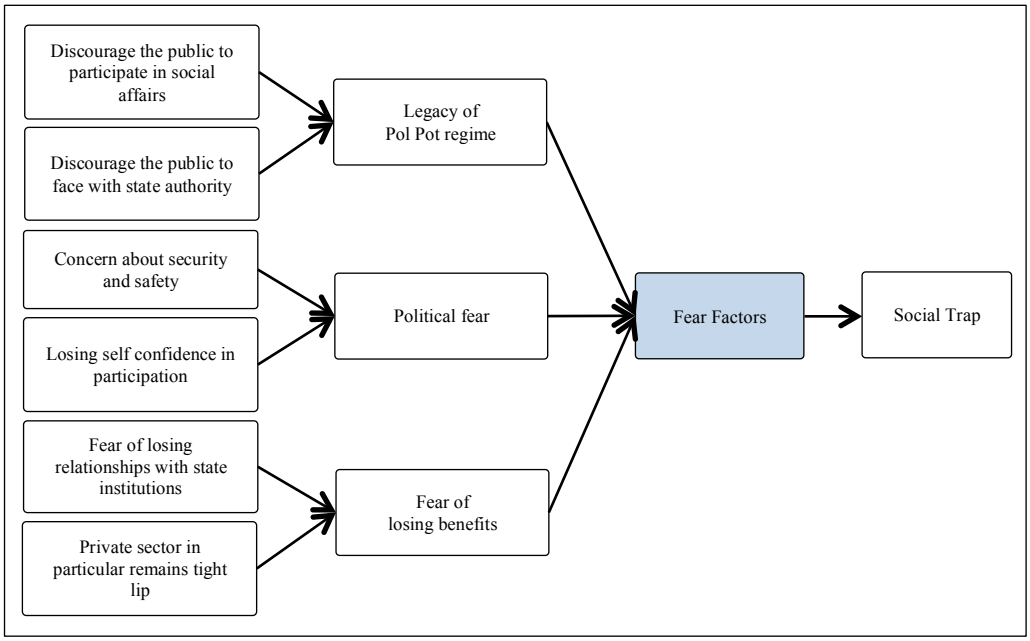
Figure 21: The connection between social context and corruption



Fear Factors

The data suggest three elements which make people become fearful: the legacy of Pol Pot regime, political pressure and fear of losing benefits (Figure 22). It is noticeable that the fear factor not only influences ordinary people, businesses and NGOs, but also government officials. Pol Pot regime makes people afraid of being confronted by authorities, or being a witness, even though they have evidence about someone's involvement in corrupt practices and other misconducts. This makes them participate less in social affairs because they want to secure their safety. Due to the current political situation, some businesses dare not resist authorities, or even advertise products with non-state media, for fear of losing their future interests. Some NGOs that previously worked on governance issues withdrew or avoided resisting with authorities for being fear of losing partnership with the government; and even the local authorities themselves dare not confront higher authorities for fear of being demoted, or removed, from their position.

Figure 22: The connection between fear and corruption



Legacy of Pol Pot Regime

The Pol Pot regime, which killed up to two million people, greatly damaged the courage of Khmer people. This 'killing field' regime has left behind a fearful mindset in people up to the present day. The following were perceptions of participants in this study with regards to how this fearful mindset influences their engagement in social affairs, particularly in relation to governance and corruption issues, although this social problem also impacts on national development and, specifically, on their livelihood. For example, Participant 7 stated that:

> *Pol Pot regime taught people to plant a deumkor (dump) tree, it means that you have to shut up, do not say anything. This issue carries over to present day even my mother when she hears me talking about advocacy, criticism or something like that, she says 'don't be too oily, it is said live or death depends on tongue'. (P7)*

This example emphasised that the Pol Pot regime discouraged the pubic to participate in social issues, especially work that affects public authority or the government, such as advocacy or governance. Increasingly, this kind of work can be more dangerous when it becomes more critical and confrontational towards public authority and powerful corruptors. Further, this same participant also highlighted that Pol Pot regime not only made ordinary people fearful, but also public officials, as demonstrated below:

> *The influence of Pot Pot regime has made a large number of people, I do not count those who are illiterate, those who literate are also the same, particularly among the public officials, teachers, health practitioners, some soldiers and policemen that used to be my classmates […], when I meet them I say I want to build a team to talk and share our experiences to the next generation, they say if you invite me to talk about that I dare not come I have to ask permission from my superiors. (P7)*

The above quote also conveyed that the Pol Pot regime not only bred a fearful mindset among the less-educated and well-educated people, but it also created an atmosphere of isolation among the public which made it difficult for them to work together to share common goals, as well as to build a collective force to work on certain issues for the best interests of the nation. Furthermore, the influence of the killing field regime not only discouraged people to participate in social affairs but,

also, parents and carers often prevented their children from getting involved out of fear for their security. Participant 5 highlighted this dilemma as follows:

> *The public is difficult when we work on some issues that affect on the authority they are not supportive, […] We do it they are okay with but if we let their children do it they take their children out of that work […] Thus, sometimes the pressure from family makes them difficult to engage in social affairs. (P5)*

This does not mean that people, especially the older generation who experienced this regime first-hand, do not support activities that bring about positive changes for the interest of the country; rather, to get involved directly in advocacy or corruption issues seems dangerous and they are scared to take part actively and openly. A fearful mindset seems to make people think that whatever they do that affects public authority will be monitored, as Participant 13 mentioned below:

> *If people write a complaint concerning some public officials there will be someone follow up something like that […] Khmer people still have a fearful mindset. (P13)*

Further, a fearful mindset forces the general public to make a decision when faced with this dilemma: whether to do something for the interests of the community or withdraw from any actions that are too direct, or confrontational, in order to secure their safety. Participant 8 put this as follows:

> *Some people still fear, do not have full confidence […] fearfulness and reluctance when they say something too direct. […] This is a fearfulness that remains... Local communities do not dare to talk much. (P8)*

Political Fear

According to the analysis, the current political environment has made the general public, CSOs, the private sector, and even civil servants, fearful. People prefer to not get involved in social issues that are sensitive since they are worried about their personal safety and family. Similarly, CSOs, for personal safety and for maintaining a good relationship with the public sector, are cautious in choosing the area to work on, or at least reduce their tone when doing advocacy tasks. The private

sector chooses not to incriminate itself for fear of something that may impact on their business. Furthermore, even the public servants are fearful of their safety, although sometimes they are not satisfied with the current system of the administration. The following quotes provide explanations for why the political environment makes the public fearful of vigorously engaging in social affairs. For example, Participant 4 made the remark that:

> *Political pressures, for example, because of our country context because of easy killing, arresting, and threatening. (P4)*

The above example demonstrated that the fearfulness of the public due to social and political conditions such as threatening, arresting and killing, deter the public from engaging in sensitive issues, such as governance or corruption. Even NGOs that work on governance-oriented issues are cautious in the way they fulfil their functions, as Participant 9 stated below:

> *We are careful in choosing the words we use and the issues we raised... Another is relating to...we do not strongly criticise that makes the government sees that we oppose it, […] if we do that we will be listed as an organisation against the government. (P9)*

The above quote inferred that the work of NGOs on promoting good governance, or preventing corruption, remains remarkably weak. For fear of being blacklisted, some NGOs are prudent about what they work on and this makes the operations of NGOs less effective and influential on the government to make positive changes. Furthermore, owing to the sensitive nature of corruption and that the current political environment is not favourable for them to work on, some NGOs withdraw. Examine the following remark made by Participant 3:

> *Some organisations that we expect they withdraw. For example, [Name of an NGO], [Name of an NGO] has portfolio against corruption, it withdraws. (P3)*

Similarly, the current social and political conditions also shape the behaviours of the private sector in taking part in the fight against corruption. In this regard, this same participant mentioned that:

Other stakeholders seem to be reluctant, they dare not stand up or be present to fight corruption […] Private sector, there has been researched and found that the major challenge that it faces is corruption. But most of them involve in corruption also because there is no choice, there are pressures for them to get involved. (P3)

The above quote clearly demonstrated that although corruption is a major challenge for doing business, private firms are by no means courageous enough to do something about it. With no other alternatives, they have to push themselves to engage in corrupt acts. Notably though, the political atmosphere not only discourages civil society and the private sector but also deters civil servants from doing something about social problems. As indicated by Participant 13 below:

Some communes when we pick up a topic relating to corruption they seem not want, they seem to be reluctant. (P13)

This indicated that political conditions have made low government officials scared. Even the topic of corruption that NGOs propose to work on, commune leaders asked for change to something that is not too direct. Beyond this, one major factor that makes low officials fearful is that they are mostly engaged in corruption; if they are courageous enough to react they may put themselves at risk, facing ACU or the court, as Participant 5 put it below:

When officials involve in corruption, corruption documents are in the hands of politicians, thus if the officials are brave they will face with the ACU or the court. (P5)

The above quote indicated that both higher and lower officials are corrupt. And the higher officials know that the lower officials are involved in corruption, or at least doing something inappropriate, however the higher officials do not care. But if the lower officials dare to report their superiors for acts of corruption, they may be in trouble because they also have weak points, which the higher officials can use against them. Such practices breed a culture of overlooking each other's misconduct for their respective benefits.

Fear of Losing Benefits

Besides the concern about safety and security, fear of losing benefits is another important aspect that relevant stakeholders have considered when working within unfavourable political conditions. In this regard, some NGOs, particularly those that work on development-oriented issues, remain tight lipped for fear of losing benefits from the relationship they have with the government, as Participant 4 demonstrated below:

> *NGOs […] that work on development when we meet them outside they complaint but they are not so dare to push, because they fear of affecting partnership with government. (P4)*

This example seemed to show that working in settings where operational space for CSOs is narrow, the relationship with the state actor is essential. The work of NGOs, and other relevant stakeholders, may not be able to be operationalised if they do not have relationships with state authority. Lack of relationship with state authority may mean that a request by an NGO to conduct an event may face rejection or delay.. Similar concerns also exist in the private sector, the media in particular. TV, for example, is cautious to broadcast any requests from NGOs that involve sensitive issues, such as corruption. The following is a remark expressed by Participant 5:

> *Sometimes we want to air on TV they dare not allow us to do. It is okay if we do superficially […] but if it is too deep […] we are difficult to contact with TV to broadcast. (P5)*

Although the private firm may lose income from not airing them, they are not courageous enough to stand up and do something about it. Experiences may teach them about this. If they insist on broadcasting something that makes the government, or powerful people, unhappy, their station may face problems. This mindset not only limits the media and business, but also sometimes public employees as well. Consider the following quote:

> *For the private they also complain that they are difficult to do business something like that, but they dare not say and within the public service we see*

that as a system it is difficult, but a number of public servants are not happy in that system. (P4)

The above comment not only mentioned the challenges faced by the private sector, but some public employees also show their frustration with the current political situation which distracts them from expressing their free will for fear of the impact on their future, as explained by Participant 9 below:

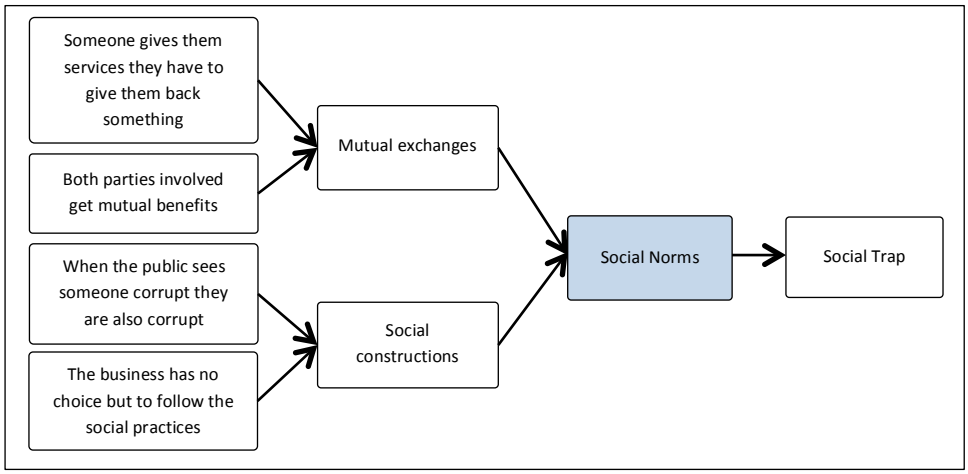
The system of corruption especially patronage-client system is very strong and has been created long ago and it ties together almost all in the government. Thus there is no one dares to do anything, if someone dares it affects on […] their future, their interests. (P9)

To sum up, fear factor limits the involvement of all stakeholders to take part in sensitive social affairs. This fearful mindset is fundamentally influenced by the legacy left behind from the past regime, the current political condition, and fear of losing one's interests. For example, the public is concerned about their security, CSOs may fear losing partnership and relationship with the institutions, and the private sector are concerned about losing future benefits.

Social Norms

In this context, social norm refers to a situation where behaviour of the public is shaped by a particular social setting, whether it happened a long time ago or is recently crafted. It is also responsible for the generation of corrupt practices. According to the data, social norm is composed of two emergent subcategories, including mutual exchange, and social constructions (Figure 23).

Figure 23: The connection between social norms and corruption



Mutual Exchanges

According to the data, mutual exchange refers to the idea that corruption is a mutual compromise or mutual exchange between parties involved. The two phrases are creating a social practice which is associated with the widespread nature of corruption in Cambodia. First and foremost is that the general public still think that when public authorities provide services to them, they have to pay them. They do not think that they are entitled to receive the service for free, or just pay according to the official price, and, beyond this, they believe that the money they pay to the state authority who provides them the service is just a mutual exchange between them. It is considered to be a normal practice, as mentioned by Participant 5 in the following quote:

> *People at locals when relating to corruption issue they seems to accept, it becomes a culture that they think that they give them service they have to give them some money. This mindset still remains. (P5)*

Besides recognising such practice as a culture of exchange, sometimes the general public accept that corruption is a mutual benefit between the parties involved, as the same participant explained about corruption in the education system as follows:

Corruption originally is a bad culture since at schools, students bribe teachers if they don't they will fail in the exams. […] thus there is mutual benefit. (P5)

The above example demonstrated that students understand that what they are doing is 'a bad culture' and illegal but they still engage in corruption because of the benefit they get from it. They think that they may fail their exams if they do not pay a bribe. The same participant added that sometimes the public, the rich in particular, recognises that corruption helps facilitate them. Consider the following statement:

They see that bribery is their benefits, particularly for those that have money […] For instance, somebody goes for a service, they have money, they give officials money, they get the service first, thus it facilitates them. (P5)

It is, therefore, evident from the data that sometimes the public considers corruption as a mutual exchange, or compromise, between service providers and service seekers. They seem to see it as a normal practice and that there is nothing wrong in giving someone something when they provide services. Further, the public, business in particular, think that such a culture of exchange helps them bypass certain rules and services are completed at a faster rate than those who do not pay extra fees.

Social Constructions

In this context, social constructions refer to the idea that perceptions, or behaviours of the public, are constructed according to the current social context and practices. They are a kind of social learning process in that the public follow one another in terms of doing something. This raises the idea that when seeing someone else who is corrupt, others may follow their example and also decide to act in a corrupt manner. Examine the following remark made by Participant 13:

Teachers or health staff with little salary start to think that someone who are very rich they still corrupt. Why not us, living without enough to eat? (P13)

For the private sector, although they do not see that to pay bribes to public officials to receive services as a culture of exchange or thankful money, they remain

trapped in the same situation. Within the current situation, they have to follow the social practices or they will face trouble by not having their services completed on time. This implies that the current situation and social practices puts pressure on them to get involved, as Participant 3 mentioned below:

> *Private sector […] involves in corruption also because there is no choice, there are pressures for them to get involved. (P3)*

This socially constructed practice has created a new social norm that encourages the public to think that corruption is a normal practice; they even think that what they are doing is not corrupt. Notice the following assumptions:

> *In our country in general, corruption becomes fact of life. Thus in the long and long time people will see that corruption as something normal in life. (P9)*

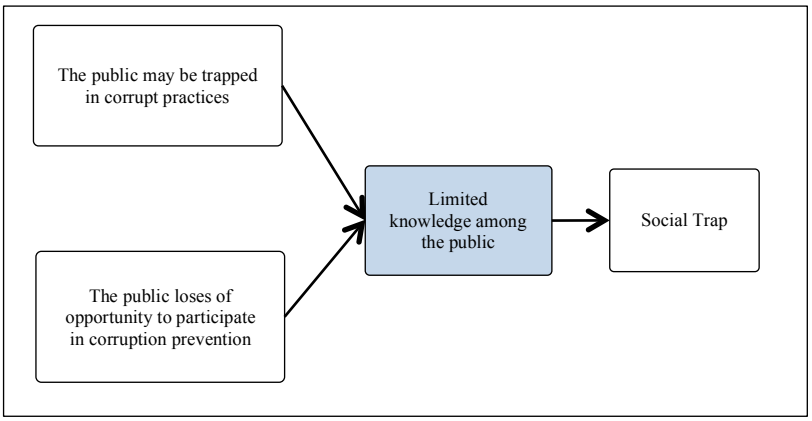
> *Everybody is involved in corruption everybody to be honest everybody at different levels I think there are different levels like high corruption and then […] petty corruption I guess most people here will not consider that's corruption. (P14)*

To sum up, social norms are constituted by two major factors, including mutual exchange and social constructions. These two factors shape the behaviour of the public and, thus, are responsible for the increase in corrupt tendencies. This is because, within the Cambodian context at the moment, the public think that corruption is a mutual exchange. They seem to think that what they are doing has nothing to do with corruption. Therefore, social norms (behaviours) greatly influence individual behaviours.

Limited Understanding among the Public

The data suggest two important aspects relating to limited understanding by the public and the widespread nature of corrupt practices. First, limited understanding by the public may make them end up engaging in corrupt behaviours. Second, limited understanding by the public makes them lose the opportunity to participate in preventing the menace of corruption (Figure 24).

Figure 24: The connection between public knowledge and corruption



With regards to the first aspect, Participants 7 and 9 mentioned that:

For example, you are a commune chief and I am going to make a birth certificate, for that certificate I give 5,000R […] because people think that the officials spend their time to do something for them. (P7)

When people need public services from government or public officials they do not understand that they have the rights to get public services without pay additional fees. (P9)

The above examples implied that people think that the money they give to state authority, in addition to the official public service fee for services provided, is just 'thankful money'. They do not think it is a responsibility of the government officials to provide them services free of additional charge. They also apparently do not think that their behaviour is against the law. Besides, lack of understanding by the public about their rights and roles limits their participation in preventing corruption. In this regard, Participant 14 provided a brief explanation that:

People have a lack of understanding of what they should be doing and they can't accept their rights and they can't protect their rights. (P14)

The above quote demonstrated that lack of understanding by the public disables them from protecting their rights and, more broadly, limits them from participating in protecting public rights and interests as a whole, as they seem to not accept the rights and roles they are entitled to.

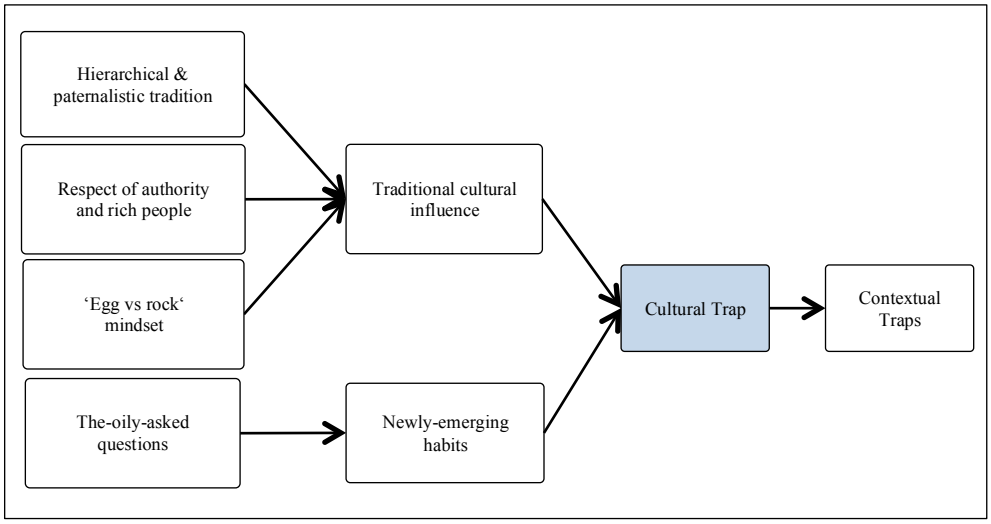
To sum up, corruption has become a social norm that moves beyond a mutual

compromise between unethical or greedy people. According to the analysis of data, people see that corruption is a '*way or fact of life'*, and a *'social learning process that people learn from each other'*. Some said *'no money no justice'* while others see corruption as *'thankful money'*. Some others see it as a *'culture of exchange'*, *'facilitate them'*, and a *'mutual benefit'*. If this continues, corruption will become the cultural norm which is increasingly hard to address.

4.2.1.4. Cultural Trap

According to the analysis, cultural trap emerged from the integration of two categories; namely; a traditional cultural influence and a newly-emerged habit (Figure 25). These two categories are partly responsible for the generation of endemic corrupt behaviours.

Figure 25: The connection between cultural context and corruption

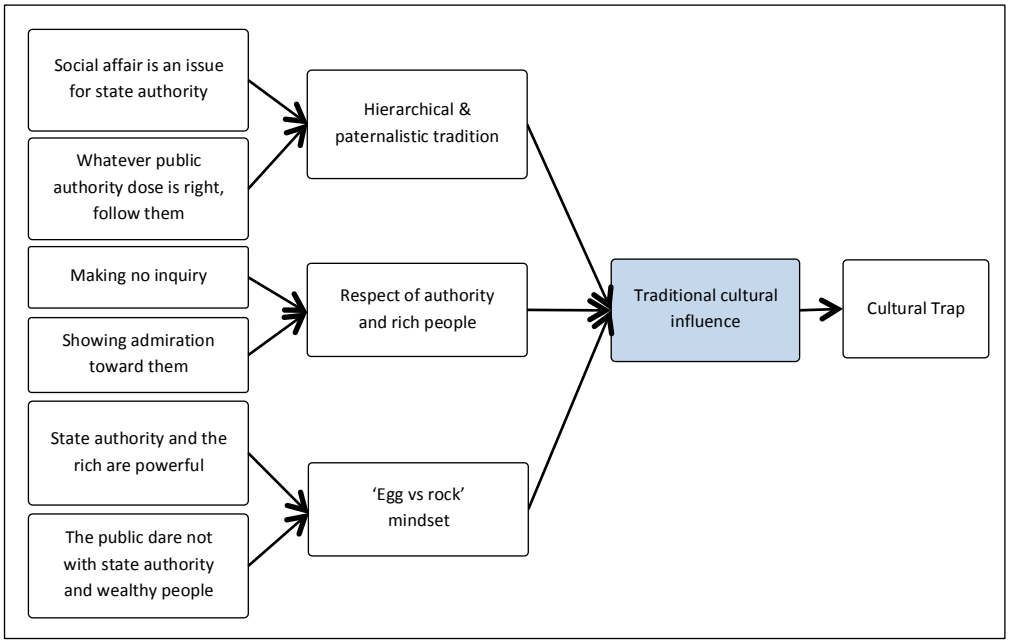


Traditional Cultural Influence

Traditional cultural influence refers to the dominance of extant culture that framed the behaviours of the public individuals. The data suggest that three emerging subcategories constitute traditional cultural influence. These include hierarchical and paternalistic tradition, respect of public authority and rich people, and 'an egg-vs-rock' mindset (Figure 26). Such a cultural mindset makes the public dependent on

the public authority to make decisions or do things on their behalf; people are generally 'rear legs' and just respect and follow the decisions made.

Figure 26: The connection between traditional culture and corruption



Regarding hierarchical and paternalistic tradition, Participant 7 described the situation as follows:

> *People understand that good governance is the issue for big leaders [...] people do not understand. They understand that whatever leaders do is right; we are small people how can we dare to say about them. Thus the barrier is still very thick. (P7)*

The above quote explained that as long as the public remains fixed to the belief that good governance is an issue for big leaders, or whatever they do is right, the principal of good governance is unable to take root. This raises the idea that the government is able to do anything freely. At least one participant in this study compared such a situation to an authoritarian regime, rather than a democratic state where participation by the public is a core element for promoting good governance. As seen below, Participant 1 stated that:

[...] relating to authoritarian power, this authoritarian power allows them [authorities] to ride a horse without holding the string. (P1)

What is meant by *'to ride a horse without holding the string'* is that the public authority is able to make decisions, or doing anything arbitrarily, regardless of whether the decisions or actions are appropriate or based on the interests of the general public or not. Hierarchical and paternalistic traditions prevent the public from participating or making an inquiry. Indeed, the absence of participation in good governance is hardly effective.

Respect for authority and rich people is also another aspect of cultural influence which results in the loss of opportunity for the public to participate in social issues. Respect for public authority and rich people in this context refers to the idea that the general public not only treats the rich and people in authority with polite behaviour, but also praises them which leads to the notion of not questioning them, as Participant 8 explained below:

Another is our cultural factor, the demand side is not accustomed to make inquiries, and our country experience is still young. (P8)

Further, the domination of such cultural influence is revealed through the respect and admiration shown by ordinary people towards the powerful and the rich, regardless of how they obtain their status. Notice the following remark expressed by Participant 12:

We have to think that we have to give respect to those who earn or cheat much, the earning is cheating and cheating is a crime, the word is like that. (P12)

An 'egg vs rock' mindset is also a major factor of cultural influence which prevents the public from engaging in social affairs, or resisting public officials and wealthy people. The public individuals still compare themselves to an egg which is easily broken when it collides with the rock, which is the wealthy people or public officials, regardless of whether they are low or high ranking officials. This is evident in the following statement from Participant 5:

Relating corruption […] sometimes the poor they do not have money but they have to borrow some money from someone to give to officials to get the service. […] they still think that they cannot resist with the authority. (P5)

This example emphasised that even though it is a personal issue, ordinary people dare not resist public authority. How about the issue that is not one's personal and the official is powerful, who dare to bring trouble to oneself? The following quote highlighted this:

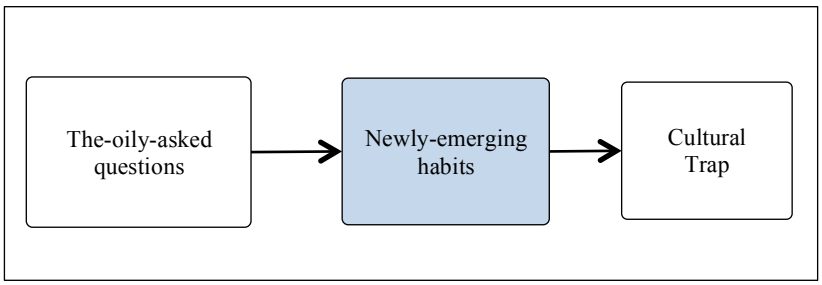
It is said 'have money have justice'. Thus if someone dares to provide information they are afraid of being taken as a witness. Although I am a witness there is no chance to win because the accused is a minister, for example. They are wealthy and have power, this is unable. (P1)

The above quote is not limited to public officials but also to rich people. Within a setting where a judicial system is not independent and corrupt, an 'egg vs rock' mindset is a major barrier; indeed, the public rarely dare to resist the rich due to the belief that *'have money have justice,'* as Participant 1 mentioned above.

Newly-Emerging Habits

According to the data, some Cambodian people have been creating a newly-emerging habit. This newly-emerging habit, which is the habit of asking corruption questions: 'earn?', 'oily?' or 'oily job?' is often heard when two or more people who know each other meet, public officials in particular (Figure 27).

Figure 27: The connection between newly-emerging habits and corruption



The 'earn?' question refers to the idea that 'beside your salary, do you earn extra money?,' and the 'oily?' or 'oily job?' questions translate to, 'do you hold a

lucrative job or position?' Although these questions are asked differently, they mean the same thing. Literally, these questions are nothing different from asking, 'Are you corrupt?' but they just use lighter phrases. At least one participant in this study revealed his interest in this newly emerging micro-culture as follows:

> *Sometimes I was asked you work there you earn much […] because we have a culture that adheres in our brain, […] this is bad. We....our Khmer still ask each other whether you earn extra or hold a lucrative position, corruption exists. (P 12)*

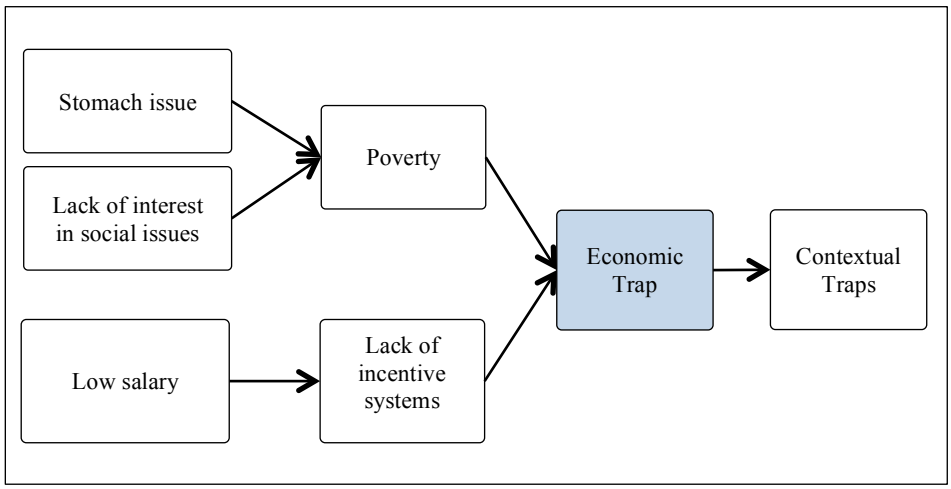
This social behaviour not only shows the level of corruption in Cambodia but is also responsible for the breeding of the culture of corruption and this makes it difficult to fight against this social menace.

It is, therefore, evident that the growth of corrupt practices is somewhat associated with culture, whether it is extant or newly created. The study found that the adherent mindset of the public that social affairs, including governance and corruption is an issue of state authority, discourages the public from participation and making inquiries into what state authority is doing. The public is accustomed to giving respect to state authority and wealthy people. This also discourages them. Besides, 'the eggs v rock' mindset also demotivates the public to participate in social issues because they still think that their resistance to state officials is just like taking the egg to hit the rock. In addition, the newly emerging habit, the 'oily' question, has been feeding the culture of corruption.

4.2.1.5. Economic Trap

Economic trap is another contextual variable which contributes to the endemic nature of corruption in Cambodia. According to the data, economic trap is comprised of two emerging categories, including poverty and lack of a government incentive system (Figure 28).

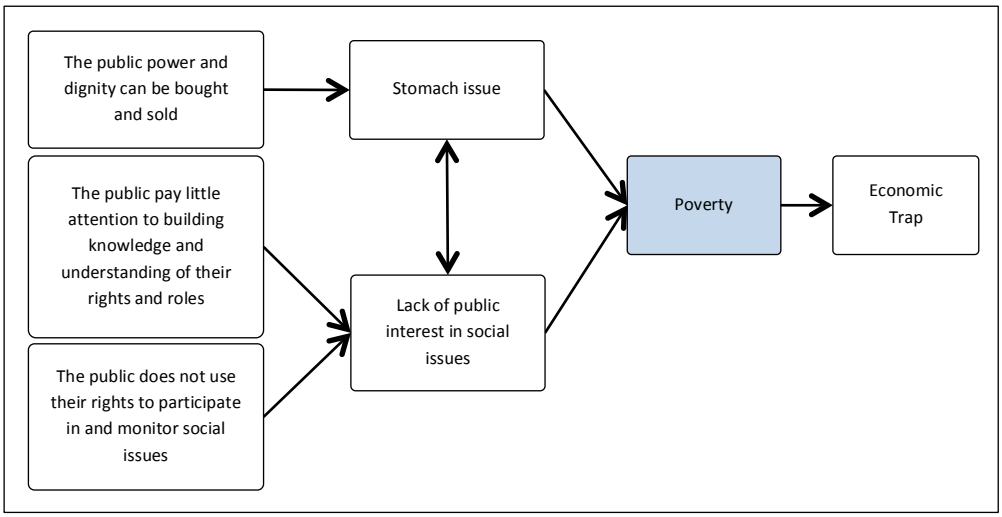
Figure 28: The connection between economic context and corruption



Poverty

The data suggest that poverty is closely connected to the generation of corruption. Poverty not only encourages people to engage in corrupt practices but also discourages them from participating in promoting good governance, or controlling corruption. When people's stomachs are empty, their first need is to find something to fill it and they seem to not care much about anything else. For example, with a choice between working in the rice field for 10,000 Riels (about US$ 2.5) per day or attending good governance or democracy workshops, people will choose the former rather than the latter. Alternatively, poverty distracts people from seeking knowledge and understanding about their roles and rights, which is important for them to demand their rights and freedom and the responsibilities of the state agents for people well-being and so forth, and this will have a long-term impact on their future livelihoods. Therefore, it is evident that as a result of a lack of understanding of their basic rights, people end up engaging in bribery with authorities for even simple paper work, which only makes the situation even worse. According to the analysis, poverty surfaced through the integration of two emerging subcategories; namely, stomach issue and lack of public interest in social issues (Figure 29).

Figure 29: The connection between poverty and corruption



Poverty makes poor people end up selling their votes for small materials and money. This issue is frequently heard in the media. For example, Human Rights Watch (2003) mentioned the gift giving campaign by the ruling party:

> *In Siem Reap, "gift" giving campaigns organised by the CPP are considerably more insidious than traditional vote buying. Voters have been assembled on the promise of getting gifts but found instead that they were forced to publicly renounce any other party loyalties and swear their allegiance to the CPP. In at least one case, villagers received what they thought were cash gifts from CPP officials but learned later they were loans to be repaid—if the CPP loses. (Human Right Watch, July 18, 2003)*

In a similar case, The Phnom Penh Post (2015) referred to the election monitor relating to the irregularity before the election:

> *Political parties in Cambodia and the ruling CPP in particular, have long used material benefits to draw in voters ahead of elections. From doling out cash directly, to more subtle gifts such as kramas, rice, medicine or sarongs, an approaching poll has long meant the distribution of gifts in villages around the country, election monitors say. (Phnom Penh Post, 17 March, 2015)*

The above two examples implied that vote buying remains an issue, both in the past and into the present. It is undeniable that poverty is strongly associated with the poor public's decision to 'sell out' which results in a loss of dignity. Moreover,

poverty discourages people from participating in important social issues and makes people lose interest in the building of their basic needs, such as education, as highlighted by some participants below:

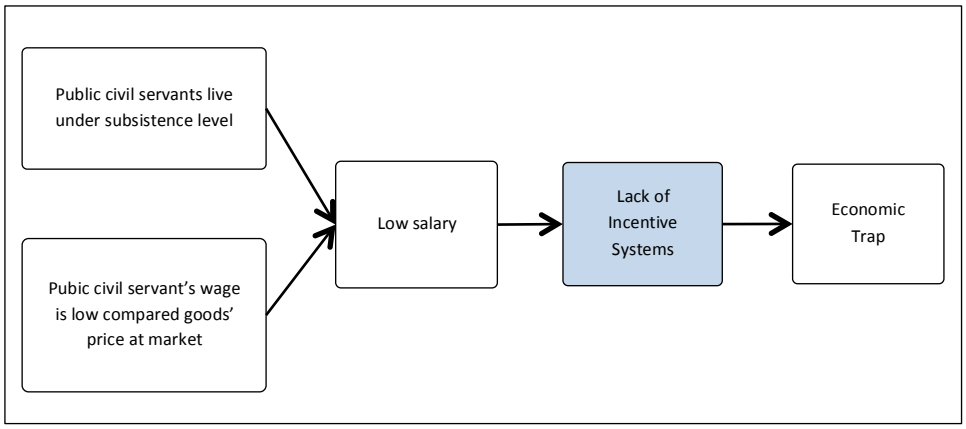
> *Participation from citizens is limited and it is difficult to mobilise them [...] sometimes the important issue is stomach, they say in one day if they are hired to harvest or plant rice in the field they can get 8,000R or 10,000R but to come for a meeting they lose that income. Thus livelihood factor is also a hindering factor also. (P7)*
>
> *At local levels people are poor. This impacts on their basic needs and their understanding. (P8)*

This means that, because of poverty, the general public loses opportunities to build their capacity and, thus, leads to a lack of understanding of their rights and roles. Finally, they end up becoming involved in corrupt practices and being cheated.

Lack of Incentive Systems

The lack of an incentive system within the public sector is greatly associated with the growth of corrupt practices. Civil servants' salaries are still far below their subsistence level and this does not include the consumption of utilities, such as electricity and water. Obviously, low wages cannot sustain their daily livelihood. Thus, the system encourages civil servants to choose between whether to live in poor conditions or to get involved in corruption to improve their living condition (Figure 30).

Figure 30: The connection between incentive systems and corruption



Participants in this study highlighted the connection between the low salary of public officials and corruption, as illustrated below:

> *We see that government official's salary is very low if compare with the price of goods in the market. Thus they cannot survive if they cannot survive thus they have to conspire to survive. Thus the system pushes people to be corrupt. (P4)*
>
> *The pubic servant's salary is low, the salary for officials at local levels is still quite low. Thus low salary is a mechanism to allow for the officials at the locals to engage in corruption. (P5)*
>
> *To sum up the hindering factors is the incentive; payroll system in Cambodia is low which encourages them to get involved in corrupt practices. (P6)*

The above examples indicated that low wages of public officials encourage them to become involved in corruption. However, to some participants, such an explanation is just an excuse. Actually, it is much more than the stomach issue; it is a problem of greed among the public officials instead. Naturally, people will engage in corruption to enrich themselves if they have the opportunity, particularly if there is a very little chance of being caught and punished. This is an actual case within the current Cambodian context. A comparison between public servants and ordinary people demonstrates that the majority of the former group lives in better conditions than that of the latter. This parallels with the claim made by some participants in this study that increasing the salary of government officials would not solve the problem. It is about the corrupt system within the public sphere rather than the incentive system. Consider the following sentiment expressed by some participants:

> *If they take stomach as a factor it is not appropriate because some are rich, they have modern cars, valuable rings but they still engage in corruption. […] I think anyone who has opportunity and get involved in it without punishment they will commit. (P5)*
>
> *I think rich or poor is not a problem, if we have commitment we can do […] This is just one part but, to increase the salary, corruption can also exist. (P8)*

These comments demonstrated that some public officials are rich and already live luxurious lifestyles, but they still engage in corruption. For them this is not about the 'stomach issue,' it is about opportunity, greed and power. Indeed, the 'stomach

issue' can be considered, in some situations, as just an excuse.

It is found, therefore, that a low salary does push civil servants to be trapped in corrupt tendencies, although this is not the single factor contributing to the increase in corruption within the public sector of Cambodia. As discussed above, some government bureaucrats and politicians who have sufficient salary and live luxurious lifestyles are still corrupt officials, perhaps the most corrupt. Economic factors are just part of the problem that encourages public civil servants to engage in corruption; indeed, people's greed, and opportunity, are the major factors that drag them into corrupt involvement.

4.2.2. Organisational Processes

As discussed in the above section (Section 4.2.1), contextual traps with their associated components and elements are driving factors contributing to the prevalence of corruption in Cambodia. It not only retards attempts by the government to develop the economy of a country but also democracy and rule of law, as claimed by General Secretary of the UN:

> *"Corruption is an insidious plague that has a wide range of corrosive effects on societies, it undermines democracy and the rule of law, leads to violations of human rights, distorts markets, erodes the quality of life, and allows organised crime, terrorism and other threats to human security to flourish". (see Ampratwum, 2008, p. 76)*

All of these are apparent factors that drive some NGOs who used to work on development-oriented or humanitarian issues to change their focus to governance-oriented issues, expecting to lend a hand to the government, both at a strategic level, for instance, to promote policy development, and at a practical level, for example, through monitoring government official's activities. Below are some examples of factors which motivate NGOs to jump into this social issue:

> *Motivation factors start from sufferings, as I mentioned earlier, because I cannot help them. The reason is that of partisans, of injustice toward citizens. We suffer seeing that the killer as a case of brother Pich Sovann' child. (P1)*

> *There are many factors that push us to work on governance, especially at subnational level. There are lots of problems, not just capacity building of the*

communes, or the local authorities, capacity building for CSOs as well...If there is no participation from the public we have no governance. If there is no participation for the public how can we participate in addressing corruption issue. (P2)

One major challenge is corruption and corrupt issue. If we consider and analyse in-depth, it is root cause that leads to other problems. Although the problems of destruction of the natural resources, poor quality education, poor services, drug trafficking and other various problems that we face every day is interrelated to corrupt acts... This is the source of cause that leads us to work on this area. (P3)

Corruption is the core issue in that which create social injustice. There are lots of human right violations. Thus we think that to do whatsoever to push for eradication of corruption, to push for an incorruptible mechanism, push for a punishing mechanism for those are corrupt. Thus it may reduce injustice in society, human right violations. (P4)

The above quotes are just to show the common sentiments that motivate NGOs to get involved in governance-oriented issues, and the focus of their interventions are discussed in detail as follows.

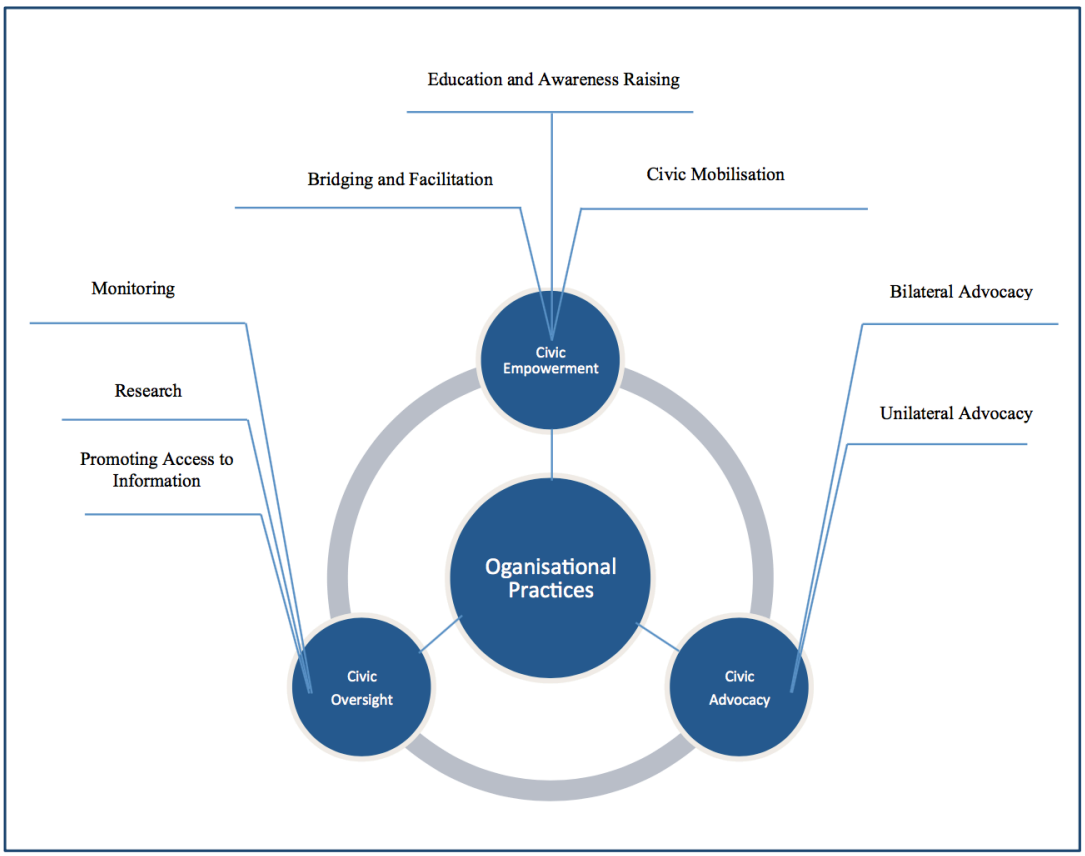
According to the data, there are two different kinds of NGOs operating in Cambodia: governance-oriented NGOs and development-oriented NGOs. Development-oriented NGOs are those that work around development, humanitarian, service delivery and the like. This type of NGO is excluded from this study. Instead, this study pays attention to governance-oriented NGOs, sometimes known as advocacy NGOs, who work around the context of promoting democracy, rule of law, human rights, good governance and resisting corruption. This is based on the belief that only those that work on governance-oriented issues would provide good and accurate information regarding the topic of this study. Based on components embedded in the framework, this section is subdivided into three subsections. Subsection One discusses the organisational practices of NGOs. Subsection Two presents organisational constraints, and Subsection Three provides descriptions about its outcomes perceived by participants in this study.

4.2.2.1. Organisational Practices

According to the analysis, the organisational practices of NGOs are composed of three emerging themes: civic empowerment, civic advocacy and civic

oversight. The three emergent themes are built up through the integration of seven emerging categories (Figure 31). The three strategic interventions of NGOs not only provide the general public basic understanding of their rights and roles, as well as the roles and responsibilities of public authorities, but also help empower them to actively participate in social affairs. This means encouraging the public to be more courageous to discuss with, to demand, and to follow up public official's activities, as well as to hold the government responsible for its actions. Their interventions are important to promote good governance and prevent corrupt practices, which are the major challenges for national development and improving people's livelihoods.

Figure 31: Conceptualising NGO organisational processes in Cambodia

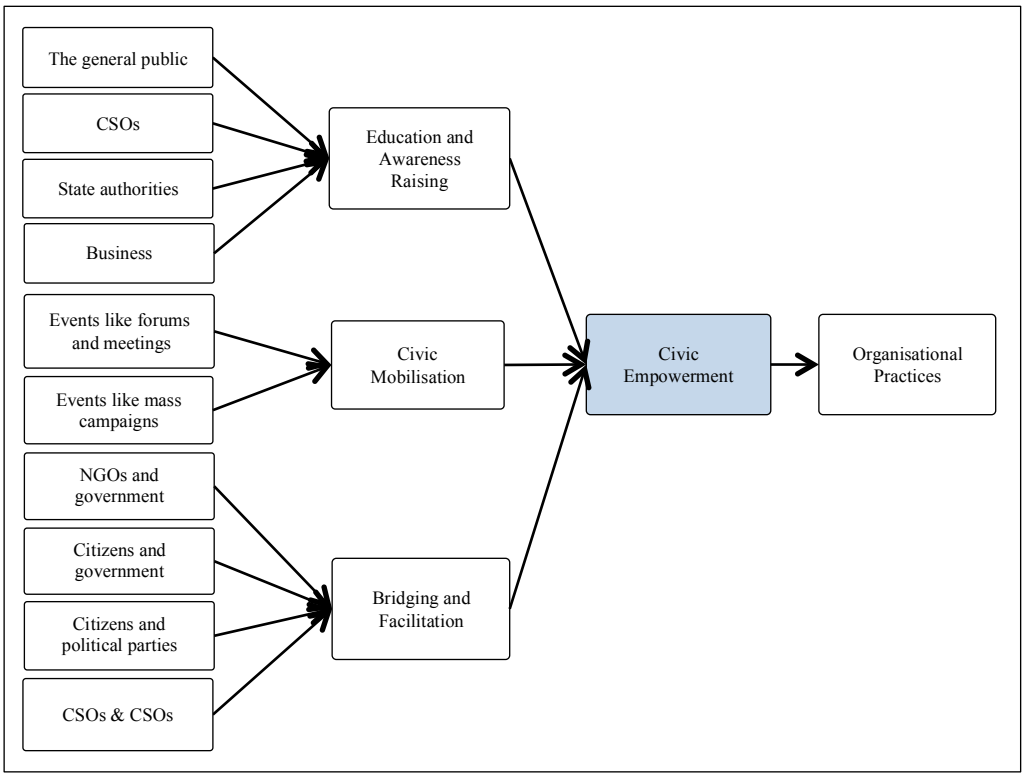


4.2.2.1.1. Civic Empowerment

Civic empowerment, according to the data in this study, is an act of giving power to the general public by way of providing them opportunities and encouraging

them to participate, or become involved, in social affairs that affect them, such as corruption. Civic empowerment is made up by integrating three categories; namely, education and awareness raising, civic mobilisation, and bridging and facilitation (Figure 32).

Figure 32: Civic empowerment to corruption prevention



Education and Awareness Raising

> *Education activities are normal activities of NGOs that work on corruption. (P11)*

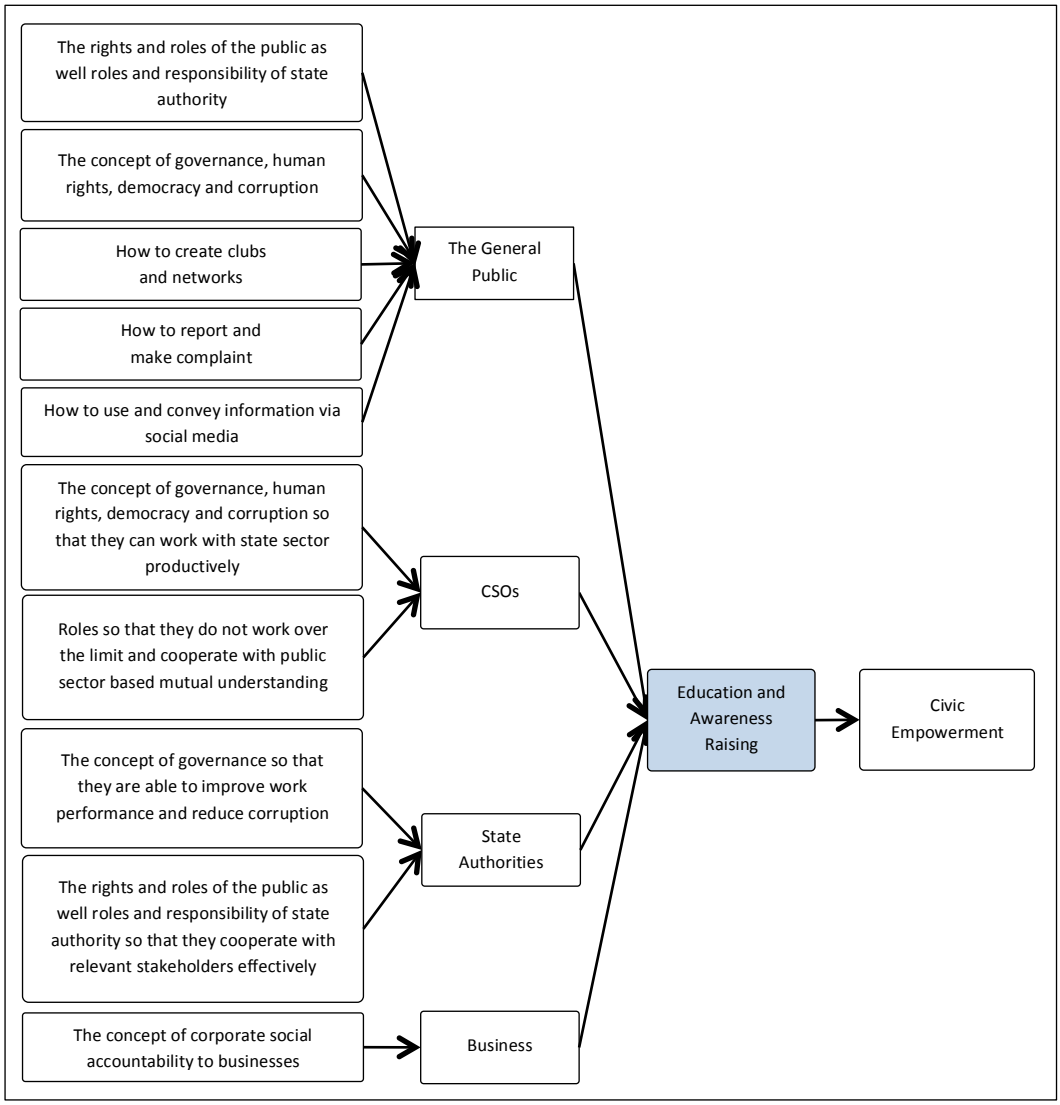
In a situation where corruption is endemic, it impacts on government endeavours to promote good governance and national development; and in a situation where the general public are affected by the influence of corruption in their daily lives, and where people have no idea what to do about it, education and raising awareness is an urgent priority. Without knowledge and lack of understanding about their rights and roles, people do not know how to get engaged in community

development processes, or involved in actions and decisions that affect them. According to the data, all of the participants in this study highly valued education and awareness raising as a means to empower the public to take part in promoting governance and preventing corrupt practices. To illustrate, below were some remarks made by participants in this study:

> *We educated, disseminated to the public, people in order that they understand the problems; in short, we do civic education. (P3)*
>
> *NGOs helped people understand and apply their rights (P8)*
>
> *We have education and awareness raising in general to demand for good governance, to fight against corruption. (P12)*

Within the concept of civic empowerment, NGOs seemed to focus on all important stakeholders, including the general public, CSOs, state authority and business (Figure 33). However, they pay more attention to the public and less consideration to business, and the subject to be covered is slightly different. This sounds good because different stakeholders have different levels of understanding and needs. This was an important attempt to make the participation of relevant stakeholders become a source of collective action to make significant changes.

Figure 33: Education and awareness raising to corruption prevention



The General Public

According to the data, education and awareness raising among the general public covers various subject areas. This, for example, ranges from educating people about their rights and roles, to the roles and responsibility of public authority, from human rights to democracy, and from the conception of good governance to transparency and accountability. It also covers corruption, anti-corruption and the costs of corruption, and the right of access to information. Lack of these basic foundations restricts the public from participating in public affairs, especially promoting good governance and preventing corruption. At the same time, the activities of NGOs also focus on encouraging the public to participate in social

affairs. These start from educating people about how to participate and how to make a complaint; how to use a smart phone and social media to report corrupt cases and to convey information to others; how to create networks at communities and clubs; and how to take joint action, and so forth.

In terms of human rights—education and awareness raising concentrated around the rights and roles of the general public, and the roles and responsibilities of public authority, and concerning the concept of democracy—the focus is about participation in particular. For example, Participant 2 mentioned that:

> *We work on including capacity building […] in order that the people understand their rights. They have the right to participate, they have the right to ask questions. (P2)*

This participant emphasised that in the present situation the general public, including the staff of NGOs, have a lack of understanding about their rights and this discourages them from participating in social affairs. Sometimes, even if they have the opportunity to participate, they lack the confidence to share their opinions, they just sit and listen which means very little. As such, the work of NGOs is to build their capacity, and encourage them to engage constructively and productively in their community development. In this similar vein, Participant 4 explained that when the public understand about their rights and roles, as well as the roles and responsibilities of the state authorities, they know what they should do and what they should not do for the sake of their community, as shown in the following quote:

> *Civic education is important. NGOs in various sectors, including human rights, media, and development should explain citizens to understand… their own roles and duties and roles and duties of the government. Thus we know what we need to do what they need to do, what we need to demand and what we do not need to demand. (P4)*

In addition, promoting the rights of access to information gained special attention by participants in this study. Even the general public understand their rights and roles, or the roles and responsibilities of the government authority, and if they do not have access to government-held information it is difficult for them to get involved in social affairs. As such, promoting access to information is crucial, as indicated in the following excerpt:

In general advocacy group first focus on making people know about their rights, right to obtain services, rights to access to information, rights to obtain. (P6)

With regards to good governance and corruption, the focus of NGOs is on conveying knowledge about, for example, transparency and accountability, and the cost and consequence of corruption. The following quotes exemplified these sentiments:

We focus on governance [...], for example, in the past 3-4 years we had commune fund supporting projects and local governance projects and rural investment...Those projects helped educate people to know. (P6)

We trained them, built their capacity regarding the general concept of transparency and accountability. (P10)

In addition to promoting public knowledge about the concept of transparency and accountability, some participants paid special attention to building public capacity in advocacy, as highlighted below:

Local advocacy programme, this programme we allow youth to work at locals, participate in communes, know how to advocate in order to demand for local authorities to take actions to fulfil their roles. That is what is required in their communities. (P5)

Building community activists is another important aspect. This means that local people, especially those who experienced problems, were selected and trained to become focal activists in their community. These activists can be representatives of their community, help solve problems and convey information to others. As seen below, Participant 4 who works for the media NGOs, mentioned that:

We educated citizens who are the activists of some communities, for instance, those are victims of land dispute, we selected and trained them to become activists that dare to provide information. (P4)

Some others placed high value on educating the public about how to build networks. For example, Participant 5 pointed out that:

Network building, this means that we educate youth know how to create clubs and take joint actions. (P5)

Others highlighted the significance of a complaint handling system. The understanding of this system by the public facilitates and helps them to participate and seek appropriate resolution:

They help educate people to know that there are places where they can sue and to dare to complain, for example, the commune chief, land officer who engages in corruption relating to the making land title. (P6)

There are many methods that we show them the ways in case that they encounter with corruption. They can call 1282, 1292, 7777 or they can write and put in the mail box that we have at the communities. (P13)

Conveying information to the public also drew the attention of some participants in this study. This means that some NGOs help train the public about how to convey information to others and create reports by using social media, as seen below:

We trained factory workers in order that they know how to use smart phone, and social media, they can take photos what they experience in the factories. They post or send to us to make news. (P4)

Another mechanism that I want to raise is to help people convey campaign information to others. (P8)

Regarding corruption specifically, some organisations paid special attention to raising public awareness about corruption, the cost of corruption and how it influences society. For example, Participants 12 and 13 highlighted that:

CSOs have taken part in the fight against corruption through training, dissemination to understand what is corruption? What is lost from corruption? (P12)

CSO is the one who stay in the middle in order to help people, educate people to understand […] corruption that affects on them. (P13)

It is noticeable from the data that education and awareness raising not only builds public capacity to free themselves from getting involved in corruption, but also empower them to be courageous enough to participate in corruption prevention.

For example, as some participants in this study declared:

> *We raise awareness to the public about corruption; we push for boycotting to corruption. (P4)*
>
> *Some NGOs train, educate people in order that they understand about corruption and in order not to let them get involved in that culture as well. (P9)*

At the same time, besides building people capacity, NGOs encourage them to participate in promoting good governance and preventing corruption. The following are some explanations relating to the encouragement of the public to participate in social issues:

> *We train youth [...] and we let them take actions, for example, relating to good governance we let them raise examples whether there is transparency, people know about budget expenditures or not, people participate when they make a plan. (P5)*
>
> *Relating to the push for transparency and good governance we used to conduct public forums in communities. We invite commune chiefs, commune councillors, commune police to meet with people in the communes to talk about issues happening in their communes, for example. People raise the issues and push the authority to address, for example, service fees. (P4)*
>
> *NGOs helped educate people to understand, wake up and to monitor the governance system at local levels as well as various service delivery system. (P6)*

As seen from the above, NGOs help encourage the public to participate in social affairs, such as a local development plan, seeking solutions from public authority on community concerns, and monitoring public service delivery.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Similar to the general public, CSOs teach CSOs. In the Cambodian context, the term CSOs is used interchangeably with NGOs, although conceptually NGOs are just part of CSOs. Due to the fact that NGOs emerged in Cambodia in the early 1990s during UNTAC (United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia), their knowledge and skills are still limited. According to some participants, building

CSOs' capacity is also important because they observed that most NGOs still have limited ability, such as with regards to good governance and D&D (decentralisation and deconcentration). When their ability is limited they cannot participate productively. For example, in a meeting or forum between NGOs and government officials, most NGOs staff rarely dare to raise issues or share ideas, they only sit and listen. Therefore, building NGOs is also essential, as Participant 2 mentioned below:

> *We work on including capacity building [...] participation by closing eyes or participation just to accompany. The CSO is also the same [...] important factors that we work every day to build their capacity. (P2)*

According to this participant, the limitation of the capacity of an NGO makes their work less effective. This is an issue that needs to be specially considered because even those who assist the public lack capacity and dare not share opinions with state actors. How can NGOs build public capacity and encourage the public to participate meaningfully and effectively? Further, education of CSOs is not for the sole purpose of providing them capacity to share or raise their concerns; rather, it is also to ensure that they understand and work cooperatively with state authority, as explained by Participant 7 below:

> *[Name of an NGO] plays very important roles on awareness raising, capacity building to […] and also the same for CSOs for them to understand clearly about D&D and when they cooperate with commune councillors on how to do the best way to walk along the side. It means that to hold hands and walk along the line that we want, not one goes that way and another walks the other way. (P7)*

The above quote emphasised that the concept of governance, or D&D, is still new to the Cambodian context. Or simply put, the involvement of civil society into state affairs remains a controversial issue for some government employees since, traditionally, civil society is accustomed to follow the directions from the public authority rather than meddling with the state. As such, building capacity with relevant stakeholders, including CSOs, is important to promote good governance, as mentioned by Participant 8 below:

> *Another importance perhaps we participate in strengthening governance work […] the importance is to strengthen the capacity, in current Cambodian*

context, both government, CSOs. (P8)

In addition, this same participant furthered that building the capacity of CSOs also strengthens their mutual understanding and trust which ensures that they understand their basic rights and not their limits as a CSO. Note the following observation:

> *[...] help strengthen capacity to [name of an NGO]'s partners at the provinces in order that they work with the supply side to build trust relationship to make them closer. (P8)*

This is important to be taken into special account because experiences have shown that some CSOs work beyond their basic rights as part of the society, to serve the interests of the general public. They cross the line and get involved in politics, as Participant 6 asserted below:

> *There are NGOs that are extreme in political tendency; some NGOs play their roles as the opposition party. I saw before the election I was very upset, there are associations, some advocacy NGOs until announced in the newspaper that we appeal to NGOs or associations within their networks not to vote for this party, vote for that party. (P6)*

Therefore, building capacity of CSOs not only ensures that they are knowledgeable and that they participate and share ideas in social affairs, and work collaboratively with state actors, but also ensures that they are not tainted themselves by politics.

State Authorities

Strengthening the capacity of state authority is not too different from the general public and CSOs, according to the data; the purpose is first to build up their capacity in the concept of governance and D&D (decentralisation and deconcentration); and second is to help them come closer and work together with mutual understanding. This is because governance is fairly new and public officials are not familiar with such a concept. The following were activities that some NGOs have undertaken relating to building capacity of state authorities:

Our work is to […] build capacity for both sides [civil society and the government sector] so that they can work together. (P2)

[Name of an NGO] plays very important roles on awareness raising, capacity building to commune councillors for them to know that what is D&D and what are the roles of commune, commune councillors. (P7)

What the above participant demonstrated parallels with the core principal of the concept of good governance and D&D, which is to promote participation of relevant stakeholders in society to work collaboratively on a mutual understanding basis for a common purpose.

Private Sector

The data reveal that the participants in this study did not pay much attention to the concept of good governance within the private sector. Only one organisation showed some interest, as shown in the following quote:

We promote corporate social accountability and they participate […] But we see that some do not care. But at least it is a good sign... We have some starts. (P2)

The above participant revealed that his organisation's effort to promote corporate social accountability attracted little interest from private businesses. However, he did not seem too upset with attendance result. To him it was a good start. Since everything must have a start, continuous endeavours will bear fruit, as our old adage 'where there is will, there is a way' reveals; and NGOs should follow this maxim if they want to make real changes.

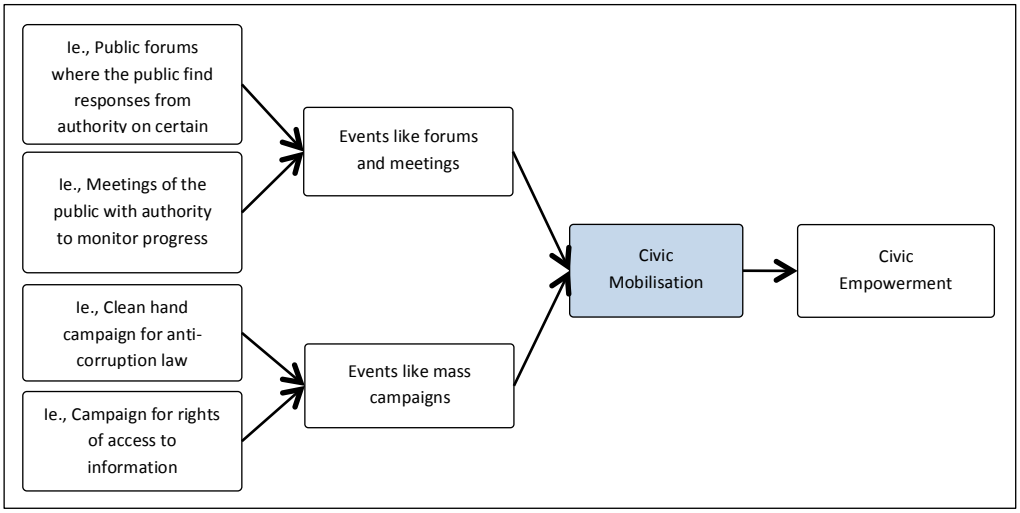
To conclude, it is evident that education and awareness raising covers a range of stakeholders; namely, the general public, CSOs, state authority and businesses. The subject areas covered include, but are not limited to, for example, the rights and roles of the public, and roles and responsibility of state authority, and the concept of governance, human rights, democracy and corruption.

Civic Mobilisation

Our project is […] popular mobilisation. (P9)

This quote implied that, basically, NGOs work with the general public and, thus, participation from the public is necessary. The interventions of an NGO on its own would be less influential to suggest changes or put pressure on the government. According to the democratic principle to which Cambodia is constitutionally bound, people are powerful since they are vote owners. Thus, mobilising them to get involved in social issues, of course, is indispensable. Within this context, civic mobilisation refers to a process of assembling the general population struggling to make their voices heard and to seek for a particular objective and change. The process usually takes the form of gathering the public to attend public forums, awareness raising campaigns, and meetings with commune or districts, and so forth (Figure 34).

Figure 34: Civic mobilisation to corruption prevention



One of the mobilisation campaigns which all of the interviewees were proud of was the clean hand campaign where they collected one million thumbprints from the general public proposing for the adoption of the anti-corruption law. Without such massive popular mobilisation, the anti-corruption law would not have been passed. Presently, they are conducting a campaign to collect thumbprints for the adoption of the law of access to information which is believed to be very important for promoting transparency and accountability, and curbing corrupt practices. Without appropriate information, the public and relevant stakeholders, and also NGOs themselves, hardly participate constructively or scrutinise the government so

that they can be held responsible for their actions. Civic mobilisation is a normal practice of governance-oriented NGOs. In a general sense, for example, Participants 2 and 3 mentioned that:

> *Our work is to mobilise those to dialogue with communes […] so that they can work together. (P2)*
>
> *We help mobilise, assemble, organise to meet and discuss between state institutions and people. (P3)*

The above examples demonstrated the important role of NGOs in mobilising the public to participate in, and deal with, social issues with state authorities. Indeed, various mechanisms, such as public forums and meetings have been frequently organised to allow the public to participate. Note the following observations expressed by Participants 5 and 8 below:

> *Through public forums, or other meetings our [Name of an organisation] sometimes invite citizens to participate in a monthly meeting of the communes. Sometimes we organise the public forums to talk about health, money or various administrative letters. (P5)*
>
> *We have another mechanism to allow people to dare to participate, to observe the monthly meeting of the councils. The other mechanism that we have done is to help the communities have their own forums. (P8)*

Besides the clean hand campaign, NGOs have also been conducting mobilisation efforts to collect thumbprints to propose the creation of a law on access to information and commitment among NGOs to fight against corruption, as highlighted by Participant 11:

> *We have a campaign to collect thumbprints with [Name of an organisation] to propose to have the law on access to information. (P11)*
>
> *Recently some CSO, CSOs' staff has signed...printed their thumbs on a commitment that [Name of an organisation] demonstrated that we are all against corruption. (P11)*

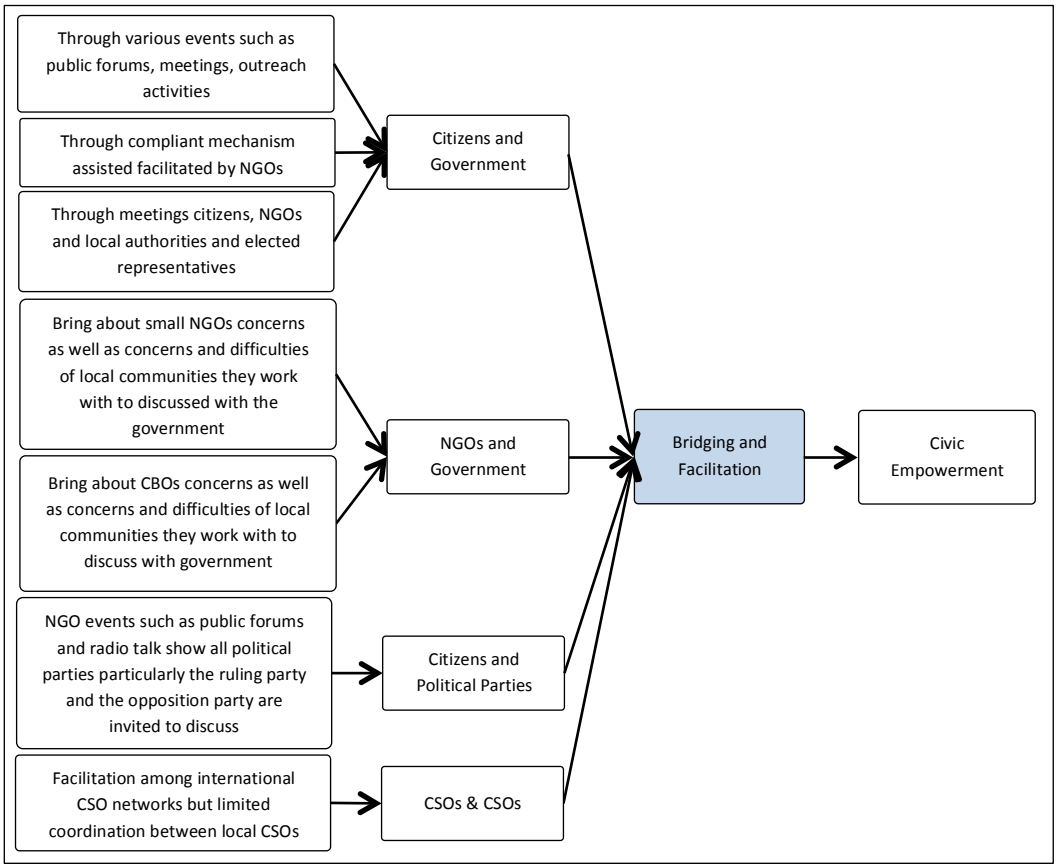
To sum up, civic mobilisation is a regular, important and influential activity through which NGOs gain public support to put pressure on the government, although this activity is difficult and sometimes receives negative reactions from the

government. In this study, civic mobilisation was found to be conducted to motivate the public to participate in various events, such as public forums, campaigns and meetings. One of the prominent mass mobilisations was a clean hand campaign where almost one million thumbprints of the people were collected to put pressure on the government to adopt the anti-corruption law.

Bridging and Facilitation

Due to the fact that the gap between relevant stakeholders in society, particularly between CSOs and the government remains huge, bridging and facilitation between diverse stakeholders is of great importance. Within this context, bridging and facilitation is meant to make a connection and narrow the gap between relevant stakeholders, usually of opposing viewpoints, and to promote their mutual communication in order that they understand and work together more productively, and relevant stakeholders' views are heard. According to the data, bridging and facilitation is made up by combining four emerging subcategories. This is composed of: between NGOs and government, citizens and government, citizens and political parties, and between CSOs and CSOs (Figure 35).

Figure 35: Bridging and facilitation to corruption prevention



Between Citizens and Government

As part of their interventions, NGOs try to bridge the gap between citizens and the government. Bridging and facilitating activities have been conducted through various means, such as public forms, and meetings. Public forums have been seen as the most popular event, where the government representatives and the public meet face to face and discuss various issues ranging from health services to local development and corruption. Sometimes they facilitate so that the people's representatives can talk with commune or district councils; sometimes they organise meetings between local communities and parliament institutions. NGOs also receive complaints from the general public and help them lodge their complaints, and give the complainants legal consultation.

Facilitation not only happens during meetings or forums but also before and after events. Before each event, NGOs sometimes help people to understand the topic

of what they are going to discuss and who should be the representative to raise their difficulties or concerns. In addition, the inquiries have to be specific to the points. It is noticeable that not all forums and meetings were run smoothly. Sometimes there has been a misunderstanding or disagreement around certain issues. Thus subsequent facilitation after the events is also found to be important to proceed further.

Bridging and facilitating between citizens and the government is basically conducted by way of, for example, organising events and inviting relevant stakeholders to participate and discuss their concerns, facilitating state authorities to do outreach, and facilitating the public to lodge their complaints. The following provides evidences for interventions that some NGOs have undertaken:

> *We are a bridge for participation of people into state programmes. Sometimes we help mobilise, assemble, organise to meet and discuss between state institutions and people. (P3)*
>
> *We just facilitate what people have in their mind to speak out. (P10)*
>
> *We facilitate for people representatives, […] to join the meeting with communes and districts […] We also have forums for mutual discussion relating to the challenges in the communities. (P2)*

The above quotes emphasised that bringing the two sectors to work together is crucial to promote good governance. Participation of the public in local affairs not only allows them to discuss and seek solutions to their concerns and challenges, but also promotes a culture of mutual understanding, direct communication and trust between citizens and local authority.

The data also reveals various other ways that NGOs try to facilitate and bridge the gap between the state and the public. For example, some organisations facilitated youth to participate in community events, such as commune meetings, and help them organise community forums through which authorities and people are able to work together to address issues happening in their community, as emphasised by Participant 5 below:

> *This programme starts allowing youth to participate in commune meetings in order that they can raise issues that they face for communes to address, this relates to governance in communes also. They started organising public forums between communes and citizens and they start to do some activities*

such as fund raising for roads and schools with the participation of the communes. (P5)

Some focused on outreach activities which means that NGOs facilitate subnational authorities to go on field visits, informing the people about, for example, incomes and expenses for the commune. As shown below, Participant 8 stated:

What we have done is to facilitate the councils […] we support the councils to do outreach. Outreach is to go field visit to ask for the people's health in small groups at locals and have the opportunity to answer questions, inform about the incomes, expenses, their decisions and give people the opportunity to ask questions and the issues that people raised we facilitate for them to be put in their annual plan. (P8)

Others paid attention to bridging the gaps between factory workers and public authorities, as expressed by Participant 4 in the following quote:

We also have forums between factory workers and relevant people, with trade unions and the government discussing about corruption in factories and the impact to outsiders. (P4)

Interestingly though, some organisations have expanded their bridging intervention between civil society, local authority and elected representatives. In relation to this, Participant 2 expressed that:

We work a lot on governance issue through, and with, elected representatives at both subnational levels and parliaments. […] The challenging issues are not only facing by people but also even by the territorial authorities, specifically the commune councils that do not have the capacity to solve. Thus it gives opportunities to authorities and communities to talk directly with elected representatives. (P2)

The above quote explained that such intervention is to bridge the gap between voters and elected representatives which, at the present, are separate from each other. This is to ensure that the elected representatives understand the challenging issues faced, not only by local communities and NGOs, but also by the local authorities as well.

Between NGOs and Government

NGOs also bridge the gap between NGOs and government. According to the data, some NGOs have difficulty meeting with the government representatives, thus, NGOs that are accessible to the government sector assist those who are not in order that they are able to meet and discuss their concerns. Participant 11 explained that:

> *[Name of an organisation] for Cambodia plays a role as a platform, an actor to link relations from small NGOs that do not have capability to talk to government so that they can talk to government […] thus [Name of an organisation] plays a role as a middleman to bring the difficulties, concerns, worries of membership organisations to talk with the government, to talk with concerned ministries. (P11)*

The above participant emphasised that, at a policy level, some NGOs, particularly those that work at the grassroots level, experience difficulty raising their concerns, as well as the concerns of the local communities they work with, with the government representatives. Thus NGOs that have good relationships and work with the government assist those NGOs to convey their concerns or difficulties to discuss with the government. Similarly, at the local level, NGOs help facilitate CBOs (community-based organisations) who have difficulties working with subnational authorities and provide an opportunity to meet and discuss with them relating to challenges in their communities, as Participant 2 indicated below:

> *We facilitate for […] CBO representatives to join the meeting with communes and districts […] Good governance is based on participation if there is no participation we cannot promote good governance. (P2)*

Between Citizens and Political Parties

Bridging the gap between citizens and political parties is another important intervention that NGOs have been undertaking. This mode of action is usually conducted in the form of a public forum or radio talk show where representatives of different political parties, particularly the opposition party and the ruling party, are invited to debate on a certain of topic, such as transparency and corruption, and the general public is allowed to participate and make inquiries about their concerns or problems that impact on their daily lives, as shown in the following examples:

We have done a lot of advocacy […] through workshops, conference we have discussed in radio programmes, public forums and we invite the representatives from political parties to debate about the principles of ensuring transparency, and anti-corruption. (P4)

Another, if we do any activities relating to politics we invite all political parties to participate. As a principle we invite all, for example, if we organise a public forum. (P5)

As indicated above, the activities of NGOs allow the general public to have an opportunity to meet with relevant political parties and make any inquiries about their concerns. The act of including both ruling and opposition parties in their activities demonstrates the impartiality of NGOs interventions and, especially, bridges the gap and brings them together to discuss the issues.

Between CSOs and CSOs

The data also suggests that NGOs have been involved in facilitation between CSOs and CSOs. Consider the following statement made by Participant 3:

We do facilitation work among international CSO networks and we are responsible for the Asia Pacific relating to the push for each country to implement the UN convention against corruption. (P3)

The above example mentioned facilitation among the international CSO network. However, the data reveal a lack of facilitation between local CSOs and local CSOs, which would ensure that all CSOs are united and work together as one voice. As is evident from the data, presently, there are several different groups of NGOs, some NGOs have formed an alliance with the government, some form one group and some others form other groups. This means that there is conflict among NGOs themselves, as some participants in this study highlighted below:

Even now NGOs that builds coalition […] together they do not get well together. Some networks still have a common principle they can join some cannot join […] If about 10 NGOs are getting well they can join but the others that are not satisfy they join and create another group. (P6)

Sometimes there is conflict between NGOs because of funding. Consider the following explanation expressed by Participant 14:

I'm not really sure NGOs [...] but I can see that there is lots of rivalry or fluctuation to work with each other because of funding issues. (P14)

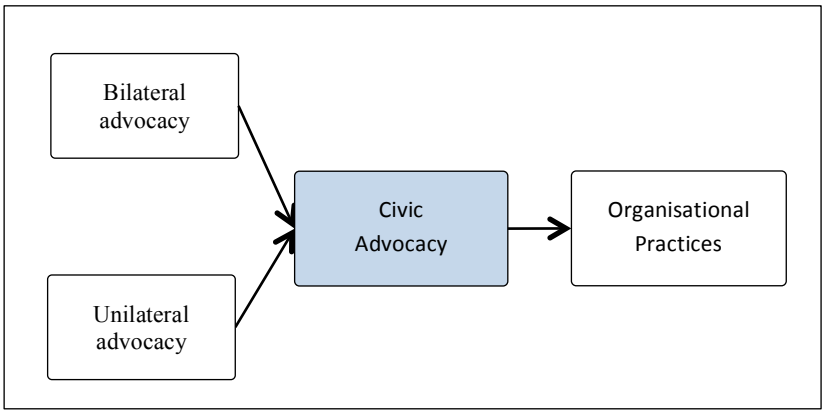
This pointed to the need for more coordination between local CSOs and CSOs in order that they work together as one voice, or they will not be influential in their intervention to put pressure on the public sector to make changes.

To conclude, bridging and facilitating plays a crucial role in bringing the two sectors, state and non-state, especially citizens and government, closer together. It is also found that bridging and facilitating empowers the public through which they have more courage to talk with, consult, and demand that public authority be transparent and accountable for their actions. This is, undoubtedly, ideal for promoting good governance and the concept of democratisation, which is essential for national development. However, NGOs seemed to ignore the involvement of the business sector in the process, where this sector takes significant responsibility in tackling corruption, as corruption usually occurs when the private and the public sector meets.

4.2.2.1.2. Civic Advocacy

According to the data, civic advocacy is a normal practice of governance-oriented NGOs. The term 'advocacy' gained its popularity among both local and international NGOs and development partners in Cambodia with the arrival of UNTAC in the early 1990s, and has become increasingly more popular in recent decades. Participants in this study refer to advocacy a process by which an organisation, an association, a union, a community, a group of organisations, a group of people, and even an individual person, aims to seek a solution, or to influence decisions and actions of the state authority, which affects them, or public interest as a whole. The terms frequently used in the advocacy context are: 'to push, to demand, to request, to propose, to remind, to debate and to persuade' the supply side to do whatever for the interest of the nation. Civic advocacy can be conducted through many different modes of activities, such as in meetings, forums and campaigns. The data suggest two apparently contradictory kinds of advocacy utilised by NGOs within the current Cambodian context: bilateral advocacy and unilateral advocacy (Figure 36).

Figure 36: Civic advocacy to corruption prevention



Overall, participants in this study see the significant role of advocacy as putting pressure on the government to be more transparent and accountable and, to a certain extent, taking action on certain issues. Note the following statements:

> *Corruption is also the same until we chant prayers to tell them to help, encourage them to do, to say, to report. (P12)*
>
> *We work on advocacy in order that the subject and problems are heard publicly and we put the issues for relevant institutions for their considerations and discussion and participation. (P3)*
>
> *Advocacy NGOs also try to help in a corner is...to remind or give remarks to government to rectify what remains as a problem to people. (P6)*

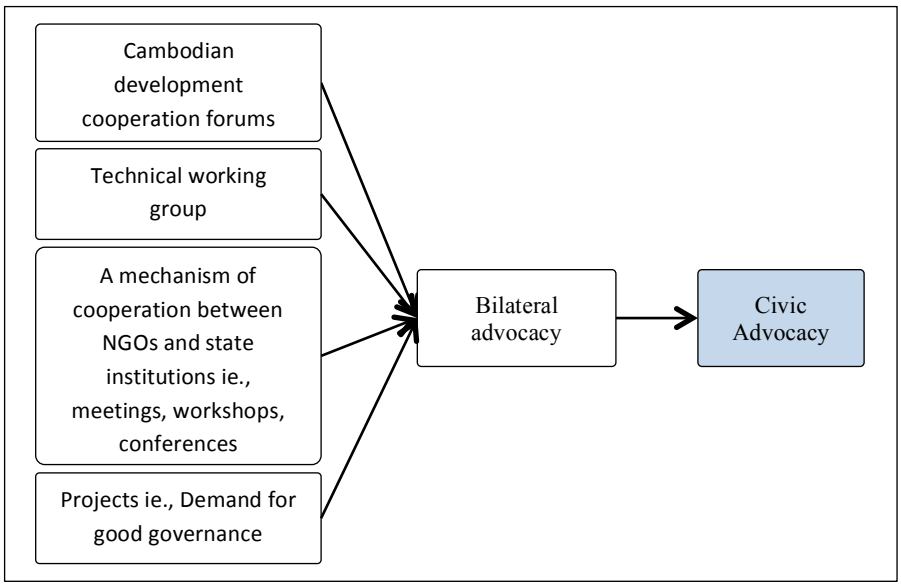
The above quotes indicated that unless there are suggestions, pushes, and demands from civil society, the government would not have cared much about the negative impacts of its actions and decisions, or about what is happening.

Bilateral Advocacy

Bilateral advocacy refers to any activity or event conducted with the involvement of state authority in the advocacy process (Figure 37). It can be a face-to-face dialogue between NGOs and government representatives, or NGOs, local community, development partners and other stakeholders with the government authority. There are various mechanisms between state and non-state actors that provide opportunities for NGOs to advocate and place demands on state actors to

accelerate their attention on promoting good governance, or fighting against corruption.

Figure 37: Bilateral advocacy to corruption prevention



At the national level, for example, NGOs also have space in the government technical working group to demand for the disclosure of government-held information, such as the disclosure of the expenditures of the national budget, as reported by Participant 11 below:

> *We have dialogues with the government representatives, sometimes we approach individual person sometimes via technical working group [...] to ask for the disclosure of documents, such as law on budget; we want to know how much budget is used annually. (P11)*

There is also a mechanism for cooperation between NGOs and relevant ministries and, through this, NGOs can express their opinion at various ministerial meetings, workshops, conferences, or seminars in which they cooperate. For example, Participant 10 maintained that:

> *We [...] had lots of meetings with the ministry of national assembly-senate relation and inspection that was then responsible for drafting the law and with the council of ministers. (P10)*

The World Bank funded Demand for Good Governance is a project where both state and non-state actors work together, and this provides a plethora of opportunities for NGOs to show off their capacity to work with, and advocate for, the government sector, as Participant 6 described below:

> *Recently we have a project which is close to finish called demand for good governance and that project has its branches relating to service delivery of one window service office and services provided by NGOs to help educate people to understand, waken up and to monitor the governance system at local levels, as well as various service delivery system, and there is a branch to help workers that have conflict with employers by using the arbitration. (P6)*

At the subnational level, a D&D programme provides great opportunities for NGOs to raise their concerns with provincial, district or communal authorities, as well as representatives from the national level. NGOs also organise public forums where NGOs and local communities can raise their difficulties, concerns and corruption issues to discuss with authorities, as some participants highlighted below:

> *We propose to have a debate, dialogue, discussion on that we give recommendations we can...such topics put into discussion through various mechanisms, for instance social forums, public forums, conferences, radio programmes that make such issues become an agenda […] That is what the politicians have to consider. (P4)*
>
> *The advocacy has something like… face-to-face dialogues, workshops or various consultation forums with participation from the government. (P12)*

Advocacy activities at the subnational level range from as simple as proposing local authorities to disclose public service fees, to expediting the process of services provisions. As seen below, participants in this study mentioned community forums through which CSOs and the public have the opportunity to advocate and seek solutions on certain issues from the local authority:

> *Relating to the push for transparency and good governance, we used to conduct public forums in communities. We invite commune chiefs, commune councillors, commune police to meet with people in the communes to talk about issues happening in their communes. People raise the issues and push the authority to address, for example, service fees. (P4)*

We enforce the government to change […] For example, they used to spend three weeks to make a birth certificate but we want them to make it in one week, or just two days, that is to help enforce. (P8)

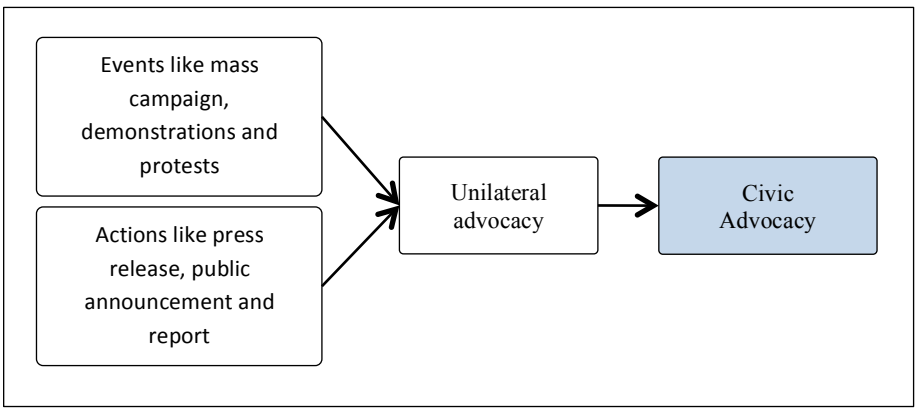
In addition, civic advocacy can be done through the media. Radio talk shows, for example, provide another important venue where NGOs and the public have a chance to discuss, make enquiries, and seek responses from the supply side about issues with which they are concerned. As is evident in the following quote, Participant 4 stated that:

We conduct forum with workers and government […] we invite government officials to the live talk show programme, they talk about activities that they have to do, people can call in and ask for this and that problem what can be done, for instance. (P4)

Unilateral Advocacy

Unilateral advocacy refers to any organised advocacy activities or events where there is involvement by the state actors in the process (Figure 38). This type of advocacy is frequently conducted in the form of a campaign, demonstration, protest, press release or public announcement. According to the data, unilateral advocacy is frequently conducted through reacting to actions and decisions of state institutions that negatively impact on public interests, for example reactions to inappropriate decisions by the ACU on detected corrupt officials and campaigning for the adoption of the anti-corruption law.

Figure 38: Unilateral advocacy to corruption prevention



Unilateral advocacy is more confrontational in comparison to bilateral advocacy. Sometimes it comes up with a controversial or aggressive response from the state actors. This appears to create misunderstanding between the two sectors, state and non-state, including the general public, who remain sceptical of one another. However, the majority of the participants in this study seemed to recommend the result it produces. One of the major events was the clean hand campaign where over one million thumbprints from the population were collected. Without such a massive campaign, which was designed to put pressure on the government, the anti-corruption law, which has been drafted since the mid-1990s, would not have been passed in 2010. This was the result of the continuous efforts of NGOs working together. The following quotes exemplified this sentiment:

> *We pushed for the creation of anti-corruption law [...] We collected thumbprints and brought petition more than one million to put at the council of ministers. (P13)*
>
> *[Name of an organisation] plays its important roles to persuade the government in order to start preparing the anti-corruption law, we have worked almost 10 years [...] we called a million signatures in order to advocate and bring the result to the Senate. (P8)*

The above examples demonstrated collective endeavours of NGOs pushing the government until the anti-corruption law was adopted. Once the anti-corruption law came into force, they pushed the government to enforce the law. As seen below, Participant 10 mentioned that:

> *Previously we conducted a campaign; match something like that, asking the government to implement the anti-corruption law correctly. Sometimes we had a press conference to react to that issue. (P10)*

The above example showed that the push for the government to do something relating to corruption is often conducted in an indirect way without the involvement of the state actor in that process, such as campaigns, and match and press conferences. This is because there is no proper existing mechanism where both parties, state and non-state actors, work together in a formal way. For example, NGOs push the government to amend the law when they observe loopholes in it. The following quote by Participant 10 pointed out loopholes that are evident in the anti-

corruption law:

> *With the government is to push for the implementation of laws and some revisions of certain laws because I see that there are many problems in the law, relating to the unclear definition (referring to anti-corruption law), and relating certain articles regarding whistle-blowers. (P10)*

Sometimes it is observable that NGOs react to actions and decisions made by the government which are deemed inappropriate. As seen below, the government does not punish corrupt officials because they claim that they valuable for the nation:

> *Recently about the finding of money by the global fund, the government said that officials are meritorious for the nation, thus they should not be punished. (P10)*

Moreover, the act of advocacy is not only to push for the implementation of the existing laws, or to amend certain contents in the law, but also to persuade the government to adopt some important laws. For example, some organisations are interested in campaigning for the creation of a law on access to information:

> *Actually we have played a part in a campaign to have the law on access to information because access to information will help us to see that the implementation of various laws is in a transparent manner, that we can see to avoid corruption. (P11)*
>
> *We work on advocacy relating to law on access to information (P3)*
>
> *We push for the law on access to information and conditions of the law, as well as the content of law, what should be included, something like that. (P4)*

Some are interested in campaigning for reform in the electoral system, including the establishment of political party financial law, as highlighted below.

> *We work on advocacy relating to […] reform of election system. (P3)*
>
> *CSOs also push for having a political party financial law. Each political party has to demonstrate how much money they spend for each electoral campaign and post on website how much they have… to avoid vote buying or the expense of money...have to be reported. (P13)*

In addition to lobbying for the creation of an anti-corruption law, a law on

access to information and political party financial law, one group of NGOs are interested in legal and judicial reform. This group participates in giving consultations on various draft bills, such as, recently, the law on supreme council of magistracy, the law on judge statute, and the law on the functioning of the court.

> *We focus on legal and judicial reform, such as we have given recommendations on various draft laws, such as anti-corruption law, peaceful demonstration law and, recently, we have given recommendations on three big laws, law on supreme council of magistracy, law on judge statute and law on the functioning of the court. (P12)*
>
> *We have done various advocacies relating to the reform of judicial system. (P3)*

Sometimes the act of advocacy is conducted in the form of compiling information into documents on issues relating to areas of concern and sending these to relevant state institutions and the parliament, seeking approval for appropriate actions. The following excerpts emphasised this:

> *Recently CSOs we have compiled various information relating to fishery, forestry offenses. We have compiled into documentations and we send the compiled documents to ACU, to national assembly in order that these two state institutions take actions. (P12)*
>
> *We also have produced certain investigating information relating to corruption issues and take that information and put for the public to debate. (P4)*

Although sometimes the act of unilateral advocacy faces serious challenges from the state authorities, such as the chase of arrest, detention of NGOs activists and fleeing to other countries, participants in this study seemed to be satisfied with the results, and will continue such activities, as Participant 11 mentioned below:

> *Previously there was a clean hand campaign. There were many NGOs that participated and if there are such mechanism happens again we will do. (P11)*

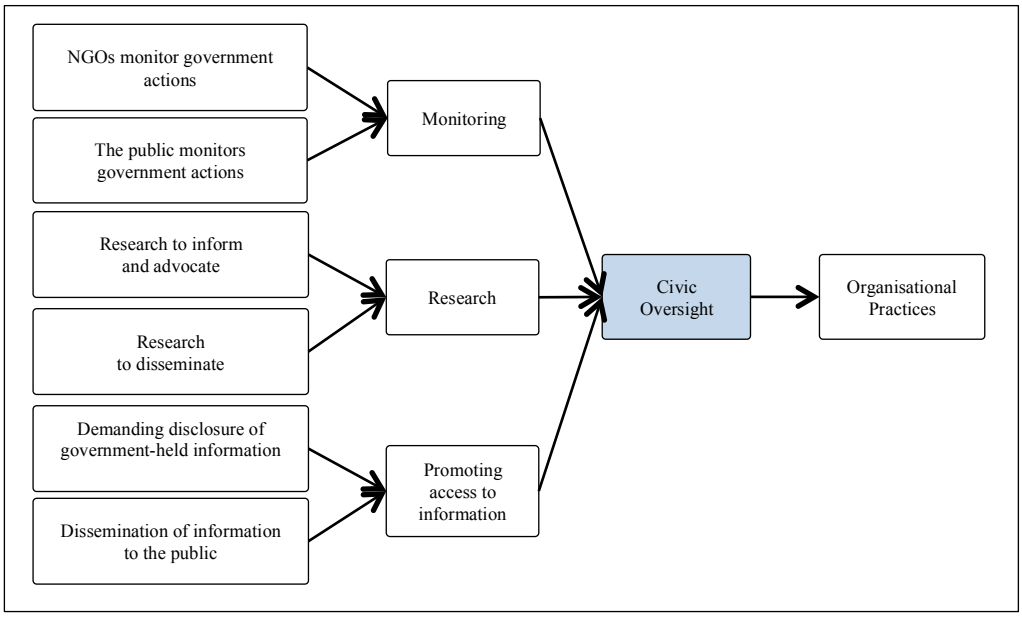
In brief, there are two different and apparently contradictory forms of advocacy utilised by governance-oriented NGOs, including bilateral and unilateral advocacy. Both of them are significant and one of the main roles that NGOs employ

is to dialogue with, and put pressure on, the government to make changes. Bilateral advocacy seems to be more appropriate since both the state and non-state actors try to work together in a cooperative way. Unilateral advocacy is more confrontational and sometimes receives aggressive responses from the government. This type of advocacy functions to make the two sectors remain sceptical about each other, and less cooperative.

4.2.2.1.3. Civic Oversight

Civic oversight refers to the act of overseeing the activities of government agencies, with the general public holding them accountable for their actions. According to the analysis, civic oversight surfaced from the combination of three categories: monitoring, research, and promotion access to information (Figure 39).

Figure 39: Civic oversight to corruption prevention

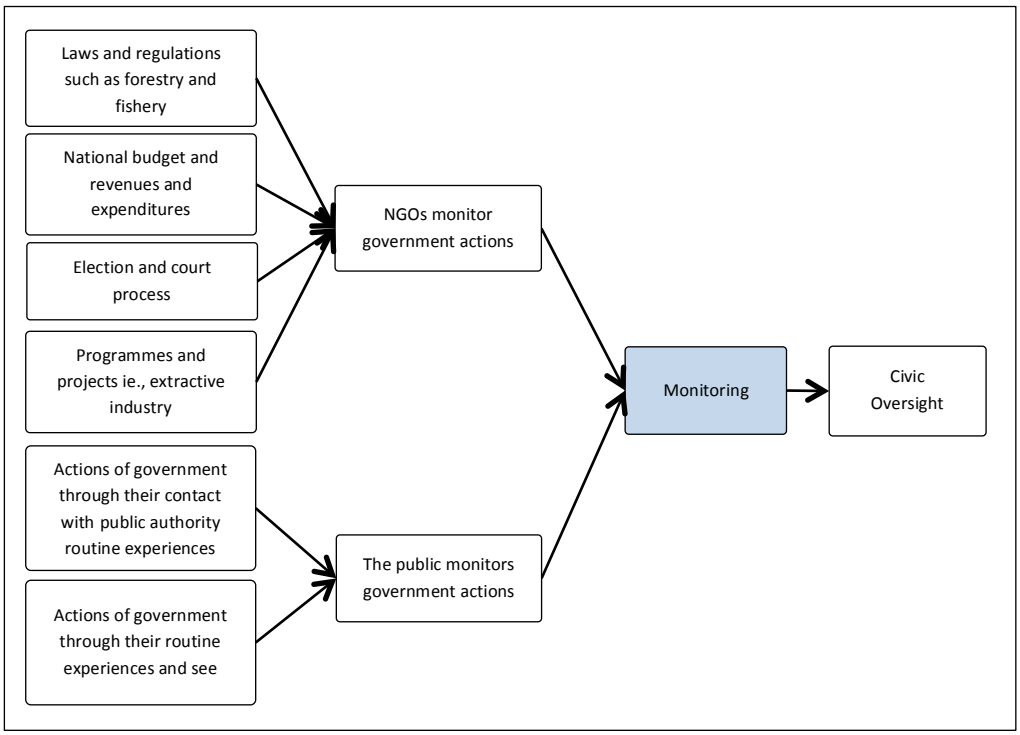


Monitoring

Within this context, monitoring refers to an act of keeping a close watch over government activities over time to ensure they are on the right track, shedding light on them, and reminding and seeking for corrective actions. Grounded in the data,

monitoring is divided into two separate subcategories: an act of monitoring taken by NGOs, and an act of monitoring conducted by the general public (Figure 40).

Figure 40: Monitoring to corruption prevention



Based on the data, monitoring activities were mostly conducted at a subnational level. For example, local communities participate with commune councils to monitor the implementation of commune projects or commune development processes, and the delivery of public services. At a national level, monitoring activities seemed to be less direct since there has not been any legal-based mechanism that allows the public to participate. It is a kind of observation rather than monitoring, such as the observation on the implementation of laws, public servant payroll system, and on governance systems in general. It is noticeable that NGOs not only monitor and observe the functioning of public institutions without taking actions, and they also conduct disseminations, make reports, and make public announcements to remind the government. Furthermore, they also sometimes make suggestions or recommendations to relevant government agencies, for example that the civil servant payroll system is not effective, the complaint handling mechanism is slow, and law enforcement is discriminative or unfair, and so forth.

In a broad sense, for example, the public, including NGOs, are entitled to

monitor government actions, as claimed by Participant 4 below:

> *NGOs, we are part of the citizens we are part of civil society. Thus when we take part in the election to allow those people to establish the government, to lead us, our obligation does not end after the election we have to monitor, scrutinise. This I think important that we have to monitor them. If we monitor alone it is not effective thus we have to work with the public in order that the public engage in monitoring and scrutinising the elected government. (P4)*

The above participant clearly stated that NGOs are part of the citizens who have the right to vote and their rights do not end after the election; rather, they have the right to monitor and scrutinise to hold the government accountable for their actions. This claim parallels with the Constitution of Kingdom of Cambodia article 35, paragraph 1 which reads:

> *'Khmer citizens of either sex shall have the right to participate actively in the political, economic, social and cultural life of the nation.' (The Constitution, 1993)*

Public rights are protected and their concerns are resolved properly by the state, as stipulated by the constitution article 31, paragraph 1 and article 35, paragraph 2 which reads:

> *'The Kingdom of Cambodia recognizes and respects human rights as stipulated in the United Nations Charter, the Universal Declaration of Human rights and the covenants and conventions related to human rights, women's rights and children's rights.' (The Constitution, 1993)*
>
> *'All requests from citizens shall be thoroughly considered and resolved by institutions of the state.' (The Constitution, 1993)*

NGOs Monitor Government Actions

There are a variety of activities NGOs are involved in to monitor government actions. For example, some conduct specific projects to oversee the effectiveness of national budget expenditures, whereas some NGOs claim to have conducted monitoring on corruption in the court of law, some create programmes or a hotline system where they are able to report on corrupt cases, and others attempt to monitor government revenues to be received from extractive industries. For example,

Participant 11 reported that:

> *We have a project that we oversee the national budget and effectiveness. Thus we want to know whether foreign aids are used correctly or not, the national budget allocation has been used as planned or not. (P11)*

The above participant confirmed that his organisation's act of monitoring help ensure both the effective allocation and transparent and accountable use of national budget and foreign aid, and the prevention of leakage through corruption. Adding to this, the data reveal various other activities relating to the act of monitoring as seen below:

> *We also involve in election observation too. (P13)*
>
> *We also conduct investigation corruption in the court. We investigate corruption on other issues like the wrong use of state power in compliance to the statute of public civil servants. (P1)*

The above quotes are just to demonstrate that NGOs are able to monitor various segments within the government apparatus. To a certain extent, they help shed light on government administrative processes to the public and this helps resist corrupt behaviours. Some organisations, more specifically, keep a close watch on thematic areas, such as forestry and fishery, in which corrupt incidences appeared to be pervasive. Notice the following example explained by Participant 12:

> *CSOs play a role in watching that issue and tell the public authority both national and subnational levels, tell them that the process of governance on forestry area is not quite good. We make documentations and we report to state authority to take action on these issues in the purpose of having good governance in the area of forestry, fishery as well as other fields. (P12)*

This participant indicated that some CSOs have been playing their parts in monitoring the actions of government officials in various fields, such as forestry and fishery. It is noteworthy that results were then disseminated to the public and reported to state authorities, both at national and subnational levels, seeking to be addressed. In addition, some organisations are interested in keeping an eye on the fulfilment of duties of local authorities and the procurement process in particular, as seen in the following quotes:

Now we are monitoring whether the services announced are applicable, or the price is higher or lower. (P2)

We monitor on certain process, for example, on bidding or procurement. We act as a watchdog thus we can also prevent. […] We do not get involved in that group but we observe something that relates to our project. (P3)

We follow up the implementation of projects that the communes have, such as relating to procurement and so forth. (P13)

Beyond this, some organisations are interested in monitoring the management of revenues to be received from extractive industries such as oil, gas and mines. Participant 9 stated:

My organisation […] is to monitor incomes that the government will receive from petrol, gas and mine. (P9)

This participant illustrated that although revenues from petrol, gas and mining has not been made, this coalition organisation gets itself ready to at least take part in ensuring the appropriate collection and use of revenues received from extractive industry to avoid the so-called 'resource curse' that has happened abroad.

The Public Monitors Government Actions

According to the data, public monitoring appeared to be a normal practice of the general public. However, the general public seemed give little consideration to what they experienced since there is no proper mechanism in place to encourage them to take action, as Participant 6 highlighted below:

The watchdog, if we say truly, people keep watching all the time but they do not have a system to bring the issues that they found to lodge a complaint to get it solved first; and second they do not dare talk about that issues […] people already see that issues we call the public eyes as the pineapple eyes. (P6)

As noted above, this participant asserted that the actions of government employees are under the observation of the public all the time. The participant compared the 'public eyes' to 'pineapple eyes'. This means that the actions of the government are seen by the public. If one does not experience it, another does. Public

monitoring has been conducted in two ways: through the use of social media and through facilities established by NGOs. Social media has been playing a significant role through which the general public has the opportunity to employ their rights to participate in monitoring actions of public officials. For example, Participant 11 pointed out that:

> *Social media plays important role, such as when we go along the streets we see policemen demand money from drivers who over load in their cars. We see clearly and some people who want to play a part in monitoring corruption they can take a photo and post in their social network to share with lots of people. (P11)*

This participant does not limit the act of monitoring by the public on government employees who engage in corrupt practices that they obviously witness, but also any act of wrongdoings by state authorities, or corrupt transactions they experience. Through social media the public is able to shed light on government activities and share information with many people. In addition to using social media, the public are also encouraged to use the report system created by NGOs through which the general public is able to make reports and complaints about corruption, or any misconduct by public officials. Some examples are provided below:

> *Other organisations such as [Name of an organisation], it has a report mechanism, for example, if we see corruption we can call to contact numbers provided. (P5)*
>
> *Recently there are some NGOs […] create other programmes to report about corruption cases. (P9)*
>
> *We have hotline. People call in when they see any happing event that can lead to corruption for instance, or the act of collusion between government officials... thus their purpose is to report thus we intervene, provide information thus it is prevented in a certain level. (P3)*

The above quotes emphasised that the report mechanism developed by NGOs facilitates the public to report on any corruption cases they encounter, and the report may also be used as evidence by NGOs as a basis for intervention which will help to deter further corrupt practices. Since everyone is part of society, everyone has the responsibility to collectively work together to monitor government actions, as Participant 4 mentioned below:

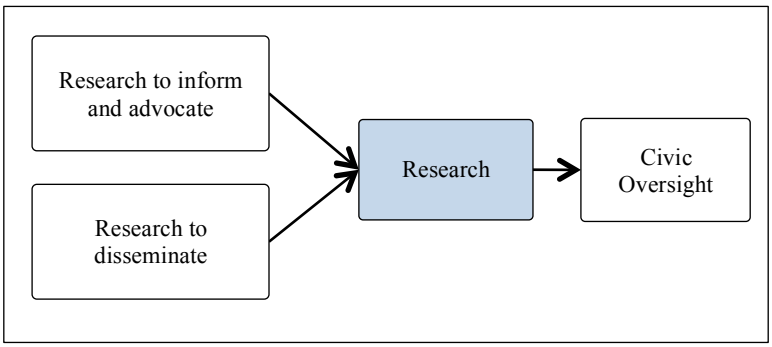
I think important that we have to monitor them. If we monitor alone it is not thus we have to work with the public in order that the public engage in monitoring and scrutinising the elected government. (P4)

To conclude, the act of monitoring government actions has been done by both NGOs and the public. It is generally found that NGOs monitor the government through their projects. This ranges from monitoring the implementation of laws by the government, such as fishery and forestry law, to monitoring national budget, revenues and expenditures, to election and court process, and to government programmes and projects, such as in the field of extractive industry. For the public, their act of monitoring is normally conducted through daily contact with public authorities, and what they routinely experience and witness in society in general.

Research

The data suggest that research is also an important activity. The majority of participants in this study also value the significance of research in supporting the effort to control corruption, as well as promote good governance. Research is knowledge development based on contextual situations and strong empirical-based evidence that NGOs employ to work with and intervene in the public sector. It is also a useful source of information as a base for most NGOs activities, such as dissemination to the public, making plans and making public announcements. In this study, research is fit over two emerging subcategories; namely, research to inform and advocate, and research to disseminate (Figure 41).

Figure 41: Research to corruption prevention



Information and Advocacy of Research

Research can build the knowledge held by NGOs about contextual problems. For example, some participants pointed out the significance of research in terms of its provisions to understand actual issues relating to corruption and good governance, or public perception on information, as highlighted below:

> *We conduct research in order to find out the sources of problems relating to corruption, transparency and social accountability. (P3)*
>
> *Major issues are… research relating the public systems at the present, for example, somewhere that are lacking, or somewhere that can be rectified to eliminate the opportunity to bribery something like that. (P9)*
>
> *We also conduct the research on that issue with the public, how people understand about access to information? Is it important? Do they need it? (P4)*

More importantly, research results provide strong bases for advocacy. For example, Participant 9 explained the contribution of research to advocacy, which is one of the major roles of governance-oriented NGOs, as follows:

> *We have research-based advocacy. This activity is to research in order to understand the existing mechanisms and to understand the present situation of the laws in order that we create recommendations to improve laws or draft laws and in order to do advocacy with relevant. (P9)*

The above participant explained that research assists her organisation to understand the current situation and existing mechanisms in place. Moreover, her organisation utilises research results as evidence to advocate with, or give recommendations to, the government. Similarly, some participants mentioned that research helps them to inform the government about what is really happening, and assist them in decision making and policy decision. As seen in the following quotes, Participants 3 and 8 maintained that:

> *We help in research, give information we can help. Give information to relevant institutions to know that what is corruption, how it happens, where it happens, at what levels? We provide them information and we provide news. (P3)*

NGOs… study, the results help inform the government in decision making, facilitating informing policy decision at national level. (P8)

In addition, the data suggest that, as an advocacy actor, NGOs cannot raise issues to discuss or advocate with the public sector based on personal feelings; indeed, they must be based on concrete, research-based evidence, as mentioned by Participants 2 and 11 below:

The issues cannot be raised based on feelings; they have to be based on research, based on evidence. (P2)

If we are an advocacy actor we do not based on imaginary. We take research as a basis, […] and we base on those findings to talk with the government. (P11)

In terms of research modes, the data suggest some different forms of research contained in this study. The following quotes outline these:

Previously we have case studies, exposure visits. (P7)

Another also is relating to research such as perception survey of people. (P9)

We develop score cards. It means similar to social accountability tools. I mean that the people participate in scoring that the authorities or communes work go well or not well, they satisfied or not satisfied. This has been done through our cards in order that they can give feedback. (P2)

Dissemination of Research

The data also suggest a couple of other major objectives of research. One of which is that research findings are used for the purpose of dissemination to the public to understand the contextual situations and problems in society. NGOs have been trying to empower the public with information and this information partly comes from research. As seen below, some participants summarised that:

The idea is for us to gather information then provide it to the public. (P14)

We research and find out we make announcements; we tell we talk to the public that the government has not fulfil the duties. It has resources but does not put into use. (P12)

The above quotes underscore the importance of research and public access to information. Without information, the public is unable to question government actions and decisions. As such, corruption may thrive because corruption is about lack of transparency and lack of communication, as Participant 14 pointed out below:

> *I think NGOs are good because […] they try to provide information to the general public and that's actually interesting because I think corruption is about lack of transparency, lack of communication. (P14)*

Research also plays an important role in developing organisational strategy. This means that through research findings, an organisation is able to fine-tune its organisational plan and target. For example, Participant 10 put this in the following way:

> *We start with research and then we analyse and determine some priority issues. Next we start planning, and during planning we encourage more engagement from relevant stakeholders, particularly participation from our target group in order that the issues are important for them or not or what that can help them. (P10)*

The above participant clearly explained that, through the use of research, his organisation comes up with, for example, clear ideas about what the priority issues to deal with are, who needs to be involved, and who the target group is, and so forth.

The data reveal certain modes that NGOs use to disseminate research results to the public. Media, website and workshops are mostly mentioned in this study, as outlined by Participants 4 and 13 below:

> *Spreading out information relating to research through media, workshops and something like that. (P13)*

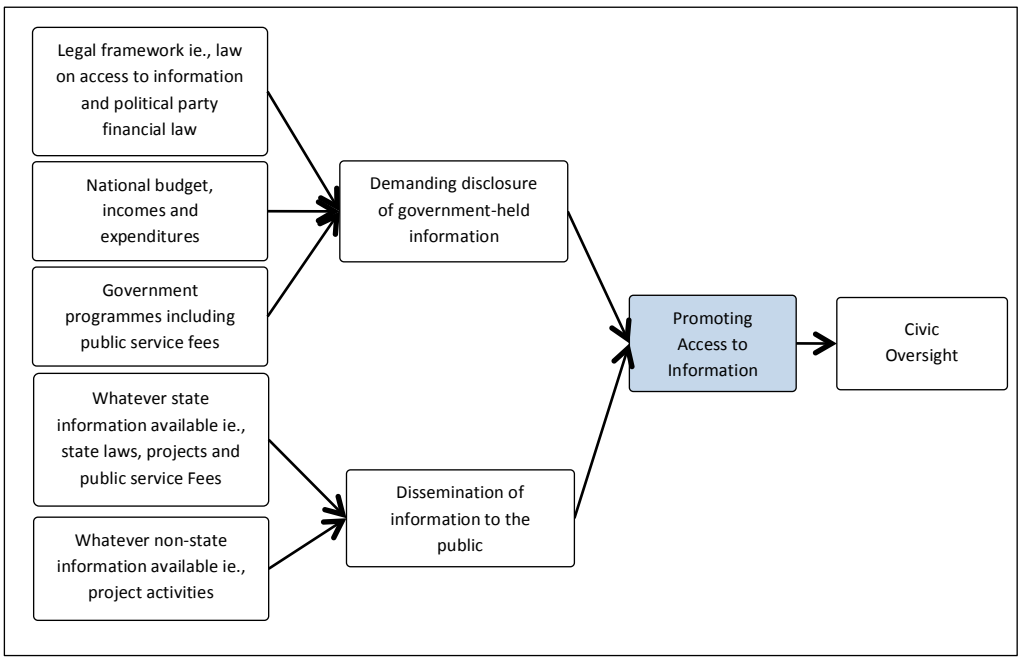
> *We create various media platforms to ensure that we can provide independent information to citizens, we can help citizens access to independent media. For example, we run radio station and website news and online reviews and so forth. (P4)*

Therefore, it is evident that research plays a significant part in knowledge building, and is a source of information NGOs utilise to inform and advocate with the public sector. It is also a source of information for developing an organisational strategy and plan.

Promoting Access to Information

Promoting access to information was recognised by most of the informants in this study as an essential approach to the fight against corruption. The data suggest two kinds of emergent interventions relating to access to information category: demanding disclosure of government held information, and dissemination of information to the public (Figure 42). The disclosure of government-held information means that the government opens up most of its information, except for so-called secret information, for example government programmes, revenues and expenses of the national budget. When the public has access to that information, they are able to assess whether what the government does is transparent and accountable, and then they are able to demand an explanation.

Figure 42: Promoting access to information to corruption prevention



At the level of policy, some organisations put their efforts into pushing the government to create a legal framework concerning the disclosure of government-held information. According to the data, one of the fundamental legal frameworks is the law on access to information. As highlighted below, some participants reported that:

We have played a part in a campaign to have the law on access to information because access to information will help us to see that the implementation of various laws is in a transparent manner that we can see to avoid corruption. (P11)

I mentioned about […] access to information we have a working group to work on access to information. (P13)

We push for the law on access to information. (P4)

As noted above, these participants emphasised the essence of information. As long as the government-held information remains closed, there is no transparency and accountability in the way the government and the public officials manage and conduct their work. Further, without information, the general public, including NGOs, are not able to oversee the government actions, as well as hold them accountable for their actions. For example, some participants illustrated that:

We are demanding for the law of access to information. When we have that law Cambodian people have the right to ask for information and they know various official fees and something like that. This is […] a mechanism to prevent corruption in Cambodia as well as to achieve good governance. (P12)

We have an organisation that work on law of access to information. We see that this law is important because if we can ask for information from the government or from the subnational institutions […] we can scrutinise, if not why? When we get that information we will compare to law. (P9)

These remarks indicated that the law of access to information is a crucial part in reducing corruption. The presence of this law allows people access to public held information. This means that the public has the right to ask the government to release its revenues, for example, and thus the public is able to monitor it. However, in the absence of this law, corrupt acts occur because no one knows whether the government is acting accountably and accurately, or not. Consider the following example by Participant 2 concerning the fishing lot bidding below:

We believe that if there is no disclosure of information widely we cannot fight against corruption. For example, if we want to bid for a fishing lot, if there is no announcement about the bidding processes, who participates in the bidding, corruption is in there. Thus […] our campaign is to push for the disclosure of information. We push for the law on access to information. (P2)

In addition to the law on the right of access to information, some organisations have demanded for the disclosure of the national budgets and documents relating to state expenditures, while others have been pushing for the adoption of the law on political party finance and for the disclosure of electoral campaign spending. The following quotes exemplified these sentiments:

> *National budget, we try to do whatever in order that the government discloses all documentations relating to state expenditures. (P11)*
>
> *CSOs also push for having a political party financial law each political party has to demonstrate how much money they spend for each electoral campaign and post on website how much they have… to avoid vote buying or the expense of money. (P13)*

As described, at the higher level, the focus is on these hot issues which are prone to corruption. At the lower level, the demand for the disclosure of information is concentrated particularly around public services fees, incomes and expenses at subnational. For example, Participant 8 explained that:

> *We have cooperated with the ACU to implement a project called clean white communes. This project helps the commune councils declare the incomes and expenses show the actual service fees, how much is for the birth certificate according the law. (P8)*

In addition to demanding the government to adopt the law on access to information and the disclosure of relevant public information to the public, some NGOs have also made considerable effort to gather whatever information is available and convey it to the public. Participant 14 summarised this as follows:

> *The idea is for us to gather information… then provide it to the public. (P14)*

This implied that the public is in need of information and, thus, collecting and providing information to the public is essential. However, limited access to government held information negatively impacts on them, as Participant 5 and 10 put simply below:

> *Lack of information is a major factor affecting people. (P5)*

People do not know to say the truth, people lack of access to information. (P10)

This means that lack of information not only prevents them from understanding what happened in society, and prevents them from participating in public affairs, but it also negatively affects people's livelihoods. Instead, public access to information allows them to participate and demand, as some participants in this study mentioned below:

People lack of access to information, thus we tell them about the official fees when they know they start to demand. (P10)

Good governance requires participation and, in order to have participation from the people, information is required. If they do not have information they do not know when there will be a meeting to prepare a plan, where the meeting is, what the commune plan to do, how much funds the commune has. If all the information is closed, how can people participate? (P2)

This implied a connection between the essence of information and its connection to public participation in social affairs. Based on the data contained in this study, the dissemination of information can be achieved through various means, such as the media and workshops, as seen in the following excerpts:

Spreading out information relating to research through media, workshops and something like that. (P13)

We create various media platforms to ensure that we can provide independent information to citizens [...] For example, we run radio station and website news and online reviews and so forth. (P4)

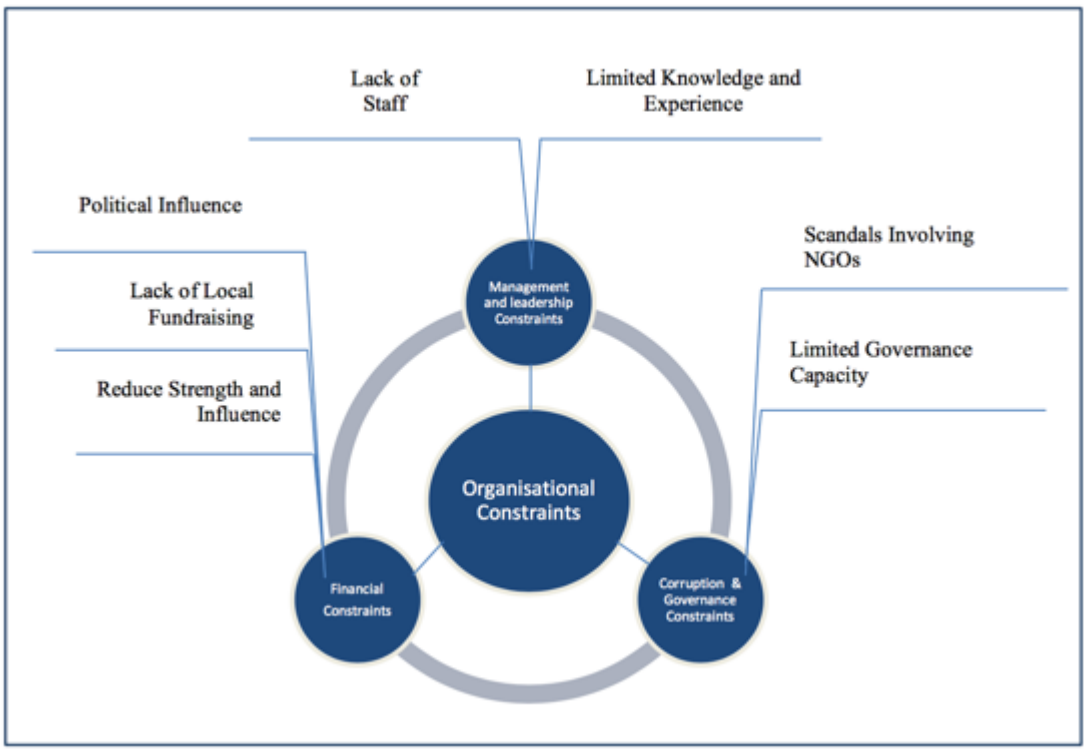
In brief, NGOs have been trying to promote public access to government-held information. They not only advocate the government to adopt a certain legal framework concerning information, and push the government to disclose its information, but also, at the same time, make the effort to disseminate whatever information is available to the public. At the current stage, law on access to information and political party financial law seem to be their main focus. The national budget and revenues and expenditures, including public service fees, are also other major aspects of concern. The data show diversified modes of information dissemination, such as through print, broadcast media and workshops. However, it is

noticeable that while trying to advocate the government to release information to the public, NGOs seem to forget that they have to disclose their information and release their project activities and expenses upon request. As such, there is a need for NGOs to reconsider this aspect by acting as a role model, or their efforts will yield no influence on the government.

4.2.2.2. Organisational Constraints

Along with contextual traps, organisational constraints on NGOs also influence the intensity and effectiveness of their operations. The analysis suggests that there are three emergent themes relating to organisational constraints: management and leadership constraints, corruption and governance constraints, and financial constraints (Figure 43).

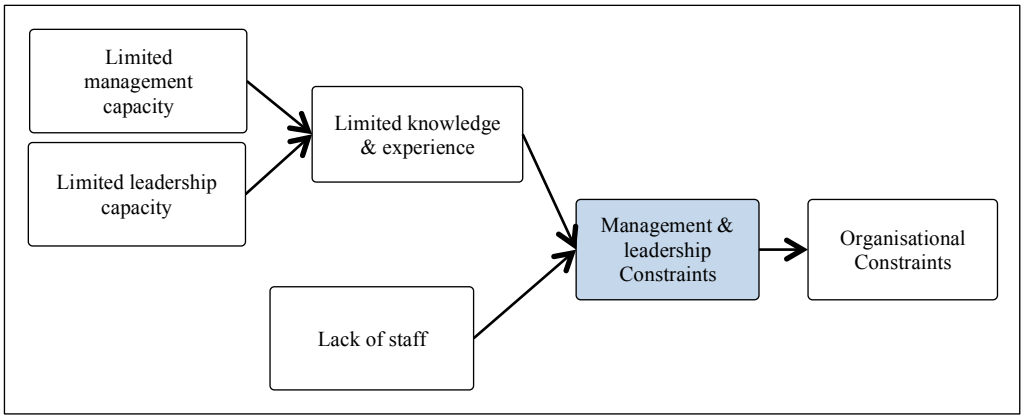
Figure 43: Organisational constraints to effective intervention



4.2.2.2.1. Management and Leadership Constraints

Management and leadership capacity ensure the quality and effective operations of the organisation and vice versa: limited management and leadership quality constrains the smoothness and effectiveness of interventions. According to the analysis, management and leadership constraint is constituted by the integration of two emergent categories. These include limited knowledge and experience, and lack of staff (Figure 44).

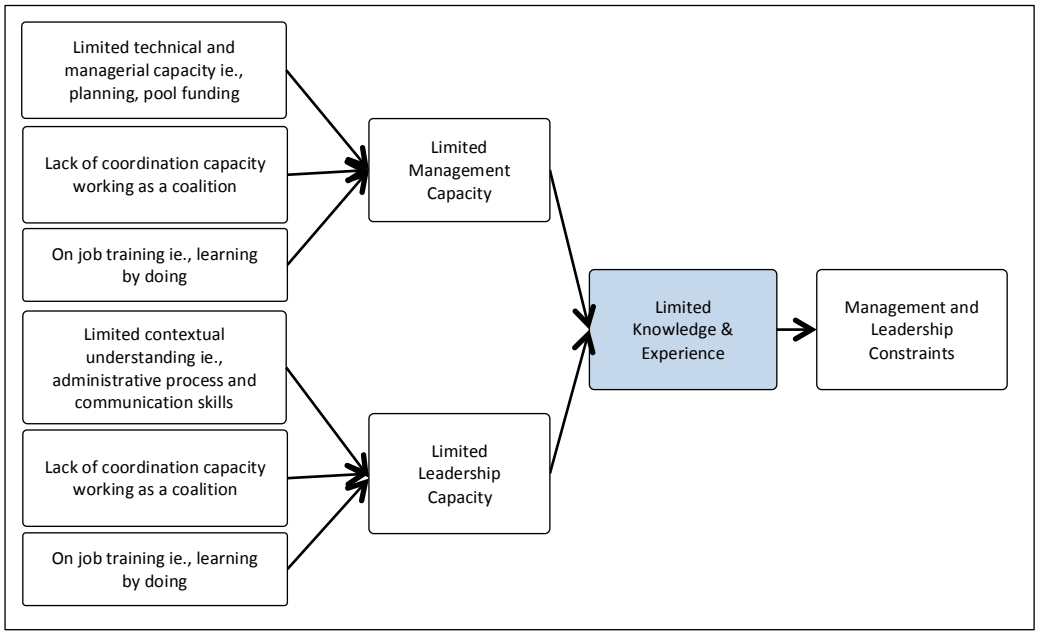
Figure 44: Management and leadership constraints to effective intervention



Limited Knowledge and Experience

As is evident from the data, limited knowledge and experience fits within two emergent subcategories, including limited management capacity and limited leadership capacity (Figure 45).

Figure 45: Limitation of institutional knowledge and experiences



The following paragraphs discuss how participants in this study explained the barriers to their operations relating to management, leadership knowledge and capacity. For example, Participant 2 argued that:

> *There are also some internal obstacles for NGOs. We see that we are learning by doing, we are not graduated in that work […] Thus, the system of working sometimes is conflicting […] Then it is a very strong challenge if talking about internal, challenge about leadership and management is serious. (P2)*

The above participant clearly emphasised that the work relating to governance and decentralisation remains a concern for his organisation because they are at the stage of learning and, at the same time, doing. Therefore, it is very challenging to manage and lead, as well as to work professionally. Similar to this, Participant 4, who works for the media NGO, discussed the constraints his organisation encounters due to the lack of both technical and managerial capacity. Note the following quote:

> *Internally, first is about capacity, the capacity of human resources relating to technical and managerial capacity. […] school curriculum in our country if*

you study to write technicality, you only write about technicality or about writing newspaper articles only about newspaper. Our curriculum is not broad. (P4)

As described, this participant referred in general to the lack of knowledge and skills of people relating to the media, due to the limited human resources and capacity of the media in Cambodia, since the educational curriculum is not intensive. As such, the technical and managerial capacity relating to the media remains a constraint to this organisation. In addition, some organisations are concerned about the ability to manage and lead the coalition organisation. They complained that each coalition member has a different understanding and runs separate programmes. This makes them difficult to coordinate and work smoothly together, as claimed by Participant 9 below:

Working as a coalition is difficult, it is different form managing an organisation that have enough staff and have separate programmes and lead by one person, coalition members lead themselves. This means that there are 5 to 7 persons and they have different understanding, our work is to ensure that they understand jointly and agree together. (P9)

More specifically, some organisations highlighted their limited specialised management capacity, such as monitoring and evaluation (M&E), planning and pool funding. The following quotes highlighted these sentiments:

Our staff has limited capacity on this area to such as M&E etc. (P10)

The preparation of my secretariat's plan makes people work beyond the capacity of human resources. Frankly speaking, we have only three people to fulfil our work but there are many activities, thus this relates to the issue of preparing the strategic plan or work organisation. (P9)

We have one project and there are 3-4 donors, thus there is different understanding of donors in one project and there are different reporting on finance, activities or the time that each donor starts to grant is different. Thus it makes us difficult in managing as a budget. (P9)

In addition, the limited capacity of staff in their specific work areas is also a concern. For example, Participant 9 complained about the lack of her organisational capacity in extractive industries, such as oil and gas:

My secretariat staff does not have high capacity on my subject, their capacity is limited but they have will to learn and to struggle in their work. (P9)

Another aspect which creates a barrier to the organisational operation is relating to the communication capacity of NGOs. The data reveal that lack of communication capacity and understanding the administrative process of the government constrains the interventions of NGOs:

The use of administrative system is very important to have our relationship even closer. We do not go directly like [Name of an NGO] while implementing its project when arriving at the location they chased back. That was because the lack of mechanism, knowledge about administration and diplomatic relations. (P1)

Lack of experience of staff not only falls on local NGO staff, but also foreign employees. Note the explanation given by Participant 14 below:

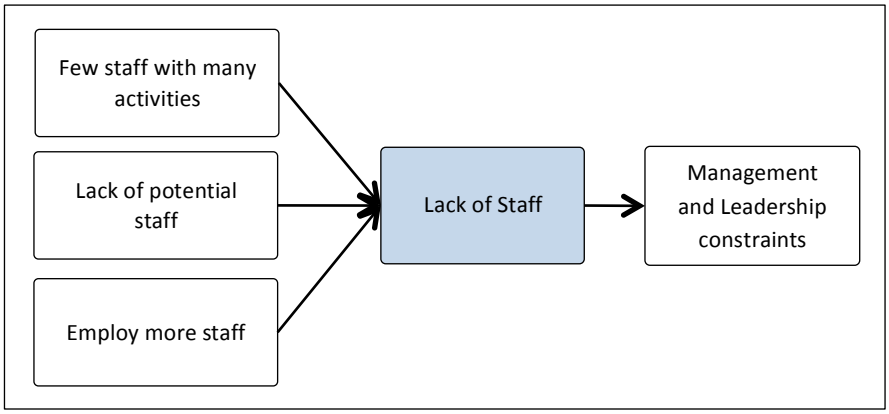
Sometimes we have foreigners involve in our work I guess…they're very short term so that can make things very difficult because they are here for three months six months and then they leave and so that can make things difficult and also they actually come with certain ideas […] and they take a need of time for them to understand that we don't do things this way here for Cambodia and in this organisation. (P14)

The above participant emphasised that, although foreign staff are usually knowledgeable, they have to spend some time to understand the Cambodian way of working. This impacts foreign employees' ability to work effectively and productively, because of their short term contract.

Lack of Staff

In addition to the limitation of management and leadership quality, the data also reveal the barrier due to the lack of staff (Figure 46).

Figure 46: Lack of staff constrains to effective intervention



The following comment by one of the participants highlights the lack of human resources and its impact on the operations of an NGO. For example, Participant 9 indicated that her coalition organisation only has three people, which makes it very difficult for them to fulfil their work roles. This executive director of a coalition NGO noted:

> *Frankly speaking we have only three people to fulfil our work but there are many activities. (P9)*

Although the above participant did not mention a barrier to its operations due to the lack of organisational staff, one can imagine the diminished quality of task performance when staff are required to work beyond their capacity. Similarly, when asked about internal factors that constrain his organisation's operations, Participant 13 mentioned that:

> *We are trying to earn more funds to enlarge our unit, such as employ more staff, something like that, in order to become a strong institution. (P13)*

As described, this implied that lack of staff remains a constraint to the possibility of the organisational potential and the lack of staff is connected to the organisational budget (see a detailed description of this in the financial constraint section). Adding to this, another participant indicated that there was a lack of staff in his organisation with potential, due to the short duration of the project. This means that during the project his organisation built capacity of staff but, when the project ended, they left for another job. Thus the organisation has to build up staff capacity

again when a new project comes. Participant 8 clarified this as follows:

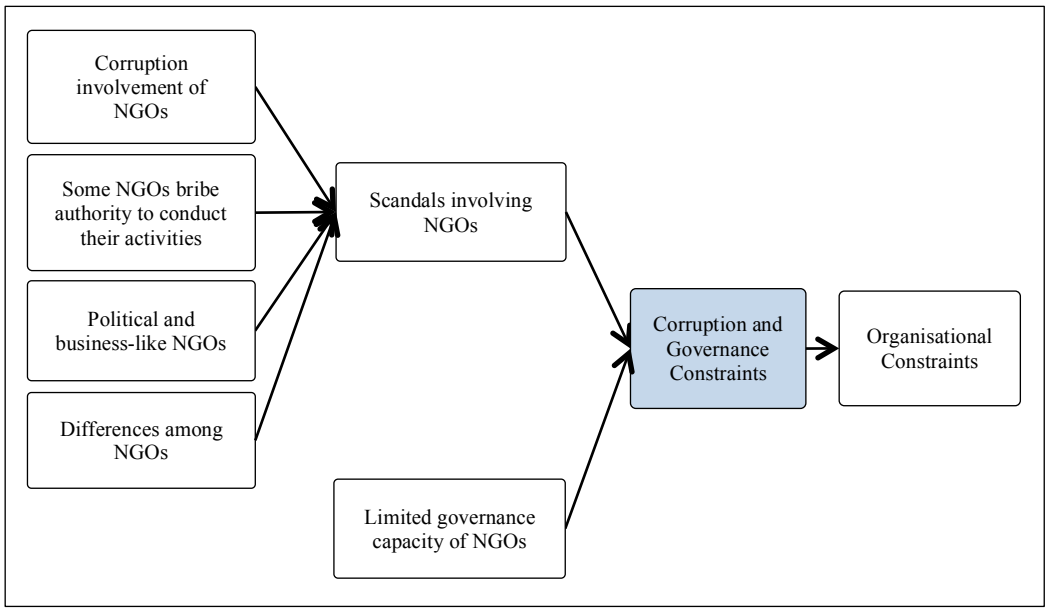
> *The project does not have continuity; I want to say that the commitment from funders is short. Thus, our staff that we have been built them up they go for other job and then we need to build new staff. (P8)*

To sum up, it is noticeable that the lack of knowledge and experience of NGOs remains a constraint to the effective operation of NGOs to play their part in promoting good governance, as well as preventing corruption in Cambodia. Overall, this relates to the management and leadership capacity of the organisation. In terms of management, most of the organisations who participated in this study maintained that they challenged both technical and managerial aspects. They are at the stage of learning and, at the same time, doing. For example, they have difficulty in managing pool funding and developing a sound strategic plan. Regarding leadership constraint, the data reveal the lack of coordination capacity and this relates to the limited contextual understanding of NGOs, particularly public sector administrative process and communication skills. Lack of organisational staff also reveals a barrier to smooth organisational functioning.

4.2.2.2.2. Corruption and Governance Constraints

The data reveal that the reputation and effective interventions of NGOs has been impacted by issues relating to governance capacity and corruption. Corruption and governance constraints surfaced by combining two emergent categories which are composed of: the scandal of NGOs, and limited governance capacity of NGOs (Figure 47).

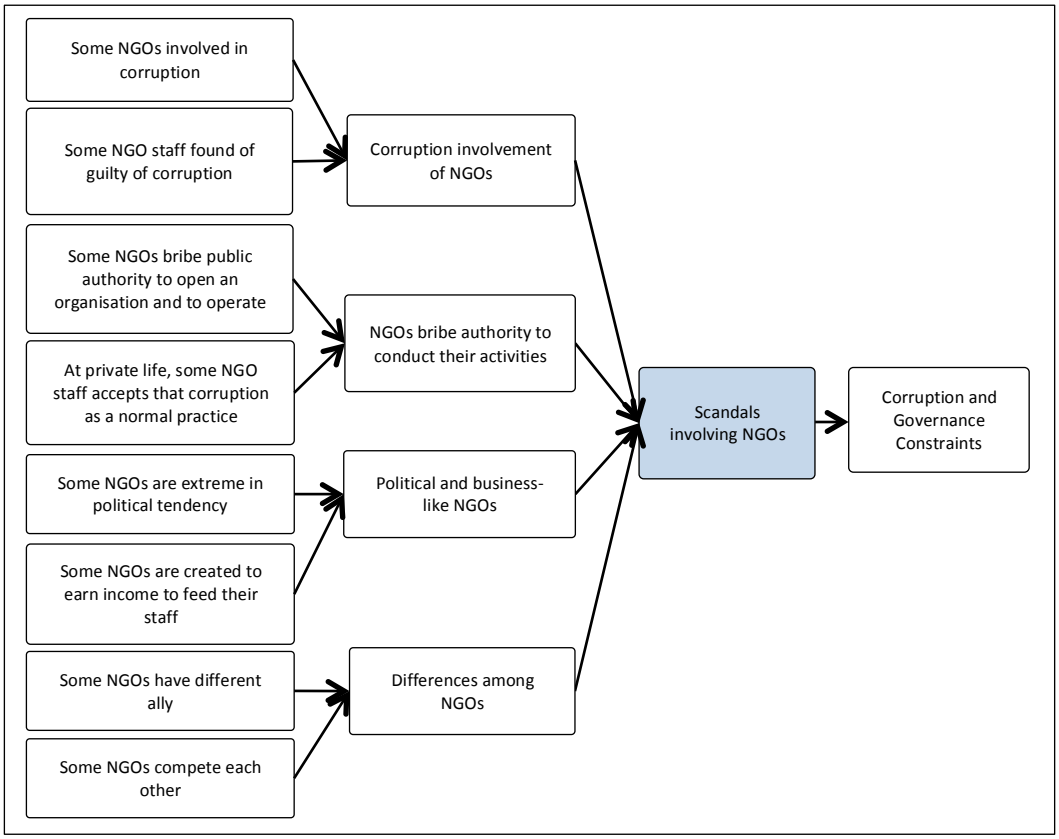
Figure 47: Corruption and governance constraints to effective intervention



Scandals Involving NGOs

It is clear from the analysis that there were a number of problems initiated by NGOs that constrain their interventions. For example, a number of participants in the study claimed that some NGOs are involved in corrupt practices. This influences the reputation and effectiveness of NGOs that work on good governance and resisting corruption in the public sector. Indeed, some NGOs are just business-like NGOs. They are created to earn incomes for their organisations and staff. More extremely, at least one participant claimed that some NGOs have political tendencies and some play their roles as the opposition party. For example, they announce in public that they vote for one political party and not for another. It was also noted that NGOs demand that the government obey the law; however, NGOs themselves are afraid of NGO law. This is also a problem that leads NGOs to play their roles confusingly and exceed the limitations of serving the public interests (Figure 48).

Figure 48: Scandals involving NGOs constrains to effective intervention



Corruption Involvement of NGOs

The data reveal that some NGOs are involved in corrupt practices. As long as governance-oriented NGOs are themselves involved in corrupt behaviours, there is no way that they are able to push the public sector to be clean in its operations. The following were some explanations from participants in this study relating to corruption practiced by NGOs. As seen below, some participants made clear that:

> *In the past [Name of an NGO] used to dismiss staff because we found out that our staff was relevant to corruption. (P11)*
>
> *The problem that we have seen is that there are some NGOs also corrupt. (P3)*
>
> *There are many NGOs that have been found out that there is internal corruption among NGOs themselves. (P6)*

The above claims demonstrated the involvement of NGOs in corrupt practices. This not only happened in the past, but also exists at the present. Note two different cases reported by Participant 6 below:

> *Recently we hear that there is an NGO, along with the ministry of health, is corrupt until the WTO declares cut aid with the ministry of health because the NGO is corrupt, (P6)*
>
> *Frankly speaking, I work directly, I also know the persons. There are many NGOs that cheat donor funds to enrich themselves, it exists the same. (P6)*

Further to these examples, sometimes NGOs are involved in bribing public authority. Such an act is evident when NGOs start to communicate with public authority to conduct their projects. For example, Participants 5 and 11 highlighted that:

> *NGOs themselves involve in corruption with authorities, how they involve, when they want to do some activities, they give money to authorities. (P5)*
>
> *When we invite speakers we give them souvenirs and so forth and sometimes we pay them petrol […] when we ask permission to open an organisation, we have to pay, there are middlemen and something like that. (P11)*

These remarks demonstrated that NGOs have been involved in corruption since the beginning, such as requesting to open up an NGO, to project implementation, although sometimes they have not gone directly to the public authority. It is also noticed that, at the private level, the involvement of NGO employees in bribing public officials appears to be a normal practice within the Cambodian social context, as Participant 5 mentioned below:

> *We are in a society that we have to do that, how can we avoid, if we avoid who will sort it out for us. […] if we do not give them they will not do for us. (P5)*

Therefore, the involvement of NGOs in corrupt practices makes it difficult for them to push the government to promote good governance, or to resist corruption, because NGOs are also corrupt. Khmer phrase refers this to *'leang kout kluon eng oy chres sen sem leang kuot nak dor tey'* which literally means that 'make your bottom clean before making another clean', meaning that 'fix your own mess before fixing

others'. It is believed that if you have not made yourselves clean, there is no way to make others clean. Therefore, NGOs have to free themselves from corruption involvement prior to pushing the public sector to be free from corruption.

Political and Business-Like NGOs

Another element which makes the reputation and operations of NGOs problematic and ineffective relates to the political tendencies and business-like approach of NGOs. Regarding political tendencies, for example, Participant 6 pointed out that:

> *There are NGOs are extreme in political tendency; some NGOs play their roles as the opposition party […] They declare to mobilise to vote for one party and against another openly in newspaper. (P6)*

This participant demonstrated that some NGOs play their roles beyond the frontier of civic organisation to serve the interests of the general public by participating in political life, attacking one party and mobilising the public to support another political party. Such a position shows the partiality of NGOs in their intervention. Participant 8 simply stated that:

> *Some NGOs play their roles confusingly. (P8)*

Further, another element which pollutes the environment within the NGO sector is that some NGOs work just like a business company. This means they are not interested in serving the public in general, but merely for the survival of their organisation and employees. Note the remark given by Participant 6 below:

> *I have mentioned only two types of NGOs, NGOs that work on advocacy and NGOs that work on development but in each individual part there are […] NGOs that are just created to earn income to feed their own staff without clear targets. (P6)*

It is also noteworthy that the demand of some NGOs to remain outside the framework of the state legal framework may be problematic. The absence of NGO law has created the NGO sector without clear roles and functions to operate. In

relation to this, Participant 6 also pointed out that:

> *NGOs demand the government to obey the laws and to have commitment on that issues but […] NGOs do not want to have NGO law. This is a problem […] If NGOs do not have their clear system, clear law, they cannot speak out to the government. (P6)*

This participant stressed that, as long as NGOs do not have a legal framework it is not easy for them to work with, and give constructive criticism to, the government. This same participant also highlighted that without a clear legal framework, NGOs will never know exactly where they should go, as seen in the following quote:

> *Thus there should be an NGO law otherwise they do not know their frontier where they should stay. (P6)*

Another barrier which makes NGOs problematic is in relation to their staff asset declaration. For example, the rejection of NGOs concerning the declaration of asset of NGO employees demonstrates that NGOs are not committed and ready to work on promoting good governance and corruption prevention. Note the following comment from Participant 6:

> *ACU also proposes that the NGO officials should also declare their assets, the director of an NGO and NGOs immediately reject that proposal, NGOs themselves want to stay outside the law. (P6)*

This denoted that NGOs merely want the government official to be governed by the state law but want to keep themselves outside the legal framework. This position reveals the problem within the NGO sector which makes it difficult for them to work effectively, as they cannot act as a model to show the government that they are open, transparent and accountable in what they are doing.

Differences among NGOs

The data reveal that differences among NGOs are also a barrier. The differences among NGOs only make their common voices split and, thus, the force of advocacy is less effective and influential. Following are observations made by some

of the participants:

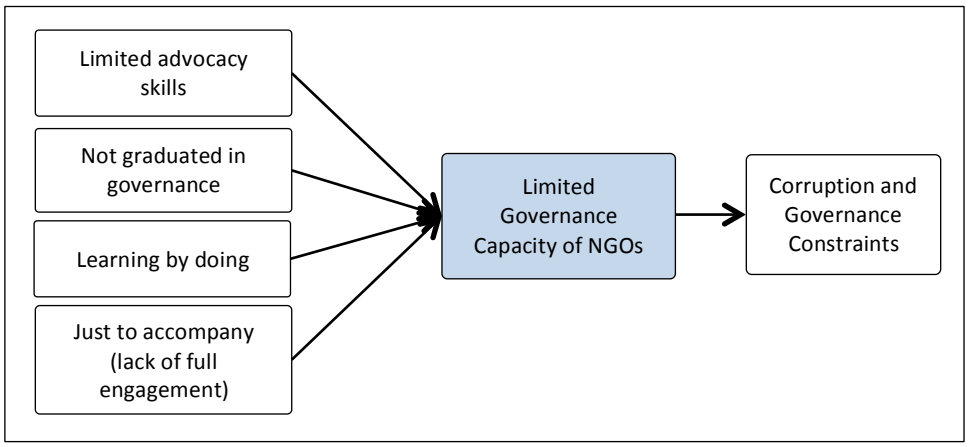
> *I believe that they have to collaborate well...because some organisations seem to compete each other... Thus when they compete each other, they make the force of advocacy goes down. (P3)*
>
> *Even now NGOs that builds coalition [some name of NGOs] or some other groups that they build networks together they do not get well together. (P6)*
>
> *I can see that there is lots of rivalry or fluctuation to work with each other because of funding issues because anybody competes for the same advance… but may be working more together. (P14)*

The above quotes simply emphasised that differences among the NGO sector, no matter what they are, diminish the reputation of NGOs and make them less effective.

Limited Governance Capacity

Limited governance capacity of NGOs is also a challenge. As highlighted by some participants, NGOs work on governance issues but they lack knowledge and experience when it comes to governance. This, no doubt, negatively impacts on their performance. The majority of participants in this study accept that governance is quite a new concept to Cambodia. For example, one interviewee indicated that his organisation is 'learning by doing' from the experiences of other countries. Some added that they lack advocacy skills; others claimed that due to the lack of capacity in governance issues this makes some NGOs that cooperate with the public sector prefer to accompany, rather than to advocate or provide constructive ideas for government to be taken for consideration (Figure 49).

Figure 49: Limited governance capacity constrains to effective intervention



The data suggest that NGOs experience a great challenge due to their limitation in governance capacity. As shown below, some participants mentioned that:

> *In my organisation those who understand a lot or work long about governance is only me and for other staff […] they understand just the basic concept […] this is also a challenge. (P10)*
>
> *My secretariat staff does not have high capacity on my subject, their capacity is limited but they have will to learn and to struggle in their work. […] and advocacy skills they are limited. (P9)*
>
> *There are also some internal obstacles for NGOs. We see that we are learning by doing we are not graduated in that work […] Thus we also learn and we also do. (P2)*

As noted, these remarks clearly indicated that NGOs have not matured in their work in governance issues and this negatively influences their operations. This is perhaps the reason why NGOs interventions are less productive, as pointed out by Participant 1 below:

> *Even CSOs formerly have signed MOU with ACU but I see that there has no priority to take part in-depth with ACU. Just to accompany as what I saw previously. (P1)*

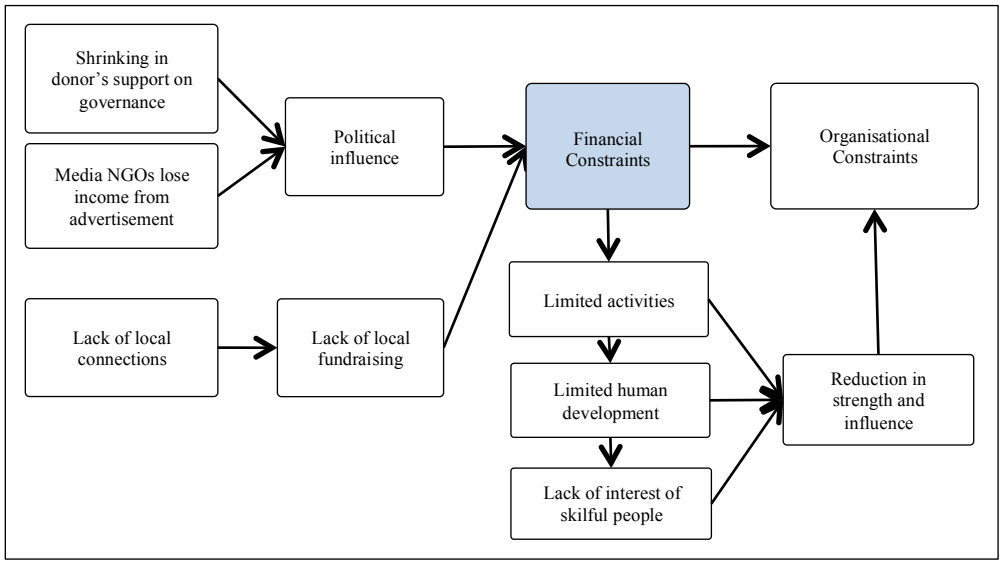
The above participant demonstrated through her experiences that there has been cooperation between NGOs and the government institutions with the signature

on MOU (memorandum of understanding) between the two sectors. However, the work of NGO staff has no influence because they are more likely to accompany the state institution rather than to fully participate on an equal footing with them.

4.2.2.2.3. Financial Constraints

According to the analysis, the data suggest two factors associated with financial constraint, including factors which lead to financial constraint faced by most NGOs, and factors caused by financial constraints which influences the intensity and effectiveness of their operations. The factors leading to financial constraints is composed of political influence and lack of local fundraising, while the factors caused by financial constraint encompasses limited activities, limited human resources development, and lack of interest of skilful people (Figure 50).

Figure 50: Financial constraints to effective intervention

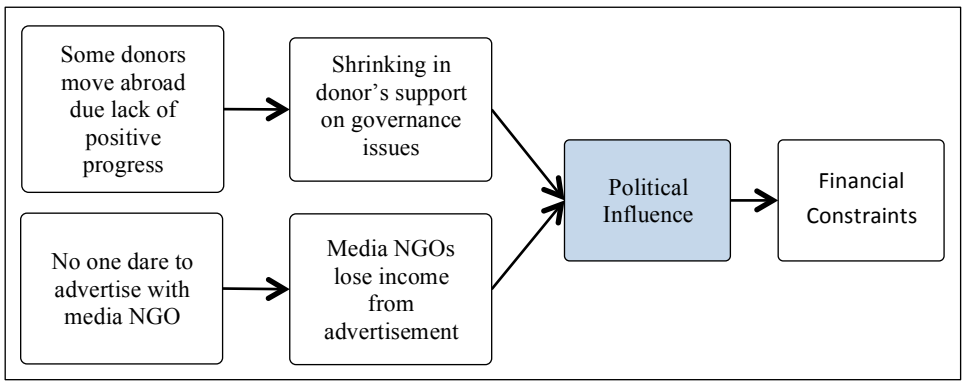


Political Influence

Grounded in the data, the political condition in Cambodia is one reason which makes most NGOs face financial constraint. Some participants claim that Cambodia has made no significant progress after years of reform with donor's support. This has resulted in disappointment which has led them turning to other countries and which

has made the flow of aid to Cambodia shrink. Media NGOs, in particular, argued that the political environment has also made them lose income to support their operations since businesses dare not advertise their products with them (Figure 51).

Figure 51: Political influence constrains to effective intervention



The following were some points raised by some participants in this study associated with factors leading to the shrinking of donor funds to Cambodia due to political conditions. Participant 2 commented that:

> *Politically the government does not reform, it does not have any positive progress, all are negative. Thus it makes some donors hopeless. For example, DANIDA which is the big donor that works on governance, human rights issues. When there has no progress been made it stopped from Cambodia […] Now all funds go to Myanmar […] funds to Cambodia for supporting CSOs automatically reduced. This is because of politics. (P2)*

The above participant referred to the lack of progress in government reform as a political condition, which makes donors dissatisfied and turn their attention to other countries, such as Myanmar. This restricts the budgets of NGOs because most of them depend on financial support from foreign donors. Political condition also impacts on the opportunity of media NGOs that earn part of their revenues through advertisements, as Participant 4 pointed out below:

> *Regarding political pressure is relating to economic as well, for example, my institution we also earn incomes apart from funders. We do commercial advertisements but some people do not dare to advertise with. This is also a pressure. (P4)*

This participant claimed that apart from fundraising efforts abroad, his organisation also earns income to support its functioning by providing commercial advertisement. However, businesses dare not advertise with media NGOs due to unfavourable political conditions. This, of course, impacts on the economic status of his organisation.

Lack of Local Fundraising

The analysis reveals that NGOs are not interested in fundraising within the country, although local fundraising appears to be available. Participant 5, who is also the only participant that used to conduct local fundraising, explained that:

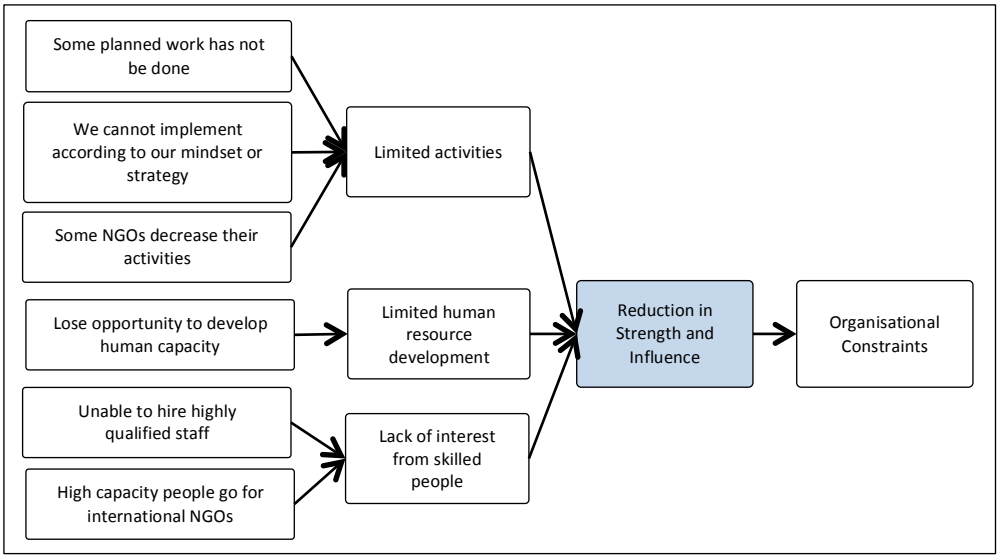
> *Youth cooperates with citizens at their locals and we teach them how to do fundraising, they solicit money 1000, 2000, 5000R from citizens. When they see any road that is broken they use that money to buy soil to fill in the broken road with the involvement of the communes, sometimes we dig wells, sometimes we raise funds to plant trees with the involvement of communes. By doing that, communes start to know us. (P5)*

This participant emphasised that his organisation is not a development-oriented NGO and, in principal, not interested in local fundraising. The only reason his organisation did participate in fundraising is to have a good relationship with local authorities so that his organisation is able to work on governance-oriented issues. Although this activity worked quite well and built up a strong connection with local communities, this organisation appeared to overlook this potential avenue.

Reduction in Strength and Influence

According to the analysis, financial constraints reduce the strength and influence of NGOs since various potential areas are restricted. This ranges from reducing some important project activities, to postponing certain operations, to limiting extensive human resource development. Some participants contended that, owing to lack of funds, they are unable to recruit capable employees (Figure 52).

Figure 52: Reduction in strength and influence constrains to effective intervention



Limited Activities

The data also reveal that financial constraints have pushed some organisations to limit their activities. Note the following excerpts:

> *We have many organisations at the provinces and we have limited budget, thus we have not fully done this work. Actually we have done in some provinces, I want to say that not enough fund. (P13)*
>
> *We want to do at an appropriate level but because of the availability of budget that we seek from outside, from the international community is limited we cannot implement according to our mindset or strategy, this is also a problem. (P12)*
>
> *Because we are very poor relating to funding, not only our organisation is poor, even other organisations the funds sponsored by donors have been blocked or paused. Other organisations do not postpone but they decrease then NGOs are mostly shrinking and the strength is reduced. (P1)*

The above quotes simply emphasised that limited funding has made the strategies and goals of NGOs not fully accomplished because certain planned activities have not been implemented, reduced or postponed. As such, the impact they wish to have on society is also weak.

Limited Human Resource Development

It is evident from the data that financial constraint is strongly associated with human resources of the organisation. This means an organisation loses an opportunity to develop staff capacity to respond to social changes, as mentioned by Participant 10 below:

> *I see that some strengthening or building capacity that focus on that issue we have not done enough […] if we try to earn funds to only build on that issue it is difficult, donors will not give us money. This is also a challenge. (P10)*

The above participant emphasised that limited funding reduces the ability of his organisation to develop human resources that are at the stage of limitation.

Lack of Interest from Skilled People

Financial constraint limits the ability of NGOs to get skilful job finders. With limited funding, local NGOs in particular are unable to recruit highly educated and experienced people since they seek higher salaries, where local NGOs are not affordable. For example:

> *Funding support links to human resources because if we do not have much money […] we cannot hire skilful persons, we get only junior level, salary from $100 to $200...but for those who have high skills do they apply for such low salary. (P7)*

> *Third is about salary, our local institutions, we depend on aid we propose for funds and if salary is a bit high the funders will scream. […] This is also a challenge, thus staff recruitment is difficult because those who are capable they go to work for international organisations. (P4)*

These participants expressed that limited funds makes it difficult for their organisations to recruit skilful staff. In relation to this, Participant 1 gave a brief conclusion that limited funds limit human resources and, thus, limit the strength of NGO interventions, as seen in the following quote:

When we have enough funds we can have more human resources. When we have human resources we can strengthen the institution to have high advantages in participating in the fight against corruption. (P1)

In brief, there are two factors associated with financial constraint: (1) factors that lead to financial constraint, and (2) factors that result from financial constraint. Factors that lead to financial constraint are associated with current political condition and lack of local fundraising. In terms of politics, the data reveal that due to lack of progress in administration reform after years of support from the international community, some donors are dissatisfied and turn their focus to other countries. This makes the flow of funding to Cambodia shrink. Political influence also makes media NGOs lose income due to the fact that businesses dare not advertise their products with them. Factors that result from financial constraint are: limited activities, limited human development, and lack of interest of skilful people. All these may reduce the strength and influence of NGO interventions.

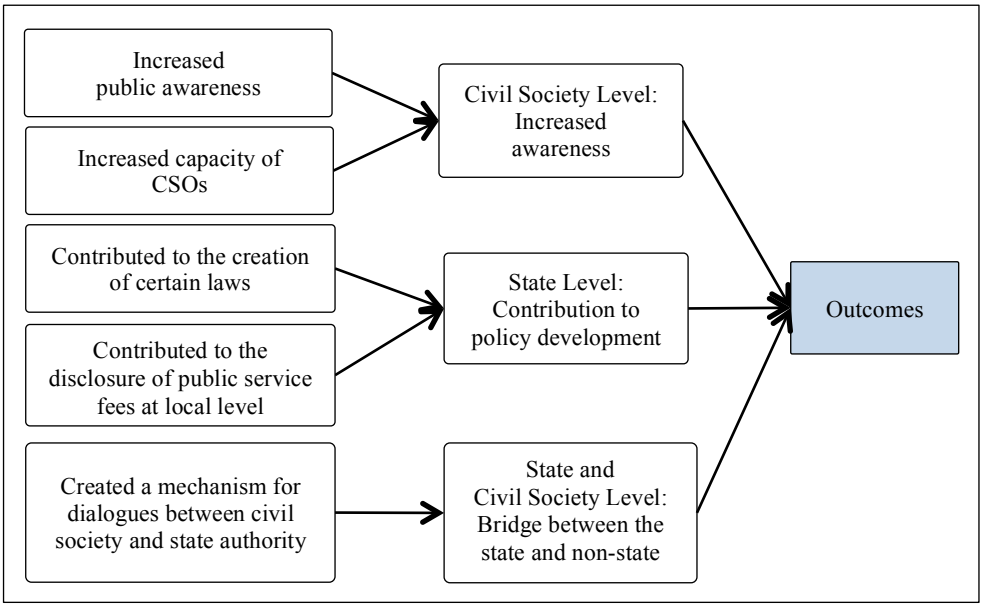
Although the work of NGOs faces challenges, both by the general contextual conditions and internal constraints within NGOs themselves, the data reveal that NGOs have made contributions to promoting the governance system and preventing corruption in Cambodia. The following section describes these perceived outcomes and impacts.

4.2.3. Outcomes and Impacts

4.2.3.1. Outcomes

In the previous two subsections, Subsection One discussed the organisational practices of NGOs; and Subsection Two talked about organisational constraints. This subsection presents perceptions of participants in this study regarding the outcomes resulting from the interventions of NGOs. I call these 'perceptions' because, as yet, there has not been other research to prove such findings. Outcomes remain just perceptions of the participants in this study. People may expect that to gauge the outcomes of advocacy NGOs is not as easy as counting one, two, three. However, based on the analysis of the data, the perceived outcomes of NGO intervention can be classified into three categories, encompassing increased awareness, contribution to policy development, and bridge between the state and non-state actors (Figure 53).

Figure 53: Perceived outcomes of NGO intervention



Civil Society Level: Increased Awareness

At the public level, the capacity of people has grown 'more' or 'less'. Through capacity building and information dissemination programmes of NGOs, people are not only more knowledgeable and understanding of their rights and roles, but also the roles and responsibility of the state authority. They also understand the effects of corruption on their daily life and society in general. The following is evidence of perceptions regarding the outputs, as well as outcomes, of NGO interventions in corruption prevention. In a broad sense, some participants asserted that they have contributed to building the general public knowledge of human rights and democratic principles. For example, Participant 12 mentioned that:

> *[Name of an organisation] has contributed to people of Cambodia understand what is human rights and how to use their rights. (P12)*

The above participant believed that enhancing public understanding of their rights is important. When people are knowledgeable of their rights, this means that they have the opportunity to use their rights to participate in social affairs. They are, for example, more courageous to say or demand something that impacts on their

livelihood, as Participant 6 highlighted below:

> *In general they have helped people to understand more than before, […] they help people to be aware of their right more than before, know how to monitor better than before, dare to say more than before. (P6)*

More specifically, NGOs have also taken part in building people capacity, and the concept of governance and corruption. The following were some contributions made by NGOs , as claimed by participants in this study:

> *There are many contributions especially knowledge, understanding of this issue to people, […] regarding corruption or governance to people. (P10)*

> *We have educated and disseminated to people to understand about the problems of corruption. (P3)*

Adding to the overall contributions illustrated above, some participants mentioned their contributions to strengthening youth capacity to work with local authority. For example, Participants 3 and 5 reported that:

> *We have strengthened the capacity of youth and our youth networks in order that they have the ability to lead, disseminate our work at provinces that previously we did not see that movement now we see them start their activities. (P3)*

> *I have helped quite a lot relating to youth education and youth continues working with communities regarding to the concept of good governance and another we help youth to have actual application relating to the good governance concept, attending commune meetings, request communes to make development plan, request communes to announce the public services fee. (P5)*

The above perceptions demonstrated that through intervention by NGOs, youth have become aware and knowledgeable about local governance. As a result, youth is able to participate and work with local authorities. Adding to knowledge about local governance, some others focused on developing public understanding about good governance with regards to the extractive industry, such as gas and petrol. Participant 9 reported on this as follows:

We have provided understanding about gas, petrol and mine. We have provided knowledge, understanding, particularly about the obstructions and special parts of that field in general, promoting understanding of people on good governance and its importance. (P9)

State Level: Contribution to Policy Development

According to the analysis, with efforts through various events, ranging from formal and informal advocacy, such as cooperation mechanisms between NGOs and the government, to public forums, to public announcements on certain issues of concerns, and, at times, to public campaigns and protests, interventions by NGOs have been perceived by participants in this study to contribute to policy development. Without these efforts, they believe, the government would have kept problems untouched and resisted changes. For example, the creation of the anti-corruption law and the growth of information disclosure, as highlighted by some participants below:

Second is about the anti-corruption law we have participated partly in the creation of this law. (P10)

We have conducted campaigns to have opened up information. Now the open up information have started to grow, everyone sees the important of information and support. This is the achievement of our participation. (P2)

State and Civil Society Level: Bridge between State and Non-state Actors

Another outcome which emerged from the data is the bridge between the public and state and non-state actors. The data suggest that there has been an increase in the relationship between the public and state authority, where formerly the general public was reluctant to talk with the public authority but now the communication between them has gradually becomes a normal exercise. Moreover, the relationship between state and non-state actors, NGOs especially, has also increased, where formerly this connection was very unusual and sceptical. Now, 'more' or 'less', the two spheres have become closer and gradually work together with mutual understanding. This narrows the gap between the two sectors and improves democratic participation for the interests of the people and country at large. Note the following views expressed by some participants below:

We do to help them, both sides come closer because previously they do not talk to each other much. (P8)

We draw both CSOs and government to work more closely, particularly with the grassroots communities with people. Formerly people and authorities rarely talked to each other. The authorities only give information to people; there was no two way communication. (P10)

The above participants emphasised that narrowing the gap between the public and state authorities was one of the major outcomes perceived by NGOs. Formerly, there had been, if not always, a one-way communication. This means that state authorities provide information to the public and the public is not given the incentive to make enquiries about what had been delivered by the authorities, especially the introduction of NGO-initiated mechanisms for dialogue, such as radio programmes, through which the public are able to participate, discuss and make enquiries to public authorities, as noted in the following excerpts:

Other issues that we raised to discuss in our radio programmes, we ask the relevant authority to participate; the issues have been rectified, solved or finished. Through the forums also citizens raise various issues relating to public services, or governance in the communes, they debate. (P4)

Additionally we have created a mechanism for dialogue that we have created at communities to be knowledgeable to work or dialogue with the authorities. (P10)

Furthermore, according to the data, the outcome that NGOs have produced not only bridges the gap between the public and state authority, but also between different state authorities. Examine the comment made by Participant 7 below:

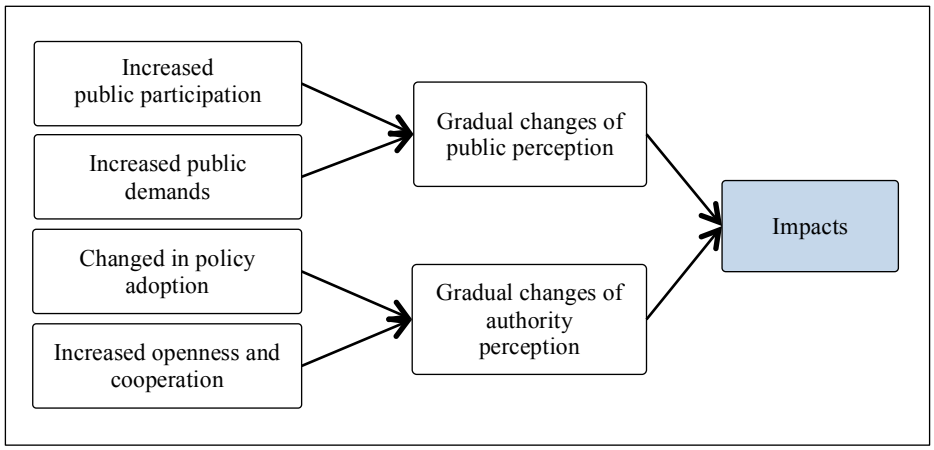
[Name of an organisation] plays as a bridge to make connection from commune/sangkat councils to commune health centres because previously they work separately. (P7)

Therefore, it is evident that NGOs seemed to claim more about the outputs that they produced, rather than the outcomes resulting from their interventions. The following section discusses perceived outputs/outcomes of NGOs leading up to impacts.

4.2.3.2. Impacts

The data suggest that the interventions of NGOs have been 'more' or 'less' influenced by perceptions and actions of both the general public and state authority with regards to promotion of good governance and, specifically, corruption. Participants in this study think that the impacts of NGO interventions are composed of two emergent categories. They include the gradual changes in public perception and actions, and the gradual changes in state authority perception and actions. The gradual changes in the perception and actions of the public is subcategorised into increase in public participation and increase in public courage; and the gradual changes in the perception and actions of the state authority is subcategorised into changed in policy adoption and increased openness and cooperation (Figure 54).

Figure 54: Perceived impacts of NGO intervention



Gradual Changes in Public Perception and Actions

The data suggest that the general public are more actively involved in social affairs, whereas they used to be dependent on the public authority to make decisions on their behalf. The general public, including NGOs, are more proactive; they started to engage in various social events, such as attending communal development meetings, attending meetings to monitor the implementation of local development plan, attending the public forums, and so forth. The data also reveal that the participation of civil society is more productive. Indeed, they do not only sit and

listen but they raise issues and make inquiries where such activities rarely happened, since they have been afraid of the public authority in the past. One of the outstanding changes was the participation of the populations, for example, relating to the clean hand campaign where one million thumbprints were collected, as claimed by Participants 2 and 13 in the following quotes:

> *I remember that one campaign that they collected thumbprints from nearly one million people in order to have law [anti-corruption law]. (P2)*
>
> *We collected thumbprints and brought petition more than one million to put at the council of ministers. (P13)*

These participants emphasised that one million thumbprints to demand for the adoption of the anti-corruption law demonstrated the changes of behaviours of the populations, where formerly they used to be quiet and lack the courage to share their views, or demand the government take action. The campaign demonstrates the will of the general public in relation to corruption, as some participants in this study highlighted below:

> *We see through recent evidence is that our citizens are no longer tolerate corruption; before they accept it as a way of life, now they do not accept it. Thus it is a big change of behaviour. (P3)*
>
> *We are proud of because now citizens do not whisper about corruption. They dare to say aloud this or that person is corrupt, selling this property is corrupt. (P1)*

Other obvious changes are that the public are actively participating in other social issues more now than before, as shown in the following examples:

> *Communities that we have worked with are more active than before. Previously they were afraid of and dared not to enter the communes, afraid of the commune chiefs and dared not to talk with. (P10)*
>
> *When they [authorities] take over the official price people start to react, even a little demand. I observe that there are such cases happened and I hope that in the future transparency will be improved in our society. (P10)*

The above participants believed that the change of public perceptions from being silent to being participative will help push this society to become more

transparent and accountable. Such activities will continue to exist when there is any violation from public authorities, as revealed by the following participant.

> *I can see that there is sustainable because people now seem to be courageous to demand, to raise lots of issues at their locales. (P12)*

The above participants believed that the change of perception and actions of the general public may not be faded away, even though the intervention of NGO projects were terminated. This means that public understanding about their rights and roles encourages them to participate for the sake of their communities.

Gradual Changes in State Authority Perception and Actions

According to the analysis, there has been a gradual change in public authority perception and actions, including changes in policy adoption and changes in government openness and cooperation. Overall, without interventions of CSOs, the degree of changes would have been static, as some participants in this study pointed out below:

> *[…] because of our continuous work, we usually raise issues to government which makes it try and if we do not do it stays at that level, […] the government does not care much. (P12)*
>
> *The subject of anti-corruption is now a very important agenda. We see that… as a result. (P3)*

With regards to the gradual changes in policy, one of the major impacts was the adoption and the creation of the anti-corruption legislation. Most of the participants in the study claimed that, without the continuous endeavours of NGOs, the anti-corruption law would not have been established, as claimed by Participant 12 below:

> *If talking about the establishment of the anti-corruption law I say in a proud manner, not specifically on CSOs we talk in the name of citizens if... particularly the civic organisation, particularly CSOs, help to row, to speak out, to demand otherwise perhaps up to this time there is no anti-corruption law. (P12)*

This participant expressed that the creation of the anti-corruption law was the major impact that CSOs have put pressure on the government. In addition, the government now adopted public services fee into its policy framework and put this into practice throughout the country. Note the claim made by Participant 2 below:

> *Now the government starts to disclose services, all services have to announce, like the end of 2013 the ministry of interior and the ministry of finance have announced more than a hundred services including fees. This is a step that we have done in the past 3-4 years. (P2)*

The above participant explained that NGOs intervention is without meaning. The endeavours of NGOs have pushed the government to follow through by adopting something that NGOs have embarked on and advocated, such as the adoption of public services into a policy framework. Similarly, Participant 11 remarked on the impact that NGOs have put on the government to re-examine the economic land concession:

> *We cannot catch one impact and claim that it is ours because we work jointly but we see, for example, now there is a ministerial Prakas (proclamation) relating to re-examine on economic land concession. […] I believe that less or more the government has accepted our ideas and come up with the re-examining of economic land concession. (P11)*

Furthermore, it was noted that the government increased openness and cooperation with non-state actors. At the subnational level, for example, local authorities are friendlier and active, with more people seeking public services than before, as highlighted below:

> *We also see that the public officials are friendlier than before when people seek for services. (P10)*
>
> *Almost all the communes that we work with stick the public service fee on information board [...] Now in communes that we have worked are open and another is that the communities that we have worked with are more active than before. (P10)*
>
> *I see that in commune/sangkat offices, they pay attention, for example, they announce the price for services. (P9)*

Behaviour changes do not only happen with local authorities but also with

local public administration, such as health care centres, as Participant 13 pointed out below:

> *We see...until now health care centres that previously used to be indifferent. When we organise forums, people speak out strongly. They announce that people can call them. If people have any problems they give a contact number. (P13)*

At the national level, for example, the government has created a mechanism where civil society organisations, particularly NGOs, are allowed to intervene on various policy issues. This, of course, is a sign of behaviour changes within the public authority, as shown below:

> *Previously such as meetings between the government and donors, [some names of NGOs] have space to talk. Thus we have impact on government too, otherwise the government do not listen to us, it does not accept our ideas, it does not allow us to enter. (P11)*

As noted above, this participant explained that government openness and cooperation with non-state actors is a positive sign of behaviour change, by allowing NGOs to get involved and have their voices heard. Therefore, it is observed that the endeavours of NGOs, 'more' or 'less', impact on public sector perceptions and actions, as asserted by some participants below:

> *Sometimes even the government has given some rejections, but later on they start to recognise, start to create various mechanisms, be responsive, start to propose policy etc. (P4)*

> *For the councils I see that they [government] start to change little by little. Perhaps the impacts do not totally coming from [Name of an NGO]'s project but it parallels with the evolution of the country […] if there are no demand the honey moon will continue for another 30 years. (P8)*

The above quotes indicated that continuous efforts by NGOs do eventually make the government sector starts to make some positive changes, otherwise the honeymoon will continue for several more decades to come.

To sum up, although sometimes interventions by NGOs to prevent corruption have been confrontational and received an aggressive response from public authorities, it is evident that their endeavours make an impact, if only sparingly,

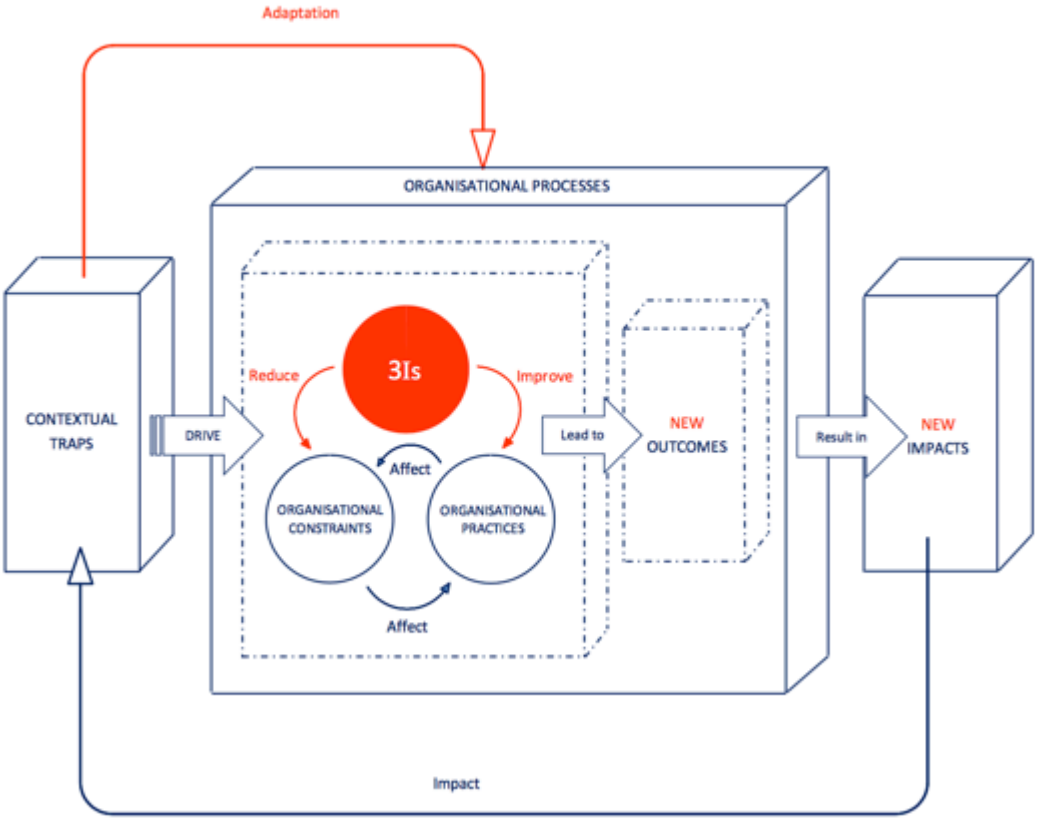
especially on 'political will' among state authorities at all levels and the 'public will' among the general public, which is vital to promote good governance and reduce corrupt incidences.

It can be argued that the efforts of NGOs have, to some extent, played their part in contributing to promote good governance and to prevent corruption. The perceived outcomes and impacts discussed above represent their contributions. However, the intervention of governance-oriented NGOs has not been enough to influence the government, the public and other relevant stakeholders, as well as to impact change. According to the analysis, there have been barriers which restrict NGOs from their effective operations and intended changes. As discussed above, these barriers include both contextual traps (Section One, Part One) and organisational constraints (Subsection Two, Section Two, Part One). Therefore, and as a response, a framework (s) is proposed by incorporating the 3Is (Integrated and Intensified Intervention) into the framework (p): problems of current practices of NGOs, aimed at addressing these problems, improving practices, and thereby reducing corruption. How the intervention of the 3Is helps address these objectives will be discussed in detail below.

4.3. Framework (s): An Integrative 3Is Approach to Corruption Prevention

This part discusses a proposed framework (s): an integrative 3Is (Integrated and Intensified Intervention) approach to corruption prevention. The framework is presented in the form of a problem-process-impact format, developed from and grounded in the data of this study. As portrayed in Figure 55 below, the framework consists of three broad interrelated dimensions, illustrated as boxes, representing contextual traps, organisational processes, and impacts. The three boxes are connected by three big arrows and two U-turn arrows which represent an iterative and cyclical process of the framework. The small box on the left represents contextual traps, the big box in the middle represents the organisational processes, and the small box on the far right represents impacts.

Figure 55: Framework (s): An integrative 3Is approach to corruption prevention



Contextual traps act as drivers that generate the prevalence in corrupt tendencies and pose hurdles to the corruption prevention effort. It also represents the surrounding environment that generates opportunities and constraints to the operational space for NGOs, and 'more or less' is affected by their current strategies to corruption prevention. Contextual traps are made up of five different, interrelated variables emerging from the data, and classified as political, legal, social, cultural and economic.

As is illustrated, the organisational processes box is composed of two subordinate boxes, shown as dash-dotted boxes. The first box is comprised of three round boxes, representing the 3Is, organisational practices, and organisational constraints. Grounded in the data, the 3Is consists of three core components: organisational reinforcement, work reinforcement and promoting institutional recognition and support; organisational practices is comprised of civic empowerment, civic advocacy, and civic oversight; and organisational constraints

encompass management and leadership constraint, corruption and governance constraint, and financial constraint. As is portrayed, the organisational practices and organisational constraints affect one another. Through the intervention of the 3Is, the organisational constraints reduced and the organisational practices improved. The three core components work together to produce outcomes.

The third box on the far right, extending from the organisational processes box, is the impact box. As is shown in the framework, the organisational processes produce their outcomes which then produce impacts. The impacts influence the contextual traps as linked by the U-turn arrow. The red U-turn arrow, extending from the contextual traps, demonstrates that the organisational processes, particularly the 3Is, have to be adapted over time to changes within the surrounding environments, known here as contextual traps, respond to changes and challenges or opportunities that arise, as well as adapt to emerging circumstances in which NGOs operate.

The reason why this framework is made up of two colours is to distinguish between the problems of NGOs current practices and the integration of the 3Is approach within the framework. This means that the blue diagram represents the NGOs current practices, and the results found that NGO intervention in corruption prevention is less effective and is influenced by both external (contextual traps) and internal constraints. With the integration of 3Is into the framework, shown in red, organisational constraints reduced and organisational practices improved which then produced new outcomes and new impacts, and adaptation of NGO organisational processes are required to respond to changes to the situations.

Since most of the dimensions, components and elements have been discussed in Part One, this part focuses only on how the incorporation and intervention of the 3Is into framework (p) to develop a framework (s) helps reduce constraints and improve practices and, thereby, reduces corruption. Detailed characteristics of the framework are summarised in Table 3, and all of these are discussed in subsequent sections.

Table 3: Detailed characteristics of the proposed framework (s)

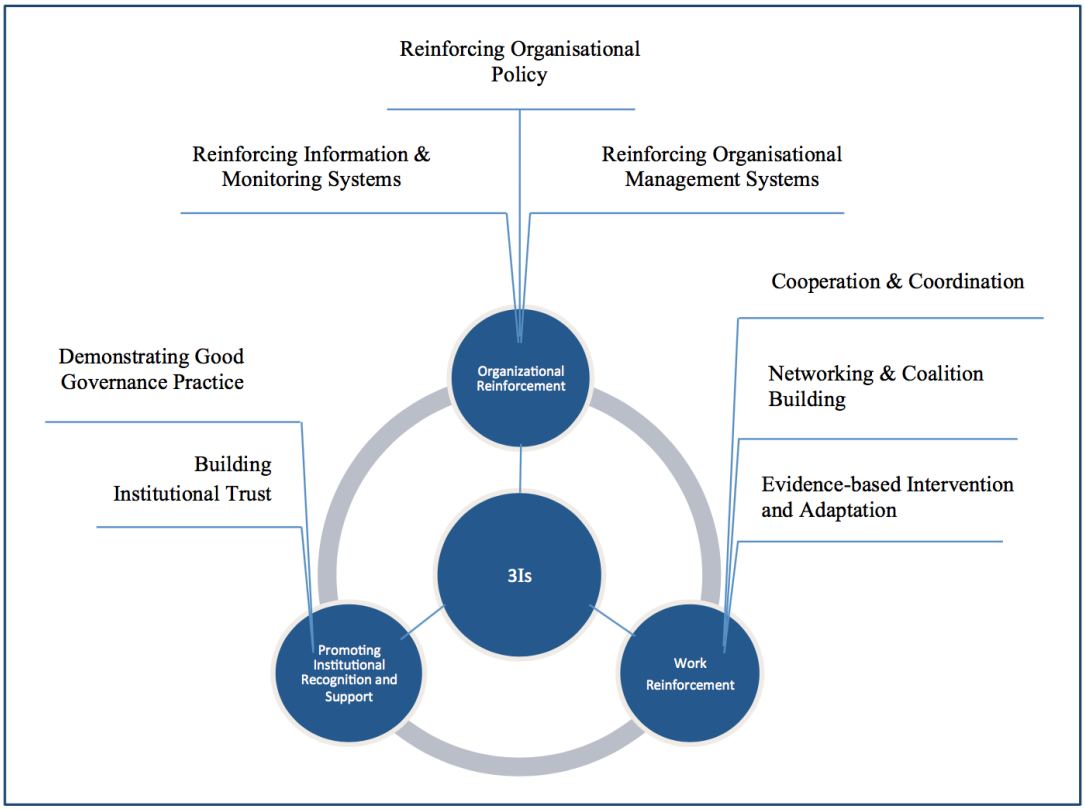
Dimension and components	Contextual Traps	Organisational Processes										Impacts
		3Is			Organisational Practices			Organisational constraints			Outcomes	
		Organisational Reinforcement	Work Reinforcement	Promoting Institutional Recognition and support	Civic Empowerment	Civic Advocacy	Civic Oversight	Management and Leadership Constraints	Corruption and Governance Constraints	Financial Constraints		
Elements within components	Political Trap: -Lack of 'political will' -Lack of 'public will' Legal Trap: -Separation of powers -Substandard anti-corruption law and unit -Lack of law enforcement Social Trap: -Fear factor -Social norms -Limited understanding of the public: Cultural Trap: -Traditional cultural influence -Newly-emerging habits Economic Trap: -Poverty -Lack of incentive systems	Reinforcing organisational policy: -Fiduciary safeguard -Personnel policy -Other policy measures Reinforcing organisational management systems: -organisation structure and management systems -Human resource development Reinforcing information and monitoring systems: -Setting up information disclosure -Monitoring and feedback systems	Cooperation and coordination: Networking and coalition building Evidence-based intervention and adaptation	Demonstrate good governance practices: -Being a role model -Anti-misconduct -Mainstream anti-corruption into NGO projects Building institutional trust: -Being neutral -Being professional -Being pragmatic	Education and awareness raising Civic mobilisation Bridging and Facilitating	Bilateral advocacy Unilateral advocacy	Monitoring Research Promoting access to information	Limited knowledge and experience: Limited Knowledge and experiences in leadership capacity Lack of staff	Corruption and governance constraints: -Scandals of NGOs -Limited governance capacity of NGOs	Factors leading to financial constraints: -Political influence -Lack of local fundraising Factors caused by financial constraints: -Limited activities -Limited human resource development -Lack of interest of skilful people	-Civil society level: Increased awareness -State level: Contributed to policy development -State and civil society level: Bridge between state and non-state actors	-Gradual changes in public perception and actions: -Increased public participation -Increased in public courage -Gradual changes in state authority perception and actions: -Change in policy adoption -Increase government openness and cooperation

4.3.1. The 3Is Approach

Conceptualised from an analysis of the data, the 3Is approach is composed of three interrelated and integrated interventions, namely organisational reinforcement, work reinforcement, and promoting institutional recognition and support. On this basis, this part is divided into three sections. Section One presents the organisational reinforcement; Section Two deals with work reinforcement; and Section Three discusses promoting institutional recognition and support (Figure 56). How the three components, including other elements embedded within them, work together to

reduce constraints and improve practices, as well as how they produce new institutional outcomes and new external impacts, is to be discussed in detail below.

Figure 56: The 3Is approach to corruption prevention

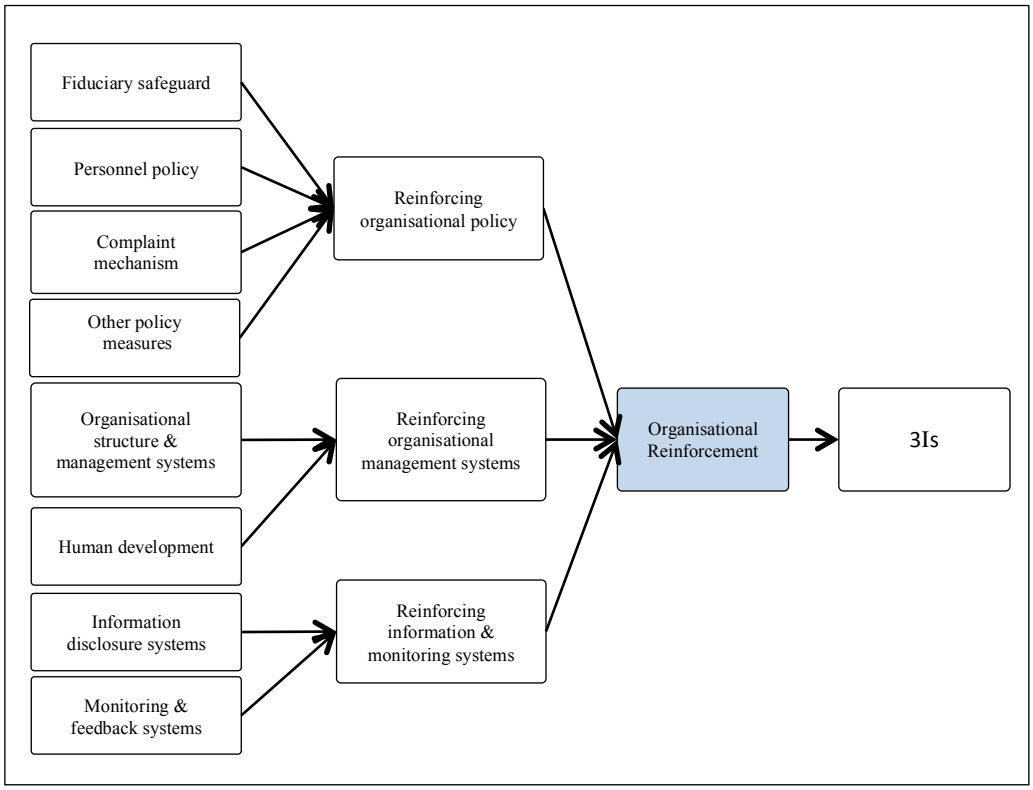


4.3.1.1. Organisational Reinforcement

Organisational reinforcement refers broadly to the strengthening of organisational policy and management systems, meaning that an organisation has to be well prepared when going into business. Reinforcing policy and a system of management, in part, assists the organisation to reach its goal and objectives. As is evident from the data, there are a number of critical starting points on the ground to be considered in relation to organisational reinforcement. These include reinforcing organisational policy, reinforcing the organisational management system, and reinforcing information and monitoring systems (Figure 57). This iterative and interrelated process not only helps improve the proper functioning of the

organisations and prevent organisational misconduct, but also, at the same time, builds trust and support and restores the reputation of the NGO sector.

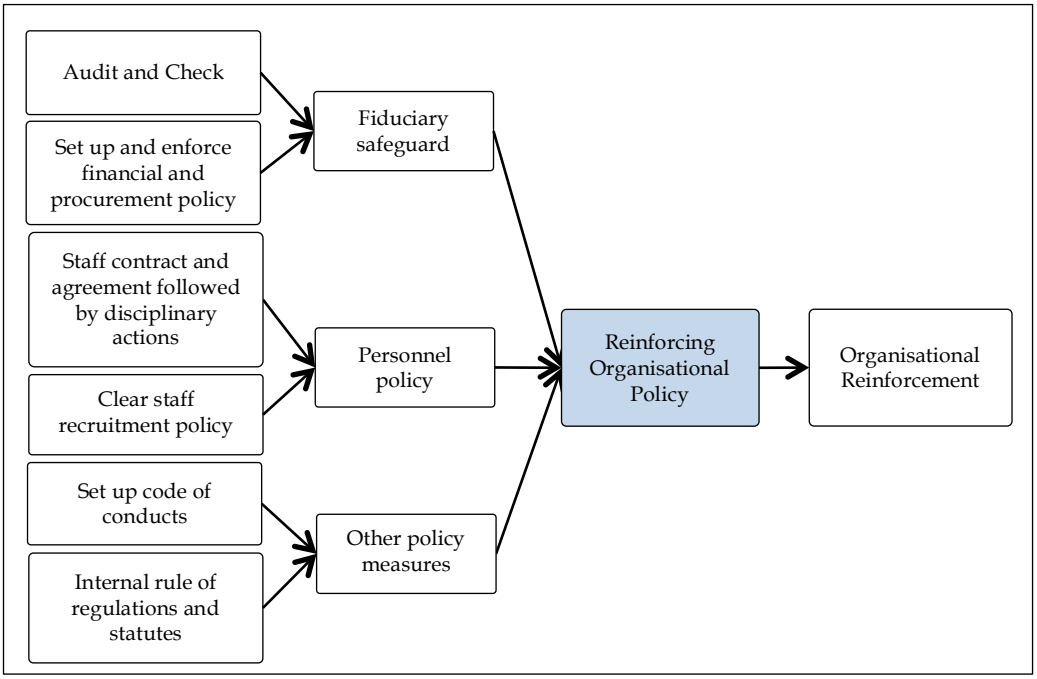
Figure 57: Organisational reinforcement



Reinforcing Organisational Policy

Grounded in the data, reinforcing organisational policy is comprised of three emergent subcategories: fiduciary safeguard, personnel policy and other policy measures (Figure 58).

Figure 58: Reinforcing organisational policy



Fiduciary Safeguard Policy

In terms of fiduciary safeguard, participants paid remarkable attention to establishing various policies to ensure that organisational budgets are well-managed and not leaked at any point. Some of the essential policies include financial and procurement policy. They further suggested that having all of these policies have not guaranteed that NGOs are free from financial leakage if they are not fully putting them into practice. Corruption is highly likely to occur in project procurement. Procurement policy not only prevents the occurrence of collusion in the bidding process but also ensures a fair competitive bidding. In addition, there are a variety of other mechanisms taken into consideration by participants in the study, to ensure transparent and accountable expenditures within an organisation's budget. This is revealed through the annual audit—both an internal and external audit. Additionally, internal check and partner check are also suggested. Note how the participants in this study commented in relation to financial safeguard. For example, Participants 3 and 7 claimed:

> *We have audit every year both internal and external. Internal audit we do in every three month and external audit annually. (P3)*

We have […] financial policy, annual audit. (P7)

The above quotes underscore the consistent claims made by the participants that financial policy and audits are of significance to prevent leakage of funds and prevent corruption. Moreover, some participants drew attention to the fact that that having the policy is not enough to ensure proper management of budgets; indeed, it is essential that it be fully enforced, as seen in the following statements:

First, we are transparent in operating our work and we have financial policy. We follow our policy. (P13)

We have financial policy and we have a mechanism to punish. (P11)

Similar to suggestions about financial policy and audits, some participants pointed, particularly, to the need for a procurement policy, since corruption occurs mostly in the procurement processes. The following highlighted this pervasive sentiment:

All procurements have to be done through bidding process and we have a committee to approve. (P2)

We have our system to control procurement, we have a committee we have involvement as a committee, no one deals with the decision. (P3)

Each project requires a safeguard system. […] It relates to procurement, goods shopping, cash management within the project. (P6)

In addition to this, some participants suggested the need to think about internal checks to avoid any misconduct in managing finance. With respect to this issue, consider comments from the following participants:

We are very strong, zero tolerance... We have regularly internal check. (P8)

We also have internal control committee to monitor regularly which is led by the board of director. (P10)

We follow up and check something like that. (P13)

Therefore, it is clear that participants in this study are consistent in the way they take action to prevent budget leakage and corruption by focusing on setting up

various policies, such as finance, procurement and audit, and actual implementation of those policies.

Personnel Policy

According to the analysis, there is evidence of considerable attention given by participants in this study to developing personnel policy as part of a solution to discourage corruption incidents. The NGOs interviewed incorporated disciplinary actions in their personnel policy, sometimes referred to as staff agreement or staff contract, to discourage employees from getting involved in any illegitimate behaviours and corruption. The following quotes exemplified their perceptions:

> *We have staff agreement, we do not have a separate agreement but in staff agreement we incorporate corruption issue in that. (P10)*
>
> *We have personnel policy [...] we strongly focus on internal management. (P7)*
>
> *All staff is tied by a personnel policy, the personnel policy applies to all from the executive director to junior, we apply to all and any personnel has a one-year contract, all have the same assessment. (P11)*

The above quotes indicated that most of the participants in this study appeared to undertake consistent actions and suggest special consideration on personnel policy as part of their approach to prevent the occurrence of corrupt acts within NGOs. Moreover, this is followed by concrete disciplinary actions if someone is detected to be involved in corrupt misconduct, as seen in the following excerpts:

> *Regarding corruption, we have a clear policy. All our staff sign agreement policy and we have a zero tolerance policy, even one dollar, if we find out the evidence, we do not forgive. All our staff know that. (P3)*
>
> *We make a contract with staff we stipulate in that along with punishment, corruption is zero tolerant. This means that if detect they have to repay all the money and dismiss immediately. (P5)*

In addition, there was a unique application exercised by an NGO concerning staff recruitment. At least one participant in this study mentioned that to avoid nepotism within the organisational recruitment process, a non-relative recruitment

policy is applied. Examine the following quote expressed by Participant 5:

> *According to the policy relatives are not allowed, although they are qualified. Because we think of nepotism it can have problems, thus relatives are unacceptable within the organisation. (P5)*

The above individual expressed that if any staff working in his organisation has his/her relatives who want to apply to work, although they are qualified, they will not get a job. This is because the organisational personnel policy tied this to preventing any nepotism recruitment that might occur.

The data also suggest that some organisations use the personnel policy to restrict their staff from getting involved in in-depth political activities. This means that they do not prefer their staff to be political activists, although people, in principal, have the right to express their political views. Consider the following remarks made by of some the participants:

> *We have clear policy similar to anti-corruption too; staff needs to sign agreement and something that is not clear...but they have the right to vote […] but if they become activist we prefer not. (P8)*

> *Anyone who works in that organisation has to follow that policy […] we do not serve any political party, thus we stay neutral and we work for the people, then any political party is not our side. (P7)*

Other Policy Measures

According to the data, participants in this research also suggested various rules and mechanisms which are crucial to prevent misbehaviours of staff. Some were interested in the developing of statutes and internal rules of regulations while some paid attention to creating a code of conduct or code of ethics, and so forth. Below are some comments which are worth consideration. For example, Participant 1 recommended the creation and implementation of an internal regulation statute:

> *The importance is… the implementation of internal regulation statute. When we obey that there is no use of power for private benefits. This is to say in short. (P1)*

The majority of informants reported the significance of an ethical code of

conduct, which guides the behaviour of staff and restricts them from any misconduct, as observed in the following quote:

> *Preventative measures include, first, we need to have a policy provided about that issue and, second, we have...because donors also have ethical code of conduct and we have signed to accept that and we try to implement it effectively. (P10)*
>
> *It is a difficult point. Generally speaking we try our best to prevent from that […] What we do we try to get away from any effect on our performance, that is we have our code of conduct. (P4)*
>
> *For partners, for staff we have clear code of conduct. We sign agreement, and if we have done so, but they still violate, there is nothing to say, thus they need to go. (P8)*

At least one of the informants in this study insisted on the implementation of norms and standards that have been developed, as shown in the following excerpt:

> *Each institution has enough norms and standards, enough policies and implements them. If we are able to implement it means that we have participated in reducing corruption. (P11)*

The above participant suggested that establishing relevant policies and rules is not enough to ensure that the organisation attaints its set goals and expectations. It is important to set up a mechanism to implement, monitor, remind and make regular adjustments. Consider the suggestions made by Participant 4 below:

> *We have regular meetings. We discuss about professionalism, code of ethics. We repetitively remind in order that our staff sticks to that. (P4)*

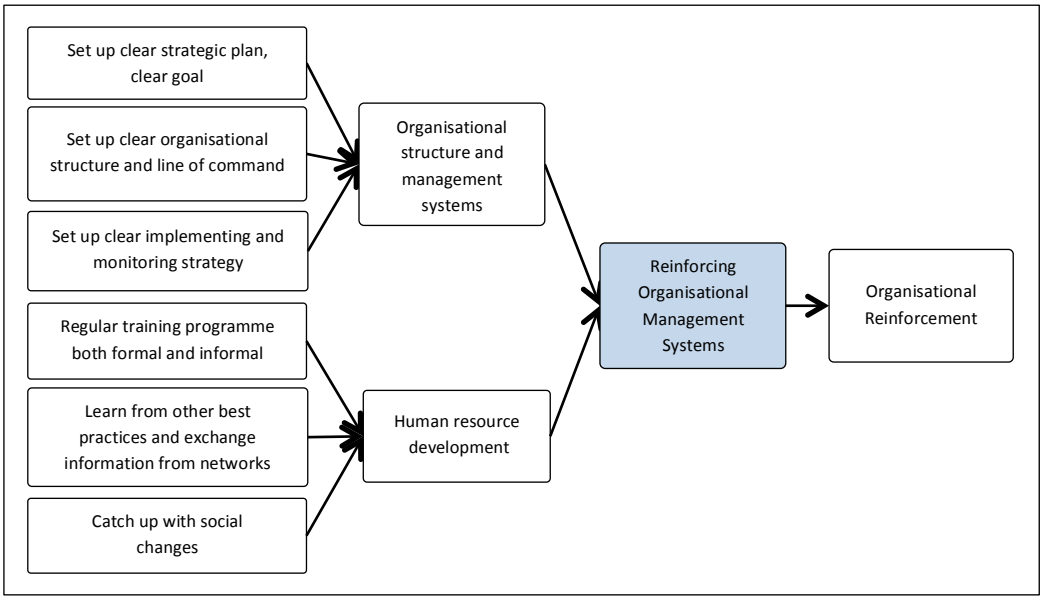
To sum up, the data suggest three important policy areas, including fiduciary safeguard, personnel policy, and other policy measures. This not only helps improve the proper functioning of organisations, but also prevents incidents of organisational misconduct from occurring. With respect to fiduciary safeguards, the focus is on financial and procurement policy, and a regular organisational audit is also recommended. Personnel policy is also recommended. This includes a clear staff agreement and recruitment rules, followed by concrete disciplinary actions. The data also reveal other policy measures, such as a code of conduct and internal rules of

regulations.

▒ Reinforcing Organisational Management Systems

Reinforcing the organisational management system is another important aspect of focus by participants in this study. This comprises two emergent subcategories; namely, organisational structure and management systems, and human resource development (Figure 59).

Figure 59: Reinforcing organisational management systems



Organisational Structure and Management Systems

The majority of participants recommended reinforcing the organisational structure and management system of the organisation. This not only helps them internally enhance their performance but also externally influence their operations on society. This ranges from setting up a clear strategic plan, clear goals, a clear organisational structure, a clear structure of command, and a clear line of supervision. Some move beyond these by also adding clear implementing strategies and an oversight system to monitor the progress. The following explanations exemplified these suggested recommendations. For example, Participant 1 and 2

mentioned that:

> *The importance is managerial system and administrative system. (P1)*
>
> *CSOs have to prepare themselves to have an appropriate functioning system. (P12)*

Whereas some others suggested developing a clear strategic plan and putting it into real practice, as shown in the following:

> *We have to prepare a good strategy and we have to prepare a policy system, which is easy to manage and operate our work. (P10)*
>
> *We need to have a proper strategic plan, because based on the strategic plan we know what to do, where to do, when to do, how to do and how much resource to do. […] and we have to actually implement the strategic plan. (P12)*
>
> *We do whatever to strengthen our policy and to properly implement our policy, including organisational management (P 7)*

Some organisations include the monitoring measure to ensure the proper functioning of their work, as shown in the following observations:

> *Have specific strategy and monitor the strategic plan. (P13)*
>
> *We have various organisational structures, thus managerial staff each has its own mechanism that they monitor and debate and so forth. (P4)*

Adding to the knowledge about the development, implementation and monitoring of the set organisational plan and goal, at least one participant suggested a consideration of the clear organisational structure and line of command. As noted below, Participant 11 mentioned that:

> *I think that there are two factors, first is to have policy in my opinion, next is to enforce that policy, asked who enforce? Thus at organisational level is management in which include management structure, something like that, thus it has line supervision who do what, who do what and we take the policy to enforce. I believe that we can move forward. (P11)*

The above participant indicated that with a clear management structure,

organisational staff can be clear about, for example, their duties and responsibility, and to whom they have to report. As such, a clear line of command may also help the organisation move forward more effectively.

Human Resource Development

The analysis reveals that NGO employees have limited capacity, both technical and managerial, and, especially, the concept of governance to which they intend to promote. As such, strengthening the capacity of NGO staff should be done on a continuous basis, whether this is achieved through a formal capacity, such as training programmes, or informal, through learning from the best practices of other countries, or even through the exchanging of information with partners within, and outside, the countries. Human resource proliferation enables organisational employees to cope with social changes and global tendencies. For example, some participants suggested that:

> *We have to strengthen our resources, human resources, technical resources. When we are strong we base on the principle of law to work with government, we can negotiate, cooperate. (P1)*
>
> *We have to […] strengthen our capacity and credits. (P4)*
>
> *[…] ensure that our staff has enough quality. (P11)*

As noted above, capacity of staff is of great importance and it is a strong channel through which NGOs are able to work more effectively with the government side. Limited capacity is hardly easy to work with. Some of the main areas of focus should be on advocacy skills, as well as on the areas they work on, as some participants in this study mentioned below:

> *Second is to strengthen their capacity because we work on advocacy of the nation. It is not a joke... (P2)*
>
> *An agency has to have institutional capacity first, but it also needs to have individual capacity. Thus, its staff needs to have capacity to work on that area. (P9)*
>
> *CSOs themselves try to build up their real professionals on the issues that they are working on. (P10)*

Upgrading staff capacity to catch up with social changes, particularly the current functioning of the public administrative process, is also another essential aspect to be taken into consideration. As seen below, Participant 7 expressed that:

> *We do whatever to strengthen […] capacity building, keep learning in order to catch up with social changes. This means that internally we need to build capacity of staff, keep upgrade what is the new policy of the government, where the government move to, what is the tendency of the development partners, we have to keep update our surrounding environment. (P7)*

In addition, Participant 10 further suggested consideration is needed for capacity building by learning from other experiences and exchanging information with networks and coalitions. This participant mentioned that:

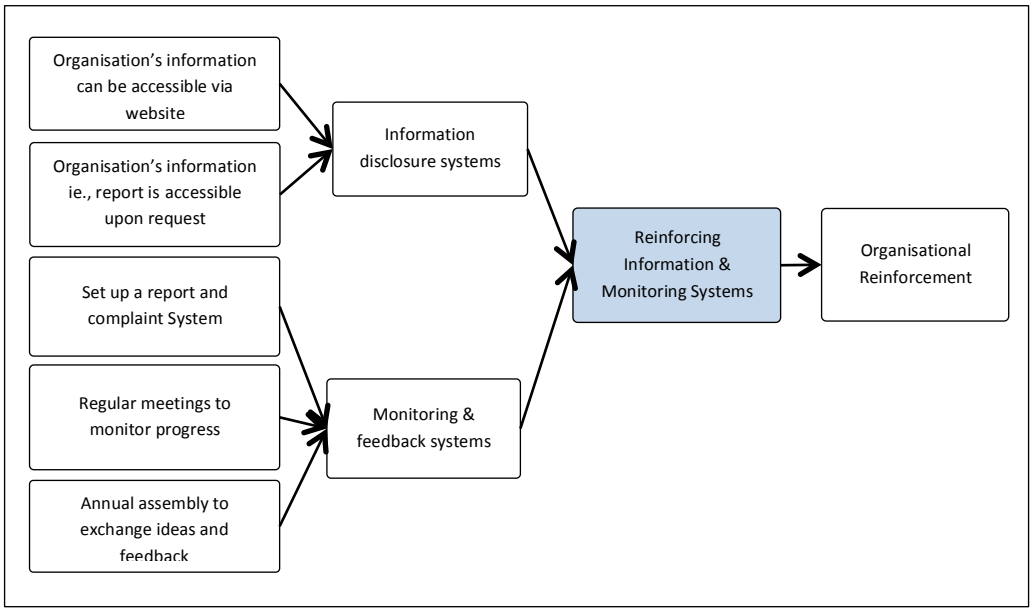
> *We have to learn more from previous experiences as well as from other countries or communities, sharing of information internationally with partners abroad. (P10)*

Therefore, it was found that participants in this study give significant consideration to the need for reinforcing organisational management systems. This includes the development of a sound organisational structure and management system. Putting the system into real practice and monitoring its progress is also needed. In terms of organisational structure, some of the vital elements recommended under this category range from setting up a clear strategic plan, a clear organisational structure and line of command, and a clear implementing and monitoring strategy. For human development, the focus is on upgrading staff capacity so that they are able to catch up with social changes and public administrative processes of the government.

▒ Reinforcing Information and Monitoring Systems

Based on the data, there were two emerging subcategories—information disclosure system, and monitoring and feedback system, made up of reinforcing information and monitoring system (Figure 60).

Figure 60: Reinforcing information and monitoring systems



Information Disclosure Systems

An information disclosure system is important for a couple of reasons based on perceptions of some participants in this study. Through this information system NGOs are not only able to disseminate information to the public, but also provide accessibility to those who wish to obtain information about an NGO and other available information. For example, consider the following expressed by Participant 5:

> *In general now we are starting to make our organisation more transparent. […] We start with our internal like financial report, annual narrative report, and other our policies we start to give accessibility to those who need it. (P5)*

This sentiment implied that since NGOs work on governance issues, there should be nothing to hide. Thus, disclosure of information to the public is important to show the practice of good governance. This means organisational documents and information, such as financial reports, annual reports, organisational policies, and others should be available to the public. Through disclosure of information, NGOs are able to receive feedback from the public which they may use as a basis to improve their operations, as Participant 12 stated below:

We […] disseminate our work to the public to know and then the public will assess our work that we are an organisation that is effective and efficient, uses less money something like that. (P12)

The suggestion relating to information is that NGOs not only aim to disclose government information but also they have to share their internal information to the public.

Monitoring and Feedback Systems

A monitoring and feedback system was also suggested by participants in this study. The system serves as both internal and external communication mechanisms through which NGO staff, and the general public, can assess and criticise general activities of the organisations, as well as corruption cases they encounter. For example, some participants gave advice on the establishment of a report and complaint mechanism. Through this mechanism, either NGO staff or the public, are able to make reports or lodge any complaints, not only relating to organisational staff misconduct, but also any corrupt practices they experience. It is also the mechanism to gather feedback on their project activities from relevant stakeholders and the beneficiary. The following explanations highlight their sentiments about how the report and complaint mechanism may assist in preventing incidents of corrupt practices. Consider the following suggestions put forth by some participants in this study below:

We have a system to control, both internal and external, and if they are doing something wrong we have a hotline that reports to us anytime. Thus we have an external accountability system. They can report when they do anything and they do anything wrong we will get feedback. Thus we have appropriate system to prevent corruption. (P3)

We have our hotline if our staff or the public sees or criticises us they can report to our email or hotline number. (P4)

We need to have a reporting mechanism, this is not only the staff but also beneficiary can report […] through online or telephone. (P5)

These participants made it clear that the report and complaint mechanism not only allows the public to make reports or file complaints against any misconducts

they experience, but may also prevent corrupt acts within their organisations. The mechanism provides comfort to the public because they can do this either online or by telephone. In terms of preventing and dealing with internal issues, for example, Participant 8, who works for an international organisation, explained his organisational processes as follows:

> *We have internal complaint mechanism […] our mechanism is quite strong and if [Name of an NGO] staff working with them involve in corruption they can report to me, if my staff, if I have any problem relative to corruption they can report to my superior, country director, if my country director, the French man, has problem we can report online to headquarter. […] We protect those who complaint, protect whistle-blowers. (P8)*

As described above, there is a need to protect whistle-blowers to ensure that they are secure and not concerned about the disclosure of their identification. This participant also referred to the process by which one can lodge their complaints and make reports, as well as be punished if one's involvement in corruption is detected. In a similar vein, some organisations are using the hotline system as a means to get feedback and report on corruption from staff and the public. At the same time, they are in the process of developing the complaint mechanism. Participant 4 explained this as follows:

> *Now we are drafting a policy called complaint mechanism. We are thinking whether through what approach the public communicate us, as well as our partners, first. Second our internal staff if they want to complain about this and that what we should do this is what we are thinking. Today what we do we try to debate through meetings, reminding and through our hotline. (P4)*

It is evident from the data that at least one participant offered a unique recommendation about complaint resolution taken by donors. Experience has shown that actions taken by donors by withdrawing financial support from corrupt NGOs appears to restrict the reporting of corruption cases. Consider the following comment by Participant 5 below:

> *The staff see that the leader of an NGO involves in corruption they want to rectify then report to donors, donors help investigate and find out corruption. When donors see that they do not rectify but they withdraw the money from that NGO. Thus the staff that report will have no job to do. This is a negative consequence that I can see that the donors should change that attitude. (P5)*

The above participant suggested that donors should reconsider their actions on resolving corruption cases by putting sanctions on corruption offenders rather than withdrawing financial support from that NGO, or terminating the project, because such actions impact on employees who are innocent. If such practices continue, it appears that no one will report corruption cases, even though they experience them.

While some participants were interested in a report and complaint mechanism, some suggested the significance of a controlling committee and follow up meetings to monitor organisational progress and receive feedback for further improvement. The following quotes exemplified these suggestions. For example, Participant 10 drew attention to the internal control committee to monitor organisational progress, as noted in the following:

> *We also have internal control committee to monitor regularly which is led by the board of director. (P10)*

Some participants recommended regular organisational meetings. The meetings not only discuss work progress but also remind employees to adhere to the organisational policies, as highlighted by Participant 4 below:

> *We have regular meetings we discuss about professionalism, code of ethics we repetitively remind in order that our staff stick to that. (P4)*

Another suggestion by participants which is similar to the above recommendations is an assembly where the organisation is able to monitor progress, exchanges ideas and provide feedback with grassroots organisations based on their experiences. The following quote from Participant 13 exemplified this sentiment:

> *We conduct the assembly once in every two year, this is also monitoring. We have done these activities and what should we do more in order to find good strategies or ideas and for those who are at the grassroots we go and give feedback something like that. (P13)*

What is more, Participant 8 also reported on a listening group which is worth consideration, to prevent corruption practiced in local communities, as noted in the following quote:

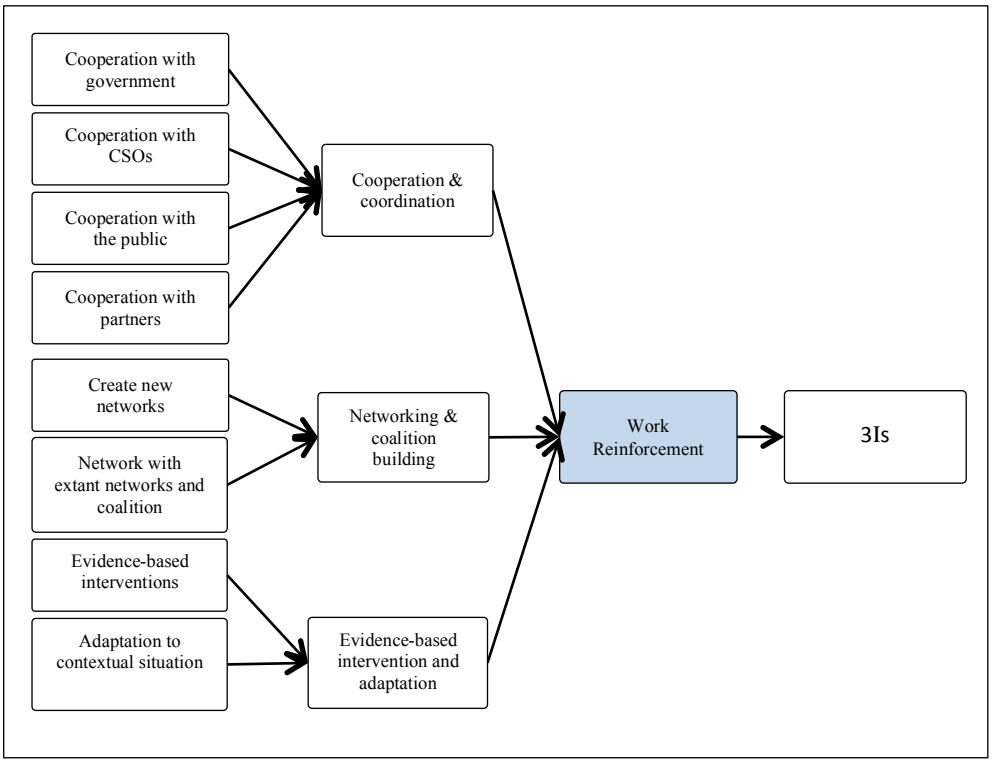
We have a listening group at grass-roots levels for such a petty issue that all members in communities. (P8)

To sum up, reinforcing the organisational information and monitoring system was found to help promote the organisation's communication. Through an information disclosure system, NGOs are able to disseminate information to the general public and also provide accessibility to those who wish to obtain information about them. The data also suggest the creation of a complaint system. Through this mechanism, either staff of an NGO or the public is able to assess and criticise general activities of the organisation, as well as any corruption cases they encounter. It also allows the public to make reports or lodge any complaints, not only relating to organisational staff misconducts, but also any corrupt practices they experience. An appropriate measure to protect whistle-blowers makes the complaint mechanism more effective.

4.3.1.2. Work Reinforcement

According to the analysis, work reinforcement stood out by integrating three emerging categories grounded in the fieldwork data. They consist of cooperation and coordination, networking and coalition building, and evidence-based intervention and adaptation (Figure 61). Almost all of the participants in the study believe in the essence of work reinforcement to improve their interventions and accelerate their influence on government and society. Through this iterative and interrelated process, it makes the activities of NGOs to become more operationalised. Furthermore, it makes the two sectors, state and non-state, come closer and work together on a mutual understanding basis. Through networking and coalition building, it helps the NGO sector unite and makes the voice of advocacy become stronger, and more persuasive and influential. In addition, evidence-based intervention and adaptation may make NGO operations become more credible and responsive to contextual situations.

Figure 61: Work reinforcement to corruption prevention

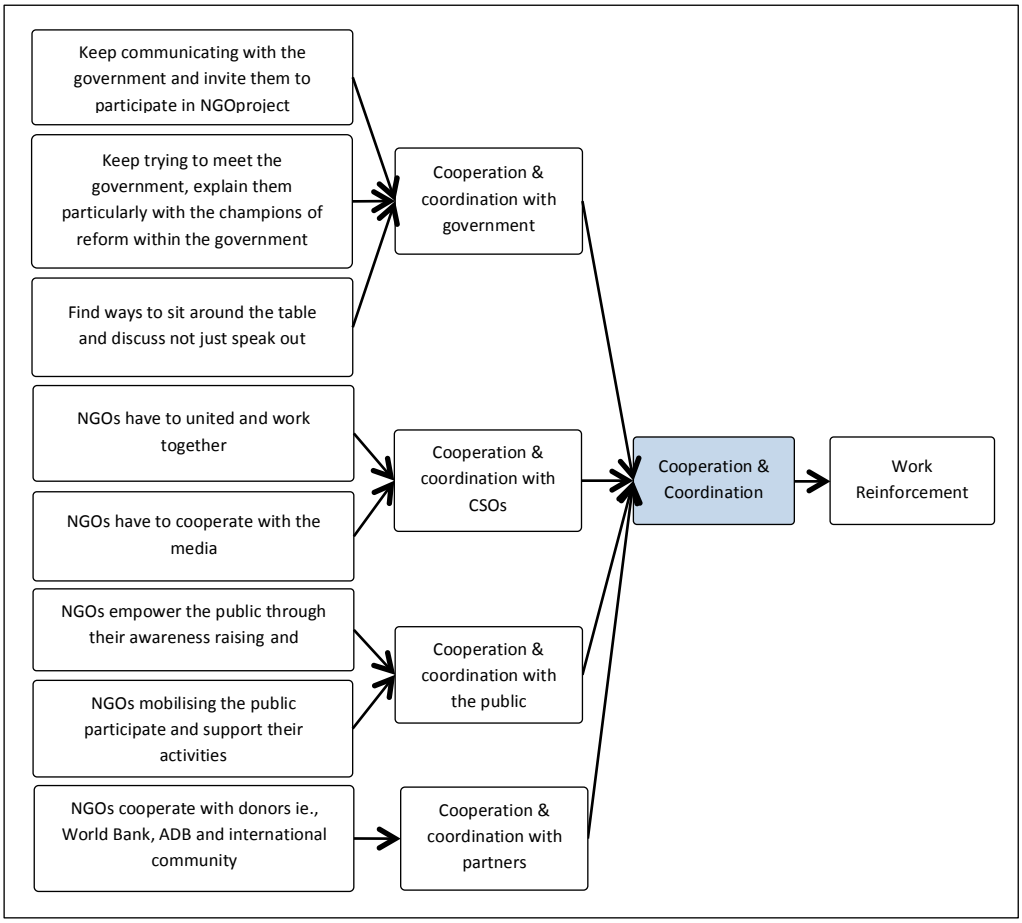


Cooperation and Coordination

Cooperation is our success factor. (P2)

The above quote is just an example to underscore the pervasive sentiment and essence of cooperation and coordination which is worth consideration by NGOs. The data suggest four subcategories which constitute the cooperation and coordination category. These are comprised of cooperation with the government sector, cooperation among NGOs, cooperation with the public, and cooperation with partners (Figure 62). It is apparent from the data that there were a range of stakeholders that NGOs cooperate with, however the data reveal little intention by NGOs to work with businesses.

Figure 62: Cooperation and coordination to corruption prevention



Cooperation and Coordination with Government

> *Keep trying to cooperate with the government. (P13)*
>
> *Have to work with the government, if they just stand from outside and speak out and point the finger that corruption, corruption it will be unable. (P6)*
>
> *Need to coordinate people in the government, between public institutions, between ministries. (P14)*

These quotes represented clear and consistent concepts which are worth bearing in mind, as long as NGOs wish to improve their operations and impacts. Cooperation, for example, as in the form of informing state authorities of what NGOs are going to do and inviting government representatives to attend an NGO-organised forums or radio talk shows, was found to be less effective. Such practice is clearly at a low level and more cooperation and coordination is needed. For example, consider

the suggestions from some of the participants below:

> *We have to […] strengthen partnership with the government even more. (P10)*
>
> *The importance is […] good cooperation with ministry of interior and provinces. (P1)*

As noted above, strengthening cooperation within the public sector is essential; at least it makes the operations of NGO activities workable. Without it, and lack of communication with state authorities, their projects are in trouble. For example, Participant 1 reported that due to good cooperation with public authorities her organisation has no problem in conducting any activities; instead, lack of cooperation with subnational authorities put an activity by one NGO in trouble, as highlighted in the following quote:

> *We do not go directly like [Name of an NGO] while implementing its project. When arriving at the location, they were chased back. That was because the lack of mechanism, knowledge about administration and diplomatic relations. (P1)*

This participant also signalled that lack of understanding of the public administrative system and communication skills may deteriorate NGO cooperation with the government side. This leads to the termination of the activity of an NGO as explained in the above example. As such, building the communication capacity of an NGO may be a good start to strengthening relationships with the government.

The majority of participants in this study appeared to accept that cooperation with the government is a good strategy to improve their interventions and impacts, and, at the same time, they are also likely to recognise the difficulty they may face in doing so. However, they insisted that the only way to overcome this dilemma is to keep trying to cooperate with the government, as Participant 8 mentioned below:

> *Generally speaking, make partnerships […] and mutual cooperation not only national level, districts by districts, provinces by provinces, we will get more benefits and when we build partnerships it is difficult, but we continue cooperate when there are problems we solve together. (P8)*

Cooperation and coordination between government and NGOs should not be

just in the form of informing; rather, it should be a process of sitting, discussing and finding solutions to problems together, as this same participant suggested below:

> *If we can do is to join hands in a positive manner, sit around the table discuss to find out solutions both the government and NGOs. (P8)*

This means that NGOs, to the best of their ability, should keep trying to find appropriate ways to cooperate with the government so that both sides are able to sit around the table, work and find solutions together, rather than criticising, or attacking, the government wrongdoings and misconducts from outside, since it hardly makes the interventions of NGOs effective and does not improve the situation. Note suggestions by some participants below:

> *Corruption occurs in the government. If they want to be effective on that issue they have to work with the government. If they just stand from outside and speak out and point the finger that corruption, corruption it will be unable. (P6)*

> *They [NGOs] are […] trying to work with the government and not just well denouncing, trying to work with the government. (P14)*

Therefore, it is worth noting that NGOs consider following recommendations which may make their operations more applicable and effective. For example, some participants suggested that NGOs should keep trying to invite government representatives to participate in their activities, communicate with and meet with them, as seen in the following quote:

> *To make our work more effective we need to […] work with the government even though whatever they say […] we still try to invite them, communicate with them, meet them or we meet through our various partners that work with them. (P4)*

Some organisations added that NGOs should try to cooperate with the government by trying to explain and discuss issues with them, and also provide assistance. Consider the following excerpts:

> *We have to engage them [governments], we try to meet, discuss, and provide assistance to government institutions in order that they respond. (P3)*

We keep trying to cooperate with the government side to explain reasons in order that it misunderstands that we do help. (P13)

Another unique recommendation was that NGOs should start up their cooperation with government officials who are the champions of reform. This may make their cooperation much easier, as Participant 3 mentioned below:

We cooperate with champions of reform within the government, those that have the intention to reform. (P3)

It is clear from the analysis that cooperation is a success factor recognised by participants in this study. However, cooperation, as in the form of informing and inviting, is less effective. The way forward is to sit around the table and find solutions together, between state and non-state actors.

Cooperation and Coordination with CSOs

Besides trying to intensify cooperation and coordination with the government sector, the data also suggest that NGOs need to cooperate with other CSOs. This means that to be more effective and influential NGOs have to unite and work together as a network and coalition (this will be discussed in more detail in the networking and coalition building section). For instance, some participants claimed that NGOs can work together to conduct a big campaign to push the government to make changes in policy and to enforce the law. Some claimed that NGOs have to cooperate with the media. On the contrary, if they compete with each other the advocacy force is diminished. As such, their voices will be less persuasive, or unheard, and the force will never be influential. As seen below, participant's responses typically indicated the need for NGOs to be united and work together:

NGOs have to combine into a coalition in order to be operationalised otherwise… We can be split off… If one by one it is easy to topple down. (P1)

At subnational levels we have to strengthen CSOs network to work together, not to work alone, one works on the east and one on the west. (P10)

The above quotes demonstrated that being united and working together make NGOs operationalised, however it will put NGOs at risk if they are separated. For

instance, the following views indicated, to a certain extent, the responses and attentions paid by public administration to NGO joint actions on certain social issues, as with the case of Beoung Kak:

> *CSOs have to unite to become a big core force to put pressure on that issue in order that the state authority solves these problems. If the issue is big, such as the present issue, for example, land issue in Beoung Kak in Phnom Penh if there is only a small organisation or association works on that case alone I think that the state authority, particularly the Phnom Penh administration, will not turn its face to look at the issue. Thus we have to unite, to talk together, find measures together and send to the administration together then it will have a responding measure. (P12)*

Again, this simply emphasised that working together will at least impel the government to address the issues. However, if NGOs are separate, as Participant 1 mentioned: *'one work on the east one on the west,'* their voices may not be heard and be persuasive. In addition, and also importantly, some participants suggested that NGOs should improve cooperation with the media. This may help their interventions become even more forceful. As noted below, some participants in this study said:

> *We have to improve cooperation with the media. (P10)*
>
> *We also have the involvement of journalists and the journalists help to make voice louder. (P8)*

At the lowest level, cooperation and coordination with other CSOs also helps channel those that are unable to work with the government side. For example, consider comments made by Participant 4 below:

> *I think it is important, it is through partnership because certain issues we are unable, we are not accessible to the government, our partners can convey that message. (P4)*

Therefore, NGOs consider more cooperation and coordination among its sector to be important for at least two reasons. First, it makes their advocacy activities more persuasive and influential when they work with one voice; second, it is a channel for NGOs that remain inaccessible accessible to work with state institutions.

Cooperation and Coordination with the Public

It is evident that NGOs work with, and serve the general public. This is natural; without public support NGOs may be voiceless. NGOs work with the public and help build their capacity and empower them to work with state authorities and, at the same time, mobilise them to participate in, and support, their activities. As seen below, some participants, for example, suggested that NGOs need to assemble citizens:

> *It is necessary to assemble… citizens, if we do not do so, it will be difficult. (P1)*
>
> *I think another way is to work with people and because...even we criticise, it's always well supported and legally supported. (P14)*

As noted above, working with the public is essential. This means that NGOs have to cooperate with the public in order that they support their activities because, without public support, the interventions of NGOs would be difficult. Sometimes NGOs work with, and support, the public to conduct advocacy, as Participant 4 suggested in the following quote:

> *I think we try to work […] with people the demand side group, raising awareness and supporting their advocacy. (P4)*

More specifically, the data pointed to the need for working with a specific target group of people. In this case, youth is found to be the most focal target group from the perceptions of participants in this study since they appeared to believe that youth are courageous and strong. Consider the following comments by Participants 1 and 5:

> *We have to take youth force to aid […] we have to gather to work together and youth force is courageous and think quickly and so forth. (P1)*
>
> *We only depend on people, educate people, particularly lower (age) youth, if we educate them more it is better to demand something. Reform is also the same, youth is the core force. (P5)*

However, at least one participant in this study advised that NGOs empower

the public, but should not make decisions for the public. Decisions have to be made by the public, not NGOs. Consider this participant's comment below:

> *The bottom line is to help people who are vote owners to decide, whatever they decide, to empower citizens. (P8)*

Cooperation and Coordination with Development Partners

> *Working with partners is very important. (P10)*

Adding to suggestions on strengthening cooperation with the government, CSOs, and the public, the data also suggest that NGOs have to cooperate with development partners, including the international community. NGOs need to cooperate with donors, such as ADB, and World Bank, in order that their interventions become more operationalised and effective. The following quotes exemplified suggestions made by some participants in this study:

> *It requires strong cooperation together and works along with donors. (P2)*
>
> *Sometimes we use influence from international community. (P3)*
>
> *We ask donors to involve because the government at some places get influences from donors. Sometimes we send message via donors, such as World Bank or ADB. (P11)*

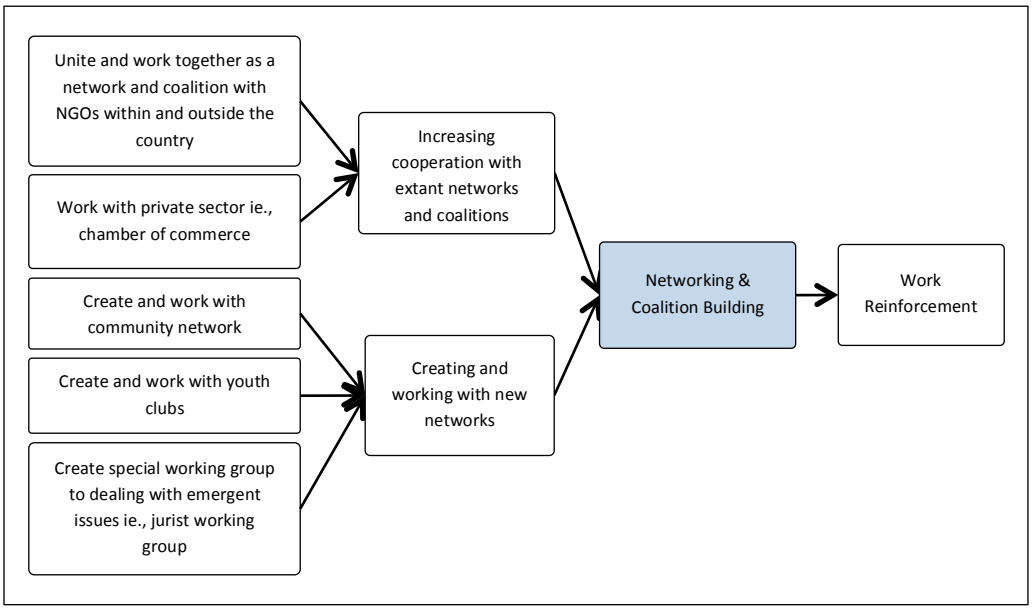
The above quotes demonstrated that working with donors is also important because experiences have taught them that, sometimes, without intervention from donors, their operations are weightless to put pressure on the public sector to be responsive and accountable.

It is, therefore, found that cooperation and coordination among various stakeholders is suggested by the majority of participants in this study. It helps bring different stakeholders closer together, mutually understand each other, and able to work together collaboratively as a collective force. However, cooperation and coordination between state and non-state actors remains weak. Cooperation and coordination between government and NGOs is merely in the form of informing, rather than sitting, discussing and finding solutions to problems together.

Networking and Coalition Building

Data from this qualitative research point to the value of building networks and coalitions as an approach that NGOs should consider, to strengthen their forces and operations. This category is made up by combining two emerging subcategories; namely, increasing cooperation with extant networks and coalitions, and creating and working with new networks (Figure 63).

Figure 63: Networking and coalition building to corruption prevention



Increasing Cooperation with Extant Networks and Coalitions

Increasing cooperation with extant networks and coalitions are highly valued by most interviewees. This does not mean that, previously, NGOs did not work together as a network and coalitions, but they suggest that this needs to be increased further. Working as an individual organisation, the NGO sector will never be strong and influential. No matter whether an organisation is big or small, they have to help and support each other. The following quotes exemplify the pervasive sentiment of participants in this study in relation to networking and coalition building.

We look at this society, we cannot be alone, even citizens cannot be alone, there must be knotting into community. NGOs have to combine into coalition in order to be operationalised otherwise… We can be split off. (P1)

[…] we can be effective is that we have to build strong network, not working apart from each other (P10)

CSOs have to tie together as a group for its strength and...We can say as one voice. (P13)

We have to mobilise forces including various expertise, resources... CSOs have to combine to make them stronger. (P2)

The above participants demonstrated the belief that working independently is not a good choice. As such, being united and working together as a coalition is an ideal option to secure their operations and ensure that their forces cannot be broken down, as well as to have their voices heard and their interventions become more effective. Beyond this, some participants illustrated that networking serves as a channel, allowing NGOs that are inaccessible to the government to become accessible. Consider the following comments expressed by Participants 2 and 4 below:

Network is important. For example, we can see some strong NGOs until today cannot access to government. But some NGOs […] can access to government. Thus use such networks to access. (P2)

I think it is important […] because certain issues we are unable; we are not accessible to the government, our partners can convey that message. (P4)

These comments demonstrated that, until now, some NGOs are inaccessible to the government but, through networks, they become more accessible and are able to work with the government. At the very least, through networks, partner organisations help convey the message to the government. Adding to this, Participant 3 mentioned the collaboration that his organisation has with the business sector, particularly the chamber of commerce, as highlighted below:

With business we are working with chamber of commerce. Thus we have British, American, European, Australian, and Canadian. We have done a lot with them, with lots of our coalitions (P3)

As described, although this participant claimed to have worked with the chamber of commerce of several countries, the data suggest no account of networking or working with private business within the country. As such, it is an area which is worth consideration.

Creating and Working with New Networks

Apart from building up cooperation with existing networks and coalitions, the data also suggest that NGOs have to create and work with new networks in order to improve their functioning. For example, they help people at grassroots level to create networks within their communities, and youth to create clubs. Sometimes NGOs create a special working group to deal with certain emerging issues. For instance, NGOs create a group of jurist to help people to know their rights and to seek for a lawyer to assist them in the court of law. The following quotes are worth noting in relation to making connections and improving the operations of NGOs, as stated by Participant 10 below:

> *We create people networks in their communities in order that they understand or talk about corruption or dare to file complaints. (P10)*

It is clear from the above example that this organisation has created people networks in communities, worked with them, and assisted them to become aware of how to use a complaint mechanism, for example. Similarly, Participant 8 expressed the idea of building networks across communes, in order that they have a common voice to work with subnational authorities, or deal with local issues. This is most likely to be an effective way to move forward to strengthen democracy, and also an important tip that NGOs should bear in mind. Consider the following quote:

> *We build their networks across communes in order to have common voices at the district level and we see that it is effective because people are courageous because they are many. This is perhaps a medicine that strongly participates in curing a disease that relating to strengthening democracy. (P8)*

In addition, some organisations mentioned the network building programme in which they help youth to create clubs, how to take joint actions, exchange information and experiences, and how to work and solve problems together, as

Participant 5 put it below:

> *We educate youth know how to create clubs and take joint actions and we have regular meeting […] in order that they share experiences and talk about their challenges and we take that challenges to solve together. (P5)*

Furthermore, some organisations advised the creation of a working group to deal with emerging issues. Although this kind of action has been adopted by some NGOs, it is worth taking into account since working as a group make their voices stronger. Observe the following comment by Participant 6:

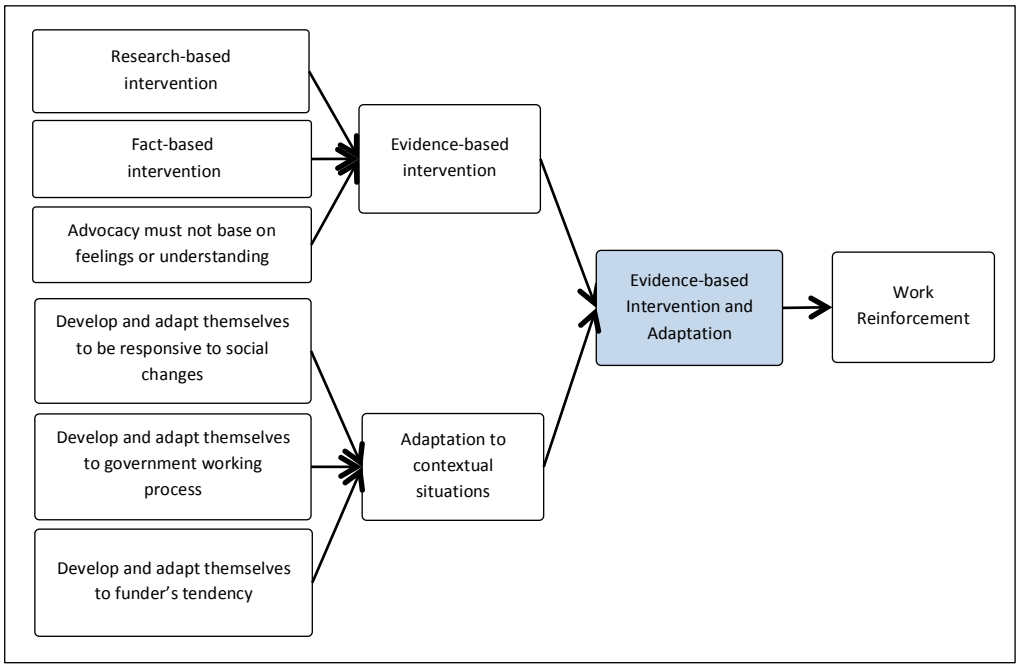
> *Another corner is that they are present to protect people to apply their rights, for example, people who has land disputes, domestic violence […] there are advocacy NGOs that create a group of jurist in order that the people first have the rights to know that they have the rights to seek for a lawyer or protector in the court. (P6)*

Therefore, some organisations have been networking and building coalitions with CSOs, both within and outside the country, and some have even created networks with the private sector, as well as attempting to create and work with new networks. For example, some NGOs claimed to be a coalition of certain NGOs, and some indicated that they were conducting a network building programme. It is evident that such actions have not been done enough and, at times, have been virtually absent all together for some NGOs. As such, it is clear from the data that networking and coalition building is an element that is worth accelerating even more in order to improve NGOs interventions.

▒ Evidence-based Intervention and Adaptation

According to the analysis, evidence-based intervention and adaptation is another important aspect that NGOs should consider to enhance their operations, otherwise they may not be properly functional. This category is made up by combining two emerging subcategories: evidence-based interventions and adaptation to contextual situations (Figure 64).

Figure 64: Evidence-based intervention and adaptation to corruption prevention



Evidence-based Interventions

It is recommended that the actions of NGOs be evidence-based. Without concrete evidence and facts, NGO interventions may become problematic. This means that NGOs cannot advocate based on emotion and supposition. All activities, such as advocacy, public announcements, face to face dialogues, and public forums, have to be based on reliable evidence, such as research and surveys. The following quotes exemplify suggestions made by some participants in this study which are worth taking into account. Participant 12 explained that:

> *The bottom line is that CSOs have to conduct research […] The means of advocacy has to be done through fact-based or evidence-based advocacy (P12)*

Put simply, this means that advocacy has to be based on fact and concrete evidence, and be direct and to the point with regards to actual issues and situations. In addition, Participant 4 explained that research-based recommendations are important because the government lack research-based information with which to respond to the public. As such, NGOs can assist in this area. Consider the following quote:

Sometimes we push the government side, but it does not have the capacity to respond to people because it does not have reports etc. because it does not conduct research. Sometimes we conduct research or surveys, we give the government recommendations. (P4)

Adaptation to Contextual Situations

Field data suggest that to become more effective in their operations NGOs have to update and adapt themselves to contextual situations. This is, for example, because the functioning of public administration is normally not static and the society develops over time. Therefore, it is essential that NGOs have to adjust to contextual changes so that they are responsive to new emerging circumstances and situations. The following comment made by Participant 7 is worth consideration:

Internally we need to build capacity of staff, keep upgrade what is the new policy of the government, where the government move to, what is the tendency of the development partners, we have to keep update our surrounding environment. (P7)

The above quote clearly indicated that NGOs have to catch up with and adapt themselves to the changes of the society and, at the same time, they have to develop their capacity and knowledge to respond to those changes. It is also evident from the data that to be more functional and productive NGOs have to understand the government administrative system. Lack of understanding of the way the public sector works may lead to miscommunication, misunderstanding and lack of interest from the public officials, leading to delays and obstructing the normal operations of NGOs. Note the following description:

They [some NGOs] also asked for permission but were rejected. This is what I want to emphasise on the importance of understanding of administrative system... plus political context also. If I forward [proposal] to city hall, at the same time I also send to the higher level. I know that the City dares not offer permission if there is no decision from the top. They follow the bureaucratic processes they do not bypass [not direct to the top]. Therefore, the proposal goes back and forth like a ball. (P1)

The above example clearly demonstrated that the decision making is highly centralised although, in theory, the administrative system or bureaucratic process authorises low level administrations, to a certain extent, to make decisions but in

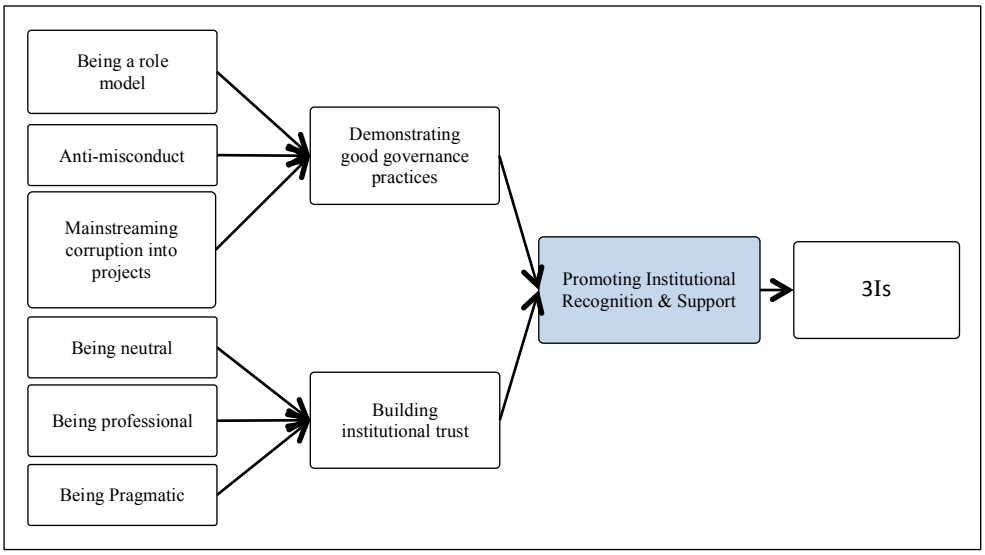
practice it rarely happens. The lower levels usually wait for the green light from the top level before taking further action. NGOs have to understand and be flexible to the current practice of the bureaucratic process within the public sector.

It is evident from the data, therefore, that contextual understanding and adaptation is recommended by participants in this study. This means that whatever NGOs do has to be based on facts and concrete evidence. They also have to develop and adapt themselves to be responsive to social changes, and the actual functioning of the government administrative process.

4.3.1.3. Promoting Institutional Recognition and Support

The data suggest that NGOs are able to build their reputations and make their work more effective by promoting institutional recognition and support. According to the analysis, promoting institutional recognition and support is constituted by combining two emerging categories, including demonstrating good governance practices, and building institutional trust (Figure 65). This third and the last theme is equally important to ensure the proper functioning and effective and supportive operations of NGOs attempting to promote good governance and prevent corrupt incidents in the Cambodian public sector. Through this iterative and interrelated process, the voice of the NGO is heard and their actions make a significant impact on society. By contrast, if the work of an NGO is not clean or examplary, their intervention does not gain public trust and support, and is not influential. To accomplish this essential goal NGOs have to, for example, act as a role model, be clean and incorruptible, be neutral in their work, be professional, and be pragmatic and responsive. As such, demonstrating good governance practices and building institutional trust are essential to gain credibility and support, as highlighted by many participants in this study. If one wishes someone to be clean, they have to be clean first, otherwise their advocacy will not be taken seriously. The details of which are discussed below.

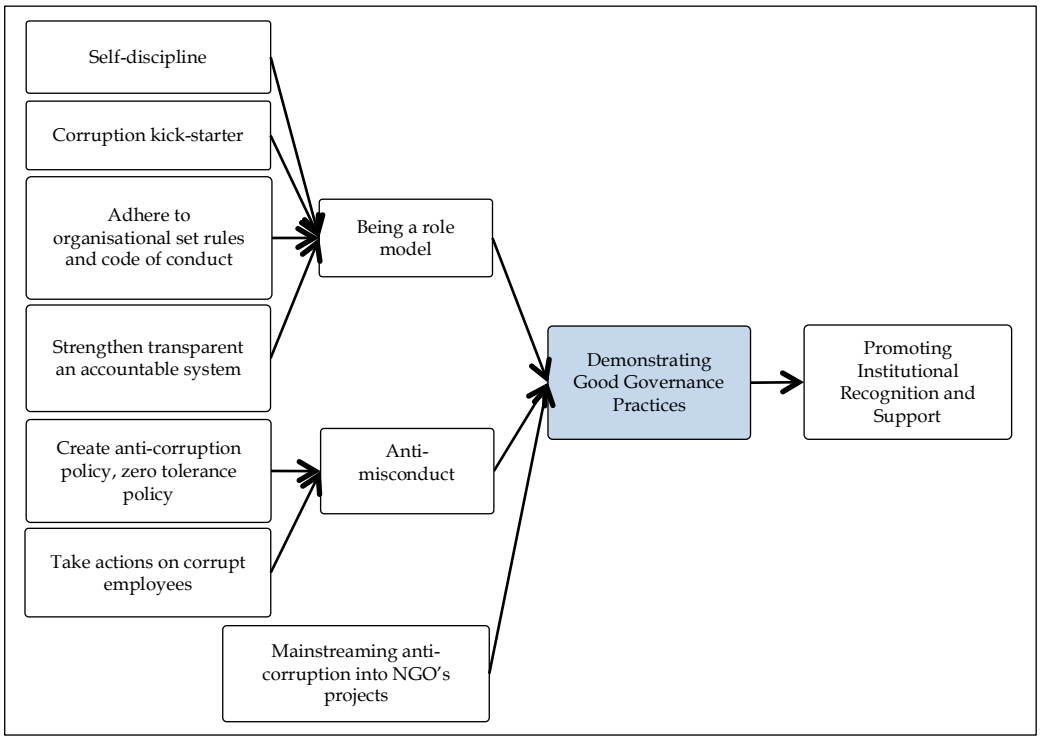
Figure 65: Promoting institutional recognition and support to corruption prevention



Demonstrating Good Governance Practices

Based on the data contained in this qualitative research, it is evident that NGOs, especially those that work on governance or corruption related issues, have to demonstrate organisational good governance practices. According to the analysis, the demonstration of good governance practices is comprised through the integration of three emerging subcategories, including being a role model, anti-misconduct, and mainstreaming anti-corruption into their projects (Figure 66). Through these interrelated processes, NGOs may not only be able to reduce organisational constraints, but also gain credibility and support in their cause.

Figure 66: Demonstrating good governance practices



Being a Role Model

> *NGOs that work on good governance, anti-corruption […] have to be a good model to lead others. (P5)*
>
> *NGOs […] have to act as a role model to show the government that this is the way we do to promote good governance. (P6)*
>
> *NGOs have to play as a role model. This is important for their organisation as well as for the society. Thus if we think that governance in the public sector is not good thus CSOs play as a role model. (P10)*

The above examples emphasised the pervasive sentiment that, as a governance-oriented organisation, NGOs have to act as a role model. According to the data, some of the phrases used to describe being a role model included, for example, *'be a good model to lead others', 'own good governance', 'be clean', and 'start from itself'*. In the following examples, participants revealed what it means to be a role model, and how it helps the work of NGOs. The first suggestion is that NGOs have to make themselves clean by strengthening self-discipline, as indicated below:

NGOs themselves need good governance because if they criticise or show the loopholes of the government, NGOs themselves must be no loopholes. (P9)

An NGO itself also must have its own good governance, it cannot criticise others but does not look at itself. (P12)

NGOs must be clean in themselves […] to show the government that this is the way we do to promote good governance. (P6)

The above quotes pointed to the need for NGOs that work on good governance or corruption related issues to cleanse themselves and set examples for others before criticising the government activities. Acting as a role model is indispensable for NGOs to demonstrate to the public that they want the public sector to do the same. Adding to this, Participant 6 furthered that by making themselves clean the voice of NGOs becomes supportive, as indicated in the following quote:

I think that NGOs can help to push the government by making themselves to become a role model, NGOs […] have to be clean in order that what they say is heavy. (P6)

Similarly, by being clean, the actions of NGOs may make a significant impact on society. Consider the idea expressed by Participant 11 below:

I think each NGO should be clean […] to ensure that NGOs themselves have good governance, have good activities […] Thus it will influence on the whole society. (P11)

The data also suggest that NGOs can be a role model by being an anti-corruption kick-starter. Consider comments made by Participants 1 and 11, as follows:

To fight against corruption is to start from ourselves. If it starts from ourselves, it can fight against it. (P1)

At NGO level we ensure that all system in [Name of an NGO] is free from corruption. […] If good starts from us, and others are good, then we are all good. (P11)

As described, NGOs should begin with themselves in the fight against corruption. Corruption happens in the public administration, thus, to allow the

corrupt administration to start the war on corruption is less effective. As such, a good start from NGOs may set a good example for the whole society. It is also apparent from the data that NGOs can act as role models by adhering to the organisational set policies and rules, and have a sufficient legal system to govern its operations. Put them into real practice, not just sit on the shelf. As seen below, Participants 4 and 6 stated that:

> *To make our work more effective we need to adhere to our principles, our professional, our code of conduct. (P4)*
>
> *NGOs should have sufficient legal system. (P6)*

In a similar vein, some NGOs provided a broad comment on the importance of strengthening the organisational transparency and accountability system, as emphasised by Participant 3 below:

> *The problem that we have seen is that there are some NGOs also corrupt. Thus they need to strengthen governance structure and transparency, accountability in their organisations. If they are corrupt they work to mainstream anti-corruption work is unable. (P3)*

By contrast, if the work of an NGO is not clean and does not set an example, their interventions will not gain public trust and support, and will fail to be influential. Think through the following examples given by some participants below:

> *NGOs […] have to be clean in order that what they say is heavy. […] NGOs along with the ministry of health is corrupt […] the tendency is not to think that all NGOs are clean and the government is unclean. Thus […] to make the government clean, for me NGOs have to be clean in themselves. (P6)*
>
> *If CSOs themselves also corrupt that's it. This is like a teacher talk to a student, you must not keep long hair, during my period male students mostly keep long hair and teachers need to instruct students not to keep long hair, but the teachers themselves keep long. (P7)*

Adding to this, Participant 6 also gave another example in relation to the ineffectiveness of NGO operations. NGOs demand the government be impartial, yet they themselves discriminate, as seen in the following quote:

Some NGOs announce to recruit staff state clearly in their criteria that… Christianity is considered as a priority in writing, it means that NGO discriminates the religion, those who are not Christian can apply but not sure to be recruited […] NGOs themselves are discriminate, how can to force the government not to discriminate. (P6)

Anti-misconduct

Similar to suggestions that NGOs act as role models, the analysis also suggests that NGOs have to show the public that they are committed to take action against organisational misconducts. Most of the participants in this study recommended the creation of anti-corruption policies and the importance of taking action against those involved in corrupt practices. For example, Participants 2 and 3 expressed that:

[Name of an NGO] has an anti-corruption policy that all agreements, all staff have to sign first. (P2)

We have a zero tolerance policy, even one dollar if we find out the evidence, we do not forgive. All our staff know that. (P3)

Moreover, some participants referred to the application of the organisational policy and taking disciplinary actions against those who engage in corrupt practices. Note the following suggestions by some participants below:

We do not tolerate. When there is any problem relating to corruption we take action immediately […] We are not silent, we do it regularly, particularly during meetings we remind or raise any points that may happen eventually. (P9)

CSOs must have the anti-corruption policy and it must be enforced, not just only have it. (P11)

We have in our policy that there is no corruption and those who work have to ensure they do not involve in corruption and no conflict of interest. (P4)

These quotes emphasised that having policy is not enough, but turning it into real action may guarantee and deter various organisational misbehaviours.

Mainstreaming Corruption Prevention into Projects

The data also suggest that NGOs should incorporate an anti-corruption approach as part of their projects. Consider the following advice given by some participants below:

> *These are the activities because the programme that we have done not focus solely on anti-corruption but we include anti-corruption as part of the project. (P10)*
>
> *We focus on strengthening governance and providing effective services, and anti-corruption are in that project too, but we do not use that word. (P8)*

As noted above, these participants indicated that although the focus of their organisational programme is not on anti-corruption, they still suggested the integration of anti-corruption as part of the projects. In a similar vein, Participant 12 added that, although NGOs work on development-oriented areas such as education and health, they should consider incorporating anti-corruption into their projects as well. Consider the following suggestion:

> *I think that CSOs have to think that corruption is a cross-cutting issue. Thus they have to mainstream that issue in their projects no matter what sector they are working on, like health, education, environment, agriculture or whatever. (P12)*

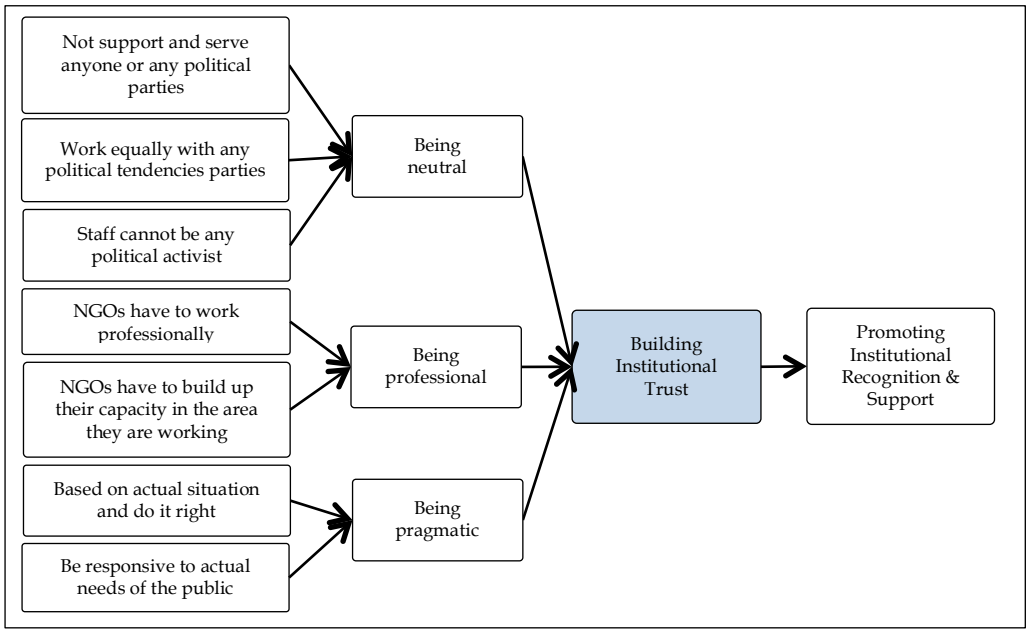
Therefore, it is evident from the data that NGOs have to demonstrate good governance practices, so long as they intend to gain institutional recognition and support from the government and the public. To accomplish this goal, NGOs have to act as role models which means that they have to be transparent and accountable in the way they work, and be clean and incorruptible, and so forth.

Building Institutional Trust

Grounded in the fieldwork data, building institutional trust is created by the integration of three subcategories. They include being neutral, being professional, and being pragmatic (Figure 67). Through these strategic actions, NGOs may attract more credibility and support from the public, and attention and cooperation from the

government.

Figure 67: Building institutional trust



Being Neutral

> *NGOs operate in Cambodia. Need to avoid political tendency or support one political party or bias to another. (P6)*
>
> *[Name of an NGO] is neutral, does not support anyone and stand on factual events. (P10)*
>
> *We have a neutral stance […] we do not support any politics […] we support all political tendencies (P1)*

The above quotes indicated that the operations of NGOs need to appeal to facts and be impartial. In particular, political neutrality is vital in terms of maintaining the reputation of an NGO. The following quotes exemplified the sentiments of NGO work:

> *We do not serve any political party, thus we stay neutral and we work for the people, then any political party is not our side. (P7)*
>
> *We try to be balance. It means that we do not work with one party and not with another, we need to have engagement from both sides and we focus on issues (P9)*

We work to show that we are not bias to any political party […] if we work with political parties we work with all. For example, we organise a workshop, if we invite political parties we invite all, if we educate, disseminate to political parties we do for all. (P12)

The above comments implied that NGOs are able to keep themselves neutral by being impartial in their work; for example, supporting one political party and opposing against another party. NGOs work with all political tendencies, regardless of whether they are from the ruling party or the opposition party. Being neutral in the way they work helps build their reputation, as Participant 8 highlighted below:

NGOs should avoid political partisan, neutrality is very important. This maintains reputation of NGOs. (P8)

Beyond this, some participants pointed to the need for the staff members of NGOs to not become political activists for any political party. Note the following remarks:

We have a mechanism: first our staff is not a political activist of any political party. If someone is a political official or political activist they have to resign. They do not participate in political campaign, attend political meetings with any political party. (P10)

All our staff, no one becomes an activist of any political party. If there is anyone who is an activist we let them resign. (P3)

We have our principle, first all staff are not any political activists, not doing any activities for any political parties. (P5)

As noted above, these participants have a consistent view that the staff of an NGO must not be political activists and participate in any events, or do any activities for any political parties. If any staff member is found in such a position, or engaged in such activities, they will be dismissed. Some organisations agreed that NGOs have to remain neutral; however, they appeared to accept that any NGO staff member is able to use their rights as a citizen of a country where anyone enjoys the right to politics, but they cannot use the name of the NGO they work for, and they are able to engage in any political event or campaign as a private citizen. Note their explanations below:

We have staff agreement which means that we are neutral when we sign a contract. Thus when there is any activity, if any political party organises a demonstration, that staff cannot join if he/she goes to participate on Saturday or Sunday, absolutely he/she cannot use the name [Name of an NGO]. (P7)

We state in our by-law also that we are not a political party but we do not ban anyone from political rights, if any staff enter politics is their choice but cannot use the name of [Name of an NGO]. (P11)

Therefore, NGOs should consider the neutrality of their organisation and the influences of their actions on the political rights of each individual citizen, where the law of the nation entitles them to participate in political life.

Being Professional

The data have made clear that NGOs have to build expertise in their area of work and perform their work professionally. This may attract more support from the public, as well as attention from the government. For example, Participant 10 mentioned that:

CSOs themselves try to build up their real professionals on the issues that they are working on, including expertise or someone who clearly understands the issues, that can talk to or dialogue with the government. (P10)

As seen above, this participant suggested that NGOs have to build up their expertise in the field they are working and, at the same time, they should also strengthen advocacy skills to work with the government. Put simply, NGOs have to be professional in their work and advocacy. Limited capacity and lack of professionalism in their work may first lead to the idea that what they are doing is not credible, as Participant 4 put it below:

We ourselves must have professional...otherwise our work, reports or our recommendations will not be credible. Thus we have to […] strengthen our capacity and credits. (P4)

Second, this may lead to the barrier that the government does not believe in the capacity of an NGO because they lack knowledge in their work areas and, even worse, when their work is not based on evidence, as Participant 2 commented below:

CSOs themselves have to be knowledgeable as professional […] This is a point in order to become…because the government always think that sometimes CSOs are not knowledgeable. CSOs sometimes say something as academically such as based on research as evidence, and sometimes they say something based on their understanding but not clear. (P2)

On the contrary, when NGOs work professionally they are able to mobilise more public support which improves their credibility; thus, their voices are more influential. Consider the comments from Participant 4 below:

We have to work professionally and principally and that could draw support and credible from citizens. When we have support from citizens we have influences in our dialogues. (P4)

Being Pragmatic

The data suggest that NGOs may gain more support from the public, and attention from the public sector, by being pragmatic in their work. Grounded in the data of this study, being pragmatic refers to the notion that NGO interventions have to be responsive to the needs of the public and based on actual situations. Note the sentiments expressed by participants in this study as follows:

As what I said, do the right thing and be responsive to the people's needs… For example, they are hungry and we invite them to dance or sing it is not right. (P11)

I think the importance is that we do the right thing, the thing that is the major issue in society and is impacting the public. I think we do the right thing we gain trust...attention from the citizens. (P4)

According to the above remarks, these participants indicated that doing the right thing, or working on the thing that impacts on people's livelihood and society, means that NGOs are making the effort to help respond to the needs of the general public. As such, working on preventing corruption and promoting good governance is the right thing to deal with and, therefore, intervention by NGOs becomes more credible and garners more support from the public. The work of NGOs will be credible and gain more public support when they involve relevant stakeholders in their projects, and gather information and respond to their actual situation. Consider remarks made by some participants below:

We start to involve relevant stakeholders in designing activities of our work. This means that when we have any project mostly we meet with them, what do they want from the project, what shall we do, we consult with them, this we think that our relevant stakeholders have somewhat ownership to the project. (P5)

We base on actual situation (P12)

[Name of an NGO] stands on factual events. Thus they cooperate more and some [communes] incorporate governance… issues into their commune/sangkat development plan. (P10)

Through actual situations or factual events, participants in this study referred to information or events that have reliable sources, such as research reports and actual cases that happened, rather than by just being heard or from their understanding and feelings.

In short, the data reveal that NGOs have been making the effort to promote social recognition and support by (1) maintaining and adhering to political neutrality, (2) building up capacity and working professionally, and (3) being pragmatic and responsive to the needs of the public.

▒ New Outcomes and Impacts

As discussed earlier, the intervention of NGOs has contributed to outcomes and impacts; however, they are at a low level. It is believed that once NGOs fully understand all associated factors and manage the 3Is effectively, they are then able to make a difference. As such, through the intervention of the 3Is into the framework, it is expected that its incomes and impacts move up to a higher level. These new expectations are explained in Chapter Five.

▒ Adaptation

The term 'adaptation' is proposed in this framework. The use of 'adaptation' makes the cyclical nature of this framework become more consistent, meaning that this integrated framework is not just a repetitive process but it also has to adapt its processes to be highly responsive to changes, and also challenges or opportunities that arise. The 3Is approach, in particular, has to adapt its processes according to the

contextual situation regardless of whether changes are the direct result of the 3Is, or the indirect result of changes in the contextual trap itself. Put simply, changes in contextual traps lead to changes in organisational processes, which then lead to changes in the 3Is approach. This is important because society is not static, it changes over time.

4.4. Chapter Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, this chapter conceptualised the surrounding environment, labelled as contextual traps. The contextual traps: political, legal, social, cultural and economic, play their significant part in the generation of corrupt practices, and, also, greatly constrains the operations of non-state actors to promote good governance, as well as prevent corruption. The chapter presented the current strategies to corruption prevention of NGOs and categorised them into three broad strategic actions, including civic empowerment, civic advocacy, and civic oversight. The chapter also discussed the constraints faced by NGOs, namely: management and leadership constraints corruption and governance constraints, and financial constraints. Next, it introduced a 3I's approach to corruption prevention. Finally, based on the findings, a proposed problem-process-impact framework is developed: an integrative 3Is approach to corruption prevention.

The next chapter discusses the key findings by making comparisons with the extant literature which was reviewed in Chapter Two. Primarily, it covers the extent literature to which this research helps improve the understanding of the problems, and the extent to which this thesis helps address the identified problems in both theory and practice.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

5.1. Introduction

Chapter Four presented the findings of the study in detail, along with supporting quotes from participants. Grounded in the findings, a proposed framework (s), an integrative 3Is approach to corruption prevention, was developed, aiming at solving associated problems and challenges that limit the effective operations of NGOs. This chapter provides a discussion of the findings, as well as a comparison to the literature reviewed in Chapter Two. The focus of this chapter is concerned with how this research can help improve theoretical and practical understanding of the current state of theoretical and practical problems, and how it helps address the identified problems. It also examines issues relating to limitations and generalisability of the study.

The chapter is divided into four parts. Part One discusses the contributions of the study. This part consists of three sections. Section One covers the contributions to theory. This also includes contributions of the study to methodology. Section Two is concerned with practical contributions. Part Two discusses the possibility that this study contributes to new outcomes, and the impacts of this research. Part Three covers the possible generalisability of the study to a broader context. Finally, Part Four is concerned with the limitations of the study.

5.2. Contributions of the Study

This research contributes to both theory and practice. In terms of theory, this study contributes to corruption research through the development of two different but interrelated conceptual frameworks, and to NGOs through expanding the stock of theoretical knowledge about NGOs and corruption prevention. Regarding practical contributions, this research informs practitioners and policy-makers by interpreting the framework into practice. All of these are discussed below.

5.2.1. Theoretical Contributions

Overall, this research contributes to theory through the development of two different but interrelated frameworks—framework (p) and framework (s). As

explained in Chapter Four, framework (p) conceptualises the problems of current practices used by NGOs. Framework (p) basically helps improve understanding of the current state of problems and surrounding environments where NGOs operate, the current state of NGO strategic actions, and their associated organisational constraints. Framework (s) represents solution to the problems identified in framework (p), through the intervention of the 3Is approach into framework (p). The framework is integrative since it encompasses dimensions, components and their embedded elements, and covers multiple disciplines. The placement of the two frameworks below (Figure 68 and Figure 69) just aims at refreshing and highlighting the connection between them.

Figure 68: Framework (p): Problems of NGO current practices

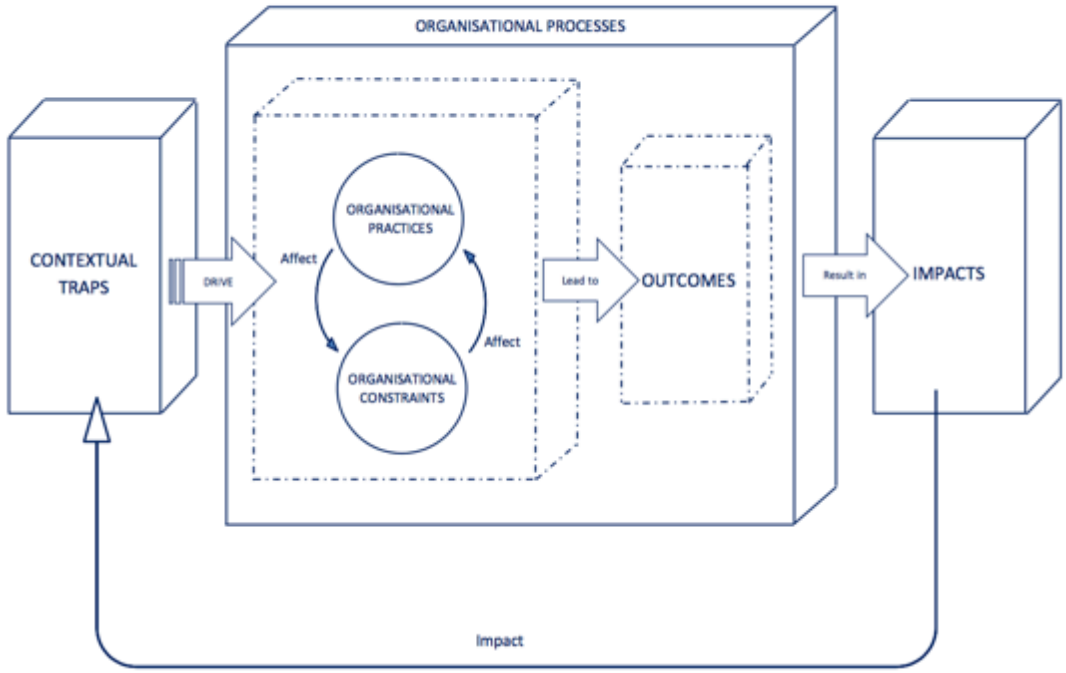
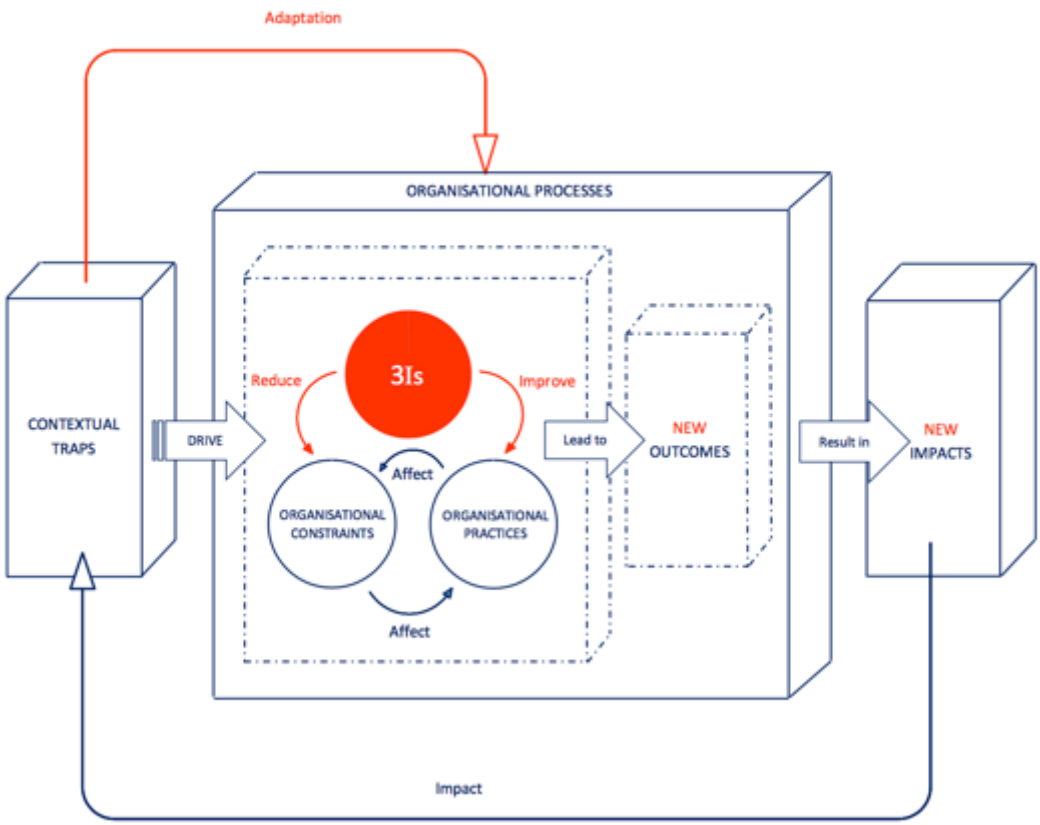


Figure 69: Framework (s): An integrative 3Is approach to corruption prevention



In a broad sense, the frameworks contribute to the shortage of theory development in the corruption literature. As claimed by Judge et al. (2011), corruption research has largely been atheoretical. It is relatively under-theorised because the majority of corruption research tends to test existing theories borrowed from other disciplines, rather than developing new ones. For example, corruption research tests sociological-based theories, such as the use of contingency theory to test the effect of human development and national culture on corruption (Sims et al., 2012), and the use of institutional theory to analyse the interaction of culture and corruption (Pillay & Dorasamy, 2010). In addition, corruption research tests economic theories, such as the use of a principal-agent model to analyse political corruption (Groenendijk, 1997) to test the relationship between party system competitiveness and corruption (Schleiter & Voznaya, 2014), and the use of game theory to examine the relationship between natural resources, democracy and corruption (Bhattacharyya & Hodler, 2010), and the inability of Chinese authorities

to deter corruption (Zhu, 2012). Theoretical perspectives have also been borrowed from criminology, such as a situational crime prevention theory to control corruption (Graycar & Sidebottom, 2012). There is little or no theory development in contemporary corruption research other than testing existing theories borrowed from other disciplines. As such, this framework is a substantive contribution to the shortage of corruption theory.

This integrative theoretical framework is a response to the fragmentation in previous corruption research which is mostly confined to silos of particular disciplinary perspectives. For example, economists work on economic causes, effects and solutions; law academics focus on legal antecedents and legal solution; ethicists research moral behaviours and solutions, and so on. As a result, corruption research tends not be truly cumulative, leading to a lack of the development of a coherent body of models and theories that explain corruption and ways to prevent it occurring (Judge et al., 2011). Moreover, it should be considered that to fight against corruption needlessly is to regard one institution more important than another. As argued by Rothstein (2007), for example, the court of law is no better, or inferior, than the mass media. This research helps address this shortcoming by looking at multiple perspectives (political, legal, social, cultural, and economic). As such, this framework helps address the concerns expressed by authors (e.g., Judge et al., 2011) about the fragmentation in corruption research findings by creating a coherent and interrelated framework.

More importantly, this research also contributes to the knowledge about NGOs and corruption research through the introduction of the integrated 3Is approach. The 3Is look at many dimensions that NGOs can play to prevent corruption, unlike the existing literature. For example, Boulding (2010) examines NGOs and political participation, and Jenkins and Goetz (2010) explores NGOs and access to information. Thus, there remains a significant number of yet to be answered research questions and unaddressed research problems and theoretical puzzles. For example, little is known about the role of NGOs in stimulating public participation to controlling corruption, or how NGOs go about lobbying political elites in order to promote the political will to fight corruption. There are also important questions about the factors affecting the effectiveness of NGOs in their efforts to control corruption in nations where democracy is fragile, nascent or non-existent.

The integrative 3Is approach is the solution to these limitations. It is a core feature of the proposed theoretical framework (s) and a new concept to corruption prevention grounded in the data of this study. There is no significant revelation of the contemporary literature relating to this development. The 3Is is integrative since it seeks solutions to the problems by looking at various associated aspects, encompassing organisational reinforcement, work reinforcement and promoting institutional recognition and support. Organisational reinforcement provides insight into the significance of the role of management in addressing corruption, such as reinforcing organisational policy, reinforcing organisational management systems, and reinforcing information and monitoring systems. Regarding work reinforcement, this is conceptualised based on participant's knowledge and experiences which is composed of three elements, including cooperation and coordination, networking and coalition building, and evidence-based intervention and adaptation. This focuses particularly on the role of collaborative governance in corruption prevention. Promoting institutional recognition and support offers an in-depth understanding of two interrelated elements, including the demonstration of good governance practice, and building institutional trust. The three components work together to improve organisational practices, reduce organisational constraints, and thereby produce new outcomes and impacts, leading up to reducing corrupt tendencies. The details of how the 3Is contribute to improving practice is discussed in Section 5.2.2.

In a narrow sense, this theoretical framework helps improve the current state of understanding and addresses problems associated with corruption prevention in contemporary literature through the introduction of five new concepts, including political trap, legal trap, social trap, cultural trap and economic trap. Regarding political trap, this research expands on the current state of understanding identified in corruption literature by providing new insights into political vested interest, limitations of public sector openness and cooperation, narrow views of the public sector toward CSOs, mere political rhetoric of the state actors, and lack of a consistent strategy and campaign to combat corruption, as associated factors leading to corrupt practices. In contemporary literature, the focus of corruption research has been largely on the involvement of political parties in the government system. For example, the roles of political parties in government systems (Blechinger, 2005), the prevalence of party-directed corruption (Mistree, 2015), excessive government discretionary authorities over the allocation of goods and services (Habib &

Zurawicki, 2002; Morris & Klesner, 2010; Tanzi, 1998), problems around the democratisation processes (Otusanya, 2012), and problems associated with political power-brokers granting contracts to electoral funders in return for money and favours (Evertsson, 2013). Similarly, democratic institutions, such as the media and CSOs, are tightly controlled, or owned, by the government and government supporters (Anderson & Tverdova, 2003; Johnson, 1997).

As a comparison, these literature findings appear to fit under the lack of 'political will' among elite government officials to fight against corruption which is just one part found in this study. Adding to the literature, this research includes new insights into political vested interest, limited openness and cooperation from state actors, narrow views of state actors toward CSOs, particularly those that work on governance or democracy, playing with mere political rhetoric of the state actors, and lack of a consistent strategy and campaign to combat corruption as a device through which the public institutions manipulate to gain both financial and political benefits (power).

Within the concept of political trap, this research also expands the stock of knowledge by establishing a new construct, lack of 'public will', as a political driver responsible for the generation of corruption. Contemporary literature reveals no significant evidence concerning 'public will' and corruption. Grounded in the data of this study, there is a strong connection between lack of 'public will' and corruption, resulting from (a) lack of public trust in the government system, and this leads to (b) limited public participation in corruption crusade, and eventually (c) the public ends up with involvement in corrupt practices. Therefore, this research adds novel theoretical knowledge to the literature in that, not only the lack of 'political will' among elite government officials leads to an increase in corruption, but the lack of 'public will' among the general public is also responsible for the growth of corrupt behaviours.

Legal trap, another new concept created by this study, contributes novel understanding to the existing literature by adding to the imbalance of power between the three state powers, and substandard anti-corruption law and agency, as factors strongly linked to corrupt tendencies. According to the literature, it is limited to, for example, the complexity and ambiguity of laws and deficiency in law enforcement (Lapalombara, 1994), and the absence of an oversight mechanism, especially the anti-corruption agencies (Salifu, 2008), as factors contributing to the increase in

corruption. Further, when the legal system is fragile, it allows bureaucrats and politicians to use their power to interpret laws and regulations to benefit their partisans and supporters, or to intimidate potential activists (Jain, 2001). For some researchers, when the legal system is weak, legislations and rules are purposively enacted to provide incentive for corrupt favours (Nielsen, 2003). Based on the findings of this qualitative inquiry, this research contributes to the existing literature by including the imbalance of power among the three bodies; namely, legislative, executive and the judiciary, and substandard anti-corruption law and agency, as new insights associated with corrupt tendencies.

For social trap, this research expands on the current knowledge highlighted in the literature by providing new insights concerning fear factor and limited knowledge of the public as associated factors leading to corrupt practices. In this regard, the focus of contemporary literature has been largely on social norms as factors contributing to the pervasiveness of corrupt behaviours in society. For example, researchers like Klitgaard (1988), and Caiden and Dwivedi (2001) argue that corruption is 'contagious', meaning that corruption spreads like a communicable disease from one person to another through their daily communication, or through the way they see their social context. This is a causal chain of relationships that begins with certain values and norms of society that directly influence the values and norms of individuals which make them corrupt (Graaf, 2007). Likewise, Xin and Rudel (2004) claim that when there are many corrupt individuals in society, it becomes optimal to also become corrupt, despite the presence of anti-corruption policies and incentives. In such circumstances, corruption is the norm rather than deviant behaviour (Mishra, 2006). Moreover, research evidence show that the greater levels of perceived corruption among government officials, the less trust citizens have in their political institutions (Gavor & Stinchfield, 2013). According to the data emerging from this study, social trap, which is composed of social norms, fear factor, and limited knowledge of the public, is also responsible for the prevalence of corruption in society. Therefore, this research expands on contemporary literature by adding new ideas including fear factor and limited knowledge of the public as associated social factors responsible for the widespread nature of corruption.

Relating to cultural trap, the newly-emerging habit of asking corruption questions such as ‘oily?’ and ‘lucrative job?’ also expands new understanding to the contemporary literature in relation to the connection between culture and corruption.

Existing corruption research literature has revealed that culture is also a trap to generate corrupt tendencies; however, it has provided no account of newly-emerging habits as a factor contributing to corrupt tendencies. According to the literature, for example, cultural and family relationships are associated with high perceptions of corrupt favours (Hofstede, 1983). Indeed, nepotism is paramount in all types of business transactions (Khera, 2001), such as in the form of gift giving and providing a job, or contract, to one's relatives (Rose-Ackerman, 1999). Furthermore, Graaf (2007) argues that trust within close personal relationships increases the chance of getting the benefits from the delivered corrupt transactions and reduces the chance of getting caught. Eventually, as Xin and Rudel (2004) assume, when mistrust builds up over time it may become a cultural legacy which affects the whole society for generations. A comparison of the literature regarding the connection between culture and corruption reveals that this study adds that the newly-emerging habit, a culture of asking corrupt questions, such as 'oily?' and 'lucrative job?' is partly responsible for the generation of endemic corrupt behaviours.

The last concept created in this research is economic trap. In this concept, the study draws attention to the finding that poverty and low salaries of public employees are not a factor when explaining the reason for being involved in corruption. According to the literature, for example, poverty may force public servants to act corruptly to supplement their revenues (Judge et al., 2011; Xin & Rudel, 2004). Blechinger (2005) claims that the lower the wages, the greater the chance that civil servants will be unable to resist temptation. In this regard, many corruption researchers conclude that public officials tend to become involved in corrupt behaviours when they are paid below the basic subsistence level (Barr et al., 2009; Soot, 2012). In addition, there is no rule when people do not have enough to eat (Rama, 2012); people's dignity is easily bought and sold when they are poor and hungry people find it difficult not to sell their votes for some returns, even a small amount of money (Blechinger, 2005). However, as is evident from the data in this study, poverty and low wages are just an excuse for those who engaged in corruption. As has been indicated in the findings, some government bureaucrats and politicians have sufficient salaries and live luxurious lifestyles, yet they are perhaps the most corrupt officials. In fact, greed (ie., wealth and power) and opportunity are the major factors that drags them into corrupt involvement.

In addition, this research also contributes to the expanding the stock of theoretical knowledge of the relationship between NGOs and corruption research. Obviously, this research contributes to the significant gap in the literature regarding the lack of research into the role of NGOs in corruption prevention within the academic community, although this independent democratic institution is recognised by practitioners as an important actor to control corrupt practices (Transparency International, 2002; United Nations, 2002). Research into the roles of NGOs in corruption prevention remains largely confined to the grey literature. The major contribution of this study is the conceptualisation of NGO strategic actions into three novel concepts, encompassing civic empowerment, civic advocacy, and civic oversight.

In terms of civic empowerment, this concept provides in-depth insight into the role of NGOs in corruption prevention through education and awareness raising, civic mobilisation, and bridging and facilitation between state and non-state actors. In this context, it is an act of giving power to the general public by way of providing them opportunities and encouraging them to participate, or become involved in, social issues that affect them such as corruption. The existing literature, most of which appear in grey paper, has revealed that education and awareness raising and civic mobilisation do help address problems associated with corruption; however, it has shown no account of the importance of bridging the connection between CSOs and state institutions which also plays a vital role in preventing corrupt practices.

For education and awareness raising, this study provides more in-depth understanding than the literature in that it focuses on all important stakeholders, including the general public, CSOs, state authority, and business. The subject areas to be covered range from democracy, human rights, good governance and corruption, to advocacy skills and so forth. According to the literature, Langseth (1999) and Mavuso and van der Merwe (1999), for example, focus education or training programmes on good governance, integrity and ethical issues. It can also be done through awareness campaigns by employing workshops (Kaufmann, 1998) and building anti-corruption clubs in schools (Aderonmu, 2011). In addition, whereas Cheema (2011) focuses on promoting public agent's ethical code of conduct, Rasmussen (2010) emphasises promoting public understanding of their rights, and strengthens social capital. As a comparison, this study provides more insight, in terms of both target groups and subject areas to be covered, than the literature, and

this is essential since corruption attacks all segments of society and everyone is affected. As such, this study adds to the current literature and, at the same time, attempts to transform ideas in grey paper into academic paper.

Regarding civic mobilisation, in this context, it refers to a process of mobilising the general population struggling to make their voices heard, and to seek for a particular objective and change in relation to current social issues that impact them. The process usually takes the form of gathering the public to attend public forums, awareness raising campaigns, to meetings with communes or districts and so forth. One of mobilisation campaigns which all of the participated interviewees were proud of was the clean hand campaign where they collected one million thumbprints from the general public proposing for the adoption of the anti-corruption law. Without such massive popular mobilisation, the anti-corruption law would not have been passed. This is consistent with the extant literature, for example, Mercer (2002) underpins that NGOs are the channel for mobilising civic movements pursuing political changes. As in the case of South Korea, for instance, Lowry (2008) emphasises that the roles of NGOs as watch groups, or voluntary organisations, have become influential in stabilising the democratic political system. However, sometimes these activities are seen to be very confrontational and, at times, are responded to with aggressive actions from the government, such as termination of the operations, and intimidation and arrest, as is evident from the data of this research.

With regards to bridging and facilitation, since there has been little research into the role of NGOs in corruption prevention, the literature provides no account of its essence. As such, this is a novel contribution of this research. As a result of this study, the data suggest that bridging and facilitation between diverse stakeholders is of great importance. Within this context, bridging and facilitation is meant to make a connection and narrow the gap between relevant stakeholders, usually of different viewpoints, and to promote their mutual communication in order that they understand and work together more productively, and that all relevant stakeholders' views are heard and taken into consideration. Bridging and facilitation is concentrated around: NGOs and government, citizens and government, citizens and political parties, and between CSOs and CSOs. This is essential due to the fact that the gap between relevant stakeholders in society, particularly between CSOs and the government, remains huge. It is also found that bridging and facilitating empowers the public through which they become more courageous and are able to talk with,

consult and demand public authority to be transparent and accountable for their actions. This is, undoubtedly, an ideal effort to promote good governance and the concept of democratisation which is essential for national development. However, NGOs seemed to ignore the involvement of the business sector in the process, where this sector takes significant responsibility in tackling corruption since corruption is more likely to occur when the business and the public sector meet.

With respect to civic advocacy, this concept provides in-depth understanding of the advocacy role of NGOs in corruption prevention through both bilateral and unilateral advocacies. In this study, civic advocacy refers to a process by which an organisation, an association, a union, a community, a group of organisation, a group of people, and even an individual person, aims to seek a solution or to influence decisions and actions of the state authority which affects them, or public interest as a whole. The terms frequently used in an advocacy context are: 'to push, to demand, to request, to propose, to remind, to debate and to persuade' the supply side to do whatever for the interest of the nation. This parallels with the argument made by Cheema (2011) that civil society, as an agent of change, plays active roles in policy analysis, policy making, decision making and advocacy to make sure that government officials are accountable, and the interests of the poor and underserved communities are taken into consideration; and Salamon et al. (2000) posits that NGOs are schools for advocacy pushing for societal transformations.

According to the data, there are two contradictory forms of civic advocacy utilised by NGOs within the current Cambodian context: bilateral advocacy and unilateral advocacy. Bilateral advocacy refers to whatever activity, or event, which is conducted with the involvement of state authority in the advocacy process. It can be a face-to-face dialogue in a meeting between NGOs and government representatives, or NGOs, local community, development partners and government authority. Unilateral advocacy refers to any organised advocacy activities or events where there is absence of involvement of the state actors in the process. This type of advocacy is frequently conducted in the form of campaigns, demonstrations, protests, press releases or public announcements. It is therefore seen that this study adds more insight to the literature by differentiating between bilateral and unilateral advocacy, which is worth consideration before embarking of any advocacy activities.

The final concept is civic oversight. This study provides in-depth understanding into this concept relating to three critical elements, including

monitoring, research and promoting public access to information. The interactions of the three elements help shed light on the actions of the public administration, thereby playing an important part in deterring corrupt behaviours. Monitoring, in this context, refers to an act of keeping a close watch by the public over the government activities over time to ensure they are on the right track, shedding light on them, and reminding and seeking corrective actions. Overall, CSOs, including the public, seemed to have been involved in monitoring most of the major elements of the government. The act of monitoring is observed to have been undertaken to oversee the effectiveness of budget allocation and use, and the development process against the laws, regulations and whatever has been put in place. For the public, their act of monitoring is normally conducted through daily contact with public authority, and what they routinely experience and observe happening in society in general. However, the general public seemed to give little consideration to what they experience since there is no proper mechanism facilitating them to take action. This function parallels with some researchers (e.g., Antlöv et al., 2008; Cheema, 2011; Mavuso & van der Merwe, 1999; Mercer, 2002) who signify the importance of independent oversight and a watchdog function as an approach to hold the government accountable for its activities, and to scrutinise the abuses of state power. Therefore, since research into the role of NGOs in corruption prevention has been largely ignored in the contemporary literature, this study offers greater insight into this aspect.

With respect to research, this study offers a comprehensive understanding of the role of research in supporting the effort to control corruption, as well as promote good governance. According to the analysis, research is knowledge development based on contextual situations and strong empirical-based evidence that NGOs employ to work and intervene with the public sector. It is also a useful source of information that NGOs use to base most of their activities on, such as dissemination to the public, making plans, and making public announcements. Research can be conducted through various forms, such as perception surveys, case studies, exposure visits, and social accountability tools, including citizen score cards. This is in line with the existing literature. Kaufmann (1998), for example, argues that scorecard evaluation on local service deliveries and bribery provide useful information for promoting good governance and reforms, and (Langseth, 1999) emphasises the benefit of integrity and annual corruption surveys. The results from the research

become an essential source of information which NGOs use to inform and advocate with the public sector, and also to disseminate to the general public. This is consistent with the conclusion made by Carr and Outhwaite (2011) that research not only contributes to promoting strategies to curb corruption but also provides input for particular aspects of governance issues, such as the effectiveness of the legislature and enforcement. More importantly, suggestions and recommendations from the research provided crucial thoughts for future consideration and adjustment on any project.

The final aspect of civic oversight is promoting access to information. According to the data, public access to information is an essential approach to corruption prevention. Without information, CSOs, as well as the general public, are basically unable to monitor and assess the government's projects or activities and work with state authority in a meaningful manner. Based on this idea, the data suggest two kinds of interventions of NGOs relating to access to information; namely, demanding the disclosure of government held information, and dissemination of information to the public. In this area, for example, some organisations have been pushing the government to create a legal framework concerning the disclosure of government held information, such as a law on access to information and a law on political party finance. Some organisations have been demanding for the disclosure of the national budgets, documents relating to states expenditures, and for the disclosure of electoral campaign expenditures. Aligned with this, the literature highlights the case of MKSS, a grassroots organisation in India, that succeeded in promoting the public right to information and monitoring government expenditures (Jenkins & Goetz, 2010).

Methodologically, although this research has not built a new method of inquiry, it seems that this research has contributed to expanding the stock of methodological approaches in corruption research in at least three noticeable ways. First, in spite of a need for sound empirical data, there are relatively few studies that meet this need. The literature on corruption is replete with review papers and, as a result, there is little to offer concrete and current solutions to inform policy-makers and practitioners in the fight against corruption. While review papers are important in the development of theory in that they provide significant insights and guidance for further empirical, contextual research that may help respond to the current failure of

the war against corruption, there needs to be a concomitant stock of research papers that are based on sound data collection and analysis.

Second, it contributes to addressing the relative lack of qualitative studies in corruption research. So far, much of the corruption research effort has been quantitative. For example, Bose et al. (2008) warn that the existing data on corruption has a number of shortcomings that poses hurdles for empirical research. This is probably because of the sensitive nature of corruption. Sending out questionnaires, for example closed questions or pre-determined responses, will probably not yield deep insights into what is really happening on the ground. Respondents tend to be reluctant to give complete responses and, at times, the provided response-space is not enough for them to share their experiences of corruption. Therefore, it is the case that qualitative inquiry is more appropriate; it offers the researcher flexible techniques to obtain in-depth responses from participants and provides detailed contextual information about the situation on the ground. Participants are allowed a 'voice', crucial for gaining data about their experiences and how they interpret their experiences. Additionally, researchers and the researched meet face-to-face in a two-way communication from which researchers can unearth unexpected thoughts, and the researched are able to make inquiries and clarify anything they are unclear about.

Third, this research contributes to methodology in that it draws researchers' attention to: (1) utilise qualitative inquiry for topic that may not be quantifiable and (2) do not choose other methods because the topics of research is difficult to access through a qualitative paradigm. It should be noticed that some phenomenon, or social reality such as behavioural phenomenon, is not easy to measure quantitatively (Grix, 2010) and is unable to be measured statistically (Silverman, 2000). According to Richards and Morse (2007), topics that are suited to a qualitative approach have often been ignored in the literature because they are inaccessible to researchers. Selecting a method of inquiry based on such a position seems inappropriate.

5.2.2. Practical Contributions: The Framework in Practice

In terms of practice, this framework offers practitioners and policy-makers a conceptual roadmap for designing strategic directions and actions. The framework incorporates a set of different dimensions, components and elements that have the

potential to be of great help in policy-making, decision-making, planning and implementation. The components and elements are important since they emerged from the data, however this does not mean that every piece is essential for every organisation. It depends, for example, on the culture, strength and weakness of the organisation. Some organisations, for example, may find improving connection with the public necessary, while others may find that collaboration with the government is indispensable.

The integrative framework is responsive to the gap between theory and practice in existing corruption research literature that pays little attention to answer the 'how it should be done' question, rather than look at the 'what should be done' question which is the focus of the literature on corruption. This thesis looks for a solution to the problems by attempting to address the 'how it should be done' question from an NGO perspective. The 'what should be done' approach appears to not have been successful because it looks for solution from within the government who itself is corrupt. As is argued by Raadschelders (1998), the focus of corruption research has largely been on public administration and on the conduct of those who work within it. Therefore, as long as governments on their own are unable to address corruption, as long as the governments have no real commitment to change without the involvement or pressures from outsiders, and as long as the governments act both as a corrupt player and anti-corruption enforcer and are seen as unworkable and ineffective, collective action and responsibility may be vital in addressing corruption. As such, research into the potential role of NGOs, an independent democratic institution in the fight against corruption is of great help in the anti-corruption endeavour, and this, of course, offers new insight and guidance to inform policy-makers and practitioners.

The answer to the 'how it should be done' question in this context considers the involvement, or the inclusion, of non- state actors (CSOs) in corruption reform processes. In the area of public sector reform, for example, there has been a lack of inclusion of independent non-state actors, particularly NGOs, in the reform processes. Bearing in mind that in developing as well as less democratic countries in general, the governance, legislative and judicial systems are fragile. The power tends to be in the hands of the executive, and thus check and balance mechanisms are weak. Within such circumstances, the government usually has no real political will to make changes to the system from which they benefit, unless there is pressure from

outside. Thus, the involvement of NGOs is of great significance, not only to control corruption in the public sector and to make the two sectors work side by side, but also to empower the public to actively participate in corruption prevention and put more pressure on government to make real changes. As such, this research helps expand the stock of practical knowledge concerning collaborative approaches between state and non-state actors in the fight against corruption.

More importantly, the 3Is approach helps inform practitioners and policy-makers of how to navigate their policy development and operations through the three core components, including organisational reinforcement, work reinforcement, and promoting institutional recognition and support. Effective management and execution of the 3Is could improve NGO organisational practices, reduce organisational constraints, and thereby produce new outcomes and impacts.

Organisational Reinforcement

Organisational reinforcement comprises three interrelated elements, including reinforcing organisational policy, reinforcing organisational management systems, and reinforcing information and monitoring systems. Through their interactions, the three elements will improve the quality of organisational performance, reduce organisational constraints, and enhance institutional recognition and support, thereby influencing contextual traps. Organisational reinforcement refers broadly to the strengthening of organisational policy and management systems, meaning that an organisation has be well-prepared and ready when going into business. Reinforcing policy and systems of management, in part, assists the organisation to reach its goal and objectives. However, based on the data contained in this study, it is clear that the organisational policy and management systems of NGOs remain an issue of concern. As is evident from the data, there are a number of critical starting points on the ground to be considered. These include reinforcing organisational policy, reinforcing organisational management systems, and reinforcing information and monitoring systems. Through this iterative and interrelated process, it not only helps improve the proper functioning of the organisations and prevents the incidents of organisational misconducts but also, at the same time, builds trust and support and restores the reputation of the NGO sector.

It is evident from the analysis that reinforcing organisational policy is made

up of a combination of three subcategories. They are composed of fiduciary safeguard, personnel policy and other policy measures. In terms of fiduciary safeguard, participants paid remarkable attention to establishing various policies to ensure that organisational budgets are well managed and not leaked at any point. Some of the essential policies are financial and procurement policies. They further suggested that having these policies in place has not guaranteed that NGOs are free from financial leakage if the policies are not put into real practice. Corruption is highly likely to occur in project procurement. Procurement policy not only prevents the occurrence of collusion in the bidding process but also ensures a fair competitive bidding. Besides, there are a variety of other mechanisms and measures taken into consideration to ensure transparent and accountable expenditures of an organisation's budget. This perhaps is revealed through the annual internal and external audit, which is conducted on a regular basis by an audit company. In addition, internal check and partner check are also suggested.

There is also evidence of considerable attention given by participants in this study to developing personnel policy as part of a solution to discourage corruption incidents. The NGOs interviewed incorporated disciplinary actions in their personnel policy, sometimes referred to as staff agreement or staff contract, to discourage employees from getting involved in any illegitimate behaviours and corruption. In addition, there was a unique application exercised by an NGO concerning staff recruitment policy. It recommended the application of non-relative recruitment policy to avoid nepotism within the organisational recruitment process. The data also suggest that some organisations use the personnel policy to restrict their staff from getting involved in political activities. This means that they do not prefer their staff to be a political party activist, although, in principle, people have the political right to do so.

The data also suggest the development and implementation of various other associated rules and mechanisms to prevent misbehaviours of staff. Some were, for example, interested in the establishment of a statute and internal rule of regulation, while some paid attention to the creation of organisational code of conduct, or code of ethics, and so forth. These not only help improve the proper functioning of the organisations but also prevent the incidents of organisational misconduct.

Reinforcing organisational management systems is another important aspect of focus by participants in this study. This comprises two emergent subcategories;

namely, organisational structure and management system, and human development. The majority of participants recommended reinforcing the organisational structure and management system as they help the organisation enhance their performance. This action ranges from setting up a clear strategic plan, clear goal, clear organisational structure, clear structure of command, and clear line of supervision. Some suggested clear implementing strategies and oversight systems to monitor the progress. Human development is also recommended by participants in this study. This is because the analysis showed that NGOs employees have limited capacity, both technical and managerial, and especially with the concept of governance to which they intend to promote. As such, strengthening the capacity of NGO staff should be done on a continuous basis, whether they are formal, such as training programmes, or informal, through learning from the best practices of other countries or through the exchanges of information with partners within and outside the countries. Human resource proliferation also enables organisational employees to cope with social changes and global tendencies.

Two other subcategories emerged in this analysis: information disclosure system, and monitoring and feedback system, made up of a reinforcing information and monitoring system. Information disclosure system is important for at least two reasons. Through this information system, NGOs are not only able to disseminate information to the public but also provide accessibility to those who wish to obtain information about an NGO and other available information. A monitoring and feedback system was also suggested by participants in this study. The system serves as both internal and external communication mechanisms through which the staff of NGOs, and the general public, can assess and criticise general activities of the organisations as well as any corruption cases they encounter. For example, some participants provided advice on the establishment of a report and complaint mechanism. Through this mechanism, either an NGO staff member or the public is able to make a report or lodge a complaint, not only relating to organisational staff misconduct, but also any corrupt practices they experience. It is also a mechanism used to gather feedback on their project activities from relevant stakeholders and the beneficiary. Moreover, appropriate measure to protect whistle-blowers makes the report or complaint mechanism more effective.

▒ *Work Reinforcement*

According to the analysis, work reinforcement stood out by integrating three emerging categories grounded in this fieldwork data. They consist of: cooperation and coordination, networking and coalition building, and evidence-based intervention and adaptation. Almost all of the participants in the study believe in the essence of work reinforcement to improve their interventions and accelerate their influence on the government and society. Through cooperation and coordination, for example, the activities of NGOs become more operationalised; indeed, it makes the two sectors, state and non-state, come closer and work together on the basis of mutual understanding. Through networking and coalition building, the NGO sector unites and the voice of advocacy becomes stronger, and more persuasive and influential. Through evidence-based intervention and adaptation, the operations of NGOs become more credible and responsive to contextual situations.

The data also suggest four subcategories which constituted the cooperation and coordination category. These are composed of cooperation with the government sector, cooperation among NGOs, cooperation with the public, and cooperation with partners. It is noticeable from the data that there were a range of stakeholders that NGOs cooperate with, however the data reveal little evidence of NGOs working with businesses. All participants recommended working closely with the public sector as long as NGOs wish to improve their operations and impacts. Cooperation, for example as in the form of informing state authorities of what NGOs are going to do and inviting government representatives to attend NGO-organised forums or radio talk shows, was found to be less effective. Indeed, it is at a very low level and thus more cooperation and coordination is needed. Moreover, cooperation and coordination between government and NGOs should not be just in the form of informing; rather, it should be in the form of a collaborative governance process where both state and non-state actors, and other relevant stakeholders, sit, discuss and find solutions to the problems together; for example, identifying problems, setting directions, implementing, and monitoring and evaluating together.

Strengthening cooperation with the public sector is also essential; at least it makes the operations of NGO activities workable. Without it, and a lack of communication with state authorities, their projects will be in trouble. Recent experiences have shown that due to a lack of cooperation and communication with

the public sector, some NGOs remain inaccessible to the government sector and, at times, their projects becomes inapplicable. Criticising or attacking the government wrongdoings and misconducts from outside hardly makes the interventions of NGOs effective or helps improve the situation; rather, it creates polarisation between them. Although the majority of participants in this study accept that cooperation with the government is a good strategy to improve their interventions and impacts, at the same time they also recognise the difficulty they may face in doing so.

In addition to trying to intensify cooperation and coordination with the government sector, the data also suggest that NGOs have to cooperate with other NGOs. This means that to be more effective and influential, NGOs have to unite, and work together as a network and coalition (see details below). For instance, some participants claimed NGOs can work together to conduct a big campaign to push the government to make changes in policy, and to enforce the law. Some claimed NGOs have to cooperate with the media. On the contrary, if they compete with each other, the voice of advocacy is diminished. As such, their voices will be less persuasive or even remain unheard.

It is evident that NGOs work with and serve the general public. This is natural; without public support NGOs may be voiceless. NGOs work with the public and help build their capacity and empower them to work with state authorities and, at the same time, mobilise them to participate in and support their activities. Adding to suggestions on strengthening cooperation with the government, CSOs and the public, the data also suggest that NGOs have to cooperate with development partners, including the international community. NGOs need to cooperate with donors, such as ADB, and the World Bank, in order that their interventions become operationalised and more effective.

The data suggest that networking and coalition building is integral and vice versa: working alone is not a good choice. Being united and working together as a coalition or network is an ideal option to secure their operations and ensure that their forces cannot be broken down. These are the overall beliefs of participants in this study. Building networks and coalitions is an approach that NGOs should consider to strengthen their forces and operations in preventing corruption. This category is made up by combining two emerging subcategories; namely, increasing cooperation with extant networks and coalitions and, at the same time, creating and working with new networks. Increasing cooperation with extant networks and coalitions is highly

valued by most interviewees. This does not mean that NGOs did not previously work together as a network and coalitions, but that they have to scale up even more. Working as individual organisations, the NGO sector will never be strong and influential. No matter whether an organisation is big or small, they have to help and support each other. Adding to the knowledge that networking and working together would contribute to making the voices of NGOs stronger, and their operations more effective, some participants in this study illustrated that networking also serves as a channel, allowing NGOs that are inaccessible to the government become accessible. Networking and coalition building is important, regardless of whether NGOs are in the city or in the provinces, or in the country or outside the country.

Apart from building up cooperation with existing networks and coalitions, this research also suggests that NGOs have to create and work with new networks in order to improve their functioning. For example, helping people at grassroots levels to create networks within their communities, and assisting youth to create clubs. Sometimes NGOs create a special working group to deal with an emerging issue. For instance, NGOs create a group of jurists to help people to know their rights and to seek a lawyer to assist them in a court of law, and in land disputes. All of these increase the strength of their advocacy voices, and ensure that they are taken into consideration by the state authority. In this regard, there were some arguments from the literature concerning the significance of networking and coalition building in corruption prevention efforts. For example, Chêne (2010) concludes that building coalition and networks is essential to reinforce collective responsibilities and actions to curb corruption and promote integrity and accountability. Transparency International (TI) is an example as it has built linkages with different stakeholders, both at the global and national levels. The literature also points to various other coalition and networks of NGOs that are important to resist corruption. For example, Yamamoto (1999) provides evidence of the building of networks among NGOs in Asian countries and with governments in terms of sharing expertise, perspectives and resources, including Buxton (2009) The Community Empowerment Network (CEN) of national networks in Central Asia of the World Bank Institute (WBI) project, and NANSMIT (National Association for Independent Media of Tajikistan) networks in India. Similarly, Chêne (2010) denotes other well-known anti-corruption coalitions and networks such as Philippines' Transparency and Accountability Network and South African National Anti-Corruption Forum. In addition, Mungiu-Pippidi (2010)

argues that to be more effective, coalition building to fighting corruption must include journalists and the media, and be based on grassroots initiatives.

According to the analysis, evidence-based intervention and adaptation is another important aspect that NGOs should consider to enhance their operations, otherwise they may not be properly functional. This category is made up by combining two emerging subcategories; namely, evidence-based interventions and adaptation to contextual situations. It is recommended that the actions of NGOs have to be evidence-based. Indeed, without evidence, the interventions of NGOs may conflict with state agencies. It is noticeable that governance-oriented NGOs cannot advocate based on emotion or assumption. All activities, such as advocacy, public announcements, face to face dialogues, and public forums, have to be based on reliable evidence, such as research and survey information. Besides, field data in this research suggests that to become more effective in their operations NGOs have to update themselves and adapt to contextual situations. This is, for example, because the functioning of public administration is normally not static and society develops over time. Therefore, it is essential that NGOs have to adjust to contextual changes so that they are responsive to new emerging circumstances and situations.

Promoting Institutional Recognition and Support

Promoting institutional recognition and support encompasses two interrelated elements, including the demonstration of good governance practices, and building institutional trust. Through their interactive processes, the two elements will improve the quality of organisational performance, reduce organisational constraints, and enhance institutional recognition and support, thereby influencing contextual traps and reducing corruption.

The data suggest that NGOs are able to build reputation, and make their work more effective through promoting institutional recognition and support. This third and last theme is equally important to ensure the proper functioning and effective and supportive operations of NGOs attempting to promote good governance and prevent corrupt incidents in the Cambodian public sector. Through this iterative and interrelated process, the voice of NGOs is heavy and the actions of NGOs may make a significant impact on society. By contrast, if the work of an NGO is not clean, and they do not set an example, their intervention fails to gain public trust and support

and is not influential. As such, to accomplish this essential goal, NGOs have to, for example, act as a role model, be clean and incorruptible, be neutral in their work, be professional, and be pragmatic and responsive. As such, demonstrating good governance practices and building institutional trust are essential to gain credibility and support, as highlighted by most participants in this study; indeed, if one wishes someone to be clean they have to be clean first (fix their own mess before fixing others), otherwise their preaches will have no credibility.

Based on data contained in this qualitative research, it is worth noting that NGOs, especially those that work on governance or corruption related issues, have to strengthen organisational good governance practices. Demonstrating good governance practice is comprised of three emerging subcategories, including being a role model, anti-misconduct, and mainstreaming anti-corruption mechanism into their projects. Through these interrelated processes, NGOs may not only be able to reduce the organisational constraints that they face, but also gain credibility and support in their cause. In terms of being a role model, according to the data, some of the most noticeable phrases frequently suggested were: *'be a good model to lead others', 'own good governance', 'be clean', and 'start from itself'*. This means that NGOs have to make themselves clean by strengthening self-discipline, and not be involved in any corrupt behaviour. They have to be an anti-corruption kick-starter, meaning that NGOs have to start by strengthening organisational transparency and accountability systems, and also expand outside its sector. It is also evident from the data that NGOs can act as role models by adhering to the organisational set policies and rules, and have sufficient legal system to govern its operations.

Similar to suggestions that NGOs should act as a role model, the analysis also suggests that NGOs have to show the public that they are committed to take action against any kind of organisational misconduct. Anti-misconduct helps them to stay clean in their operations and, importantly, also builds their institutional reputation and public support. On the contrary, as observed in the recent NGO scandals, the involvement of NGOs in corruption has polluted the whole NGO sector, not only those that are corrupt. This not only results in a lack of support from the general public, but also makes their operations less effective and influential to lobby, or put pressure on, the public sector.

In addition, the data suggest that NGOs should incorporate an anti-corruption approach as part of their organisational projects. This is not limited to NGOs that

work on corruption or governance issues, it applies to the NGO sector in general, regardless of whether they are humanitarian or development oriented NGOs, such as in education or health. They have to mainstream anti-corruption mechanisms into their projects. This is because, as mentioned above, one corrupt NGO defames the whole sector, as in the old Khmer adage, 'a bucket of fish when one is spoil, the other is too'. Mainstreaming an anti-corruption mechanism into their projects may help reduce corrupt instances and strengthen the reputation of the NGO sector.

Grounded in the fieldwork data, building institutional trust is created through the integration of three subcategories. These include being neutral, being professional, and being pragmatic. Through these strategic actions, NGOs may attract more trust and support from the public, and attention and cooperation from the government agencies. In this context, political neutrality refers to the idea that NGO operations have to stand on factual events and not offer support to any one person or political party. Political neutrality is vital in terms of maintaining the reputation of NGOs. Indeed, NGOs are able to keep themselves neutral by being impartial in their work. This means that NGOs have to work with all political tendencies regardless of whether they are from the ruling party or the opposition party. Supporting one political party and opposing another only creates a loss of credibility and trust from both the public and government side. In addition, some participants pointed to the need for NGO staff to not become politically active or be affiliated with any political party. Some organisations agreed that NGOs have to remain neutral. However, they appeared to accept that any NGO staff member is able to use their rights as a citizen of a country where everyone enjoys the right to politics, but they cannot use the name of the NGO; they are able to engage in any political event or campaign as a private citizen only. Therefore, it is worth noting that NGOs should consider the neutrality of their organisation, and the influences of their actions, on the political rights of each individual citizen where the law of the nation entitles them to participate in political life.

Adding to the suggestion about being neutral in their work, it is important that NGOs also build expertise in their area of work and perform their work professionally. Being professional may draw more support from the public, as well as attention and cooperation from the government. Limited capacity and unprofessional work may, first, lead to the idea that what they are doing is not credible; second, it may lead to the barrier that the government does not believe in

the capacity of an NGO because they lack knowledge in their working area; and, finally, when the work of an NGO is not based on evidence, but rather on assumptions or emotion, they can be seen as unreliable. On the contrary, when an NGO works professionally they are credible and able to mobilise more public support; thus, their voices are more persuasive and influential.

In addition, and grounded in the data, if NGOs are pragmatic in their work, they may pull more support from the public and consideration from the public sector. In this context, being pragmatic refers to the notion that NGO interventions have to be responsive to the needs of the public and based on actual situations. Participants in this study indicated that doing the right thing, or working on issues that influence people's livelihoods and society, means that NGOs are making the effort to help respond to the needs of the general public. As such, working on preventing corruption and promoting good governance is the right thing to deal with and this ensures that interventions by NGOs are more credible and receive more support from the public. The work of NGOs will be even more credible and gain greater public support when they involve relevant stakeholders, including the public, into their projects and gather information and respond to their actual situation. At the same time, when the work of NGOs is based on the actual situation, they may gain more cooperation from the state authority. By actual situation or factual events, participants in this study referred to information or events that have reliable sources, such as research reports and actual cases that happened, rather than by just being heard or from their understanding and feelings.

As has been discussed, the framework is designed by incorporating diversified variables conceptualised based on the experiences of key informants with years of working in governance-oriented issues and corruption. It also shows the relationships and interactions among those variables. These may be the dynamics and strength of the framework which initiates useful starting points for both researchers and practitioners interested in governance or corruption issues. The framework is simple as it is presented in problem-process-impact format, but integrative, since it includes different dimensions, components and elements. The framework first examines contextual conditions which are comprised of multiple disciplines (political, legal, social, cultural and economic). They are also the major drivers responsible for the prevalence of corruption. Second, it looks at the organisational processes (civic empowerment, civic advocacy, and civic oversight) of NGOs, their

strategic actions to promote good governance and prevent corruption, and their associated internal constraints (management and leadership, corruption and governance, and financial constraint), conditions which limit their effective operations. The intervention of the 3Is into the framework helps reduce organisational constraints, improve practices, and thereby produce new outcomes leading up to advance impacts. Finally, the 3Is adapts over time to changes, so as to fine-tune operations responsive to emergent conditions.

5.3. New Outcomes and Impacts

As discussed earlier, the intervention of NGOs has contributed to outcomes and impacts; however, they are at a low level. By applying the 3Is approach, its incomes and impacts could be improved. These new expectations are explained below.

5.3.1. New Outcomes

At civil society level:

Increased awareness raising. Through work reinforcement, factors like intensification cooperation and working with CSOs and the public, and education and dissemination of information, the public become more knowledgeable, not only about their roles and rights and the rights and responsibilities of the public officials, but also about issues that affect their lives resulting from poor governance of government agencies and corruption. Through institutional trust building efforts, factors like being neutral, pragmatic and responsive to the needs of the public, NGOs gain support and participation from civil society for their project activities. When civil society and the public become more involved in NGO projects, they become more knowledgeable, understanding and proactive.

Improved communication. Through work reinforcement, factors like cooperation and coordination with state authorities, communication between civil society and the public sector improves. Improvement in communication between the two sectors is closely connected to the increased awareness of civil society and the public, as shown in the data, such that when the public becomes aware of their roles

and rights, for example, they dare to demand, or participate in, communal development meetings and the like.

Improved quality of services provided. Through work reinforcement, factors like promoting public access to information, the public becomes aware of, for example, how much they have to pay for a birth certificate for their children and how long it takes to have it done. The demand for the disclosure of government-held information pushes the government to be more transparent and follow the state regulations, such as fees for public services delivery.

Improved ability to monitor changes. Through work reinforcement, factors like intensification of civic empowerment activities such as public education, training and awareness campaigns, along with their accessibility to information, enable CSOs and the general public to keep their eyes on government officials and hold the public authorities responsible for their actions.

At state level:

Contributed to policy development. Through work reinforcement and promoting institutional recognition and support, factors like evidence-based intervention, the operations of NGOs may persuade or push the government to adopt new policies. For example, concrete facts or evidence through research or survey results, bring about the adoption of public service fees and the re-examining of the economic land concession, as claimed by some participants in this study.

Improved openness and cooperation. The results point out, partially, a lack of government openness and cooperation with non-state actors resulting from lack of mutual trust between the two sectors. This is, in part, because some NGOs are not working neutrally, are biased to one political party, or their work is not evidence-based, for instance. Another is that the two sectors lack the opportunity to sit and find out solutions to the problems together. Through work reinforcement and promoting institutional recognition and support, factors like intensification cooperation and coordination, the public sector becomes more open and cooperative.

At state and civil society level:

Improved relationships and trust between state and non-state. Through work reinforcement factors like intensification, cooperation and coordination, the relationship between state and civil society is especially improved. Cooperation in

this sense means to sit and work together, rather than criticise and attack the government from the outside, which is found to make the two sectors fragmented and sceptical of one another. Through promoting institutional recognition and support, factors like political neutrality, and being professional and pragmatic in their work, could lead to building trust and support, as well as reduce fragmentation between the two sectors.

Improved shared mutual understanding. Improvement in cooperation and coordination means that the two sectors have more opportunities to work together. They sit around the table and negotiate, identify issues of common concerns, set ground rules for collaborative meetings, find joint facts together, and consider why collective action is needed for these common problems etc. All of these elements may bring about a shared mutual understanding and may reduce differences among the stakeholders involved.

Increased collaborative activity. When both state and non-state actors understand that what they are doing is for their shared common purposes, collaborative activity increases, and this is very important to improve good governance and prevent corrupt incidences.

5.3.2. New Impacts

Through the application of the 3Is, it is expected that the current impacts will be pushed to a higher level. As such, the current impacts transformed to be new impacts constitute improved changes in state authority perceptions and actions, and improved changes in civil society perceptions and actions. These influence contextual traps, which then lead to a reduction in corrupt behaviours.

Improved changes in state authority perceptions and actions

Improved changes in state authority perceptions and actions may result in, 'more or less', the increase in 'political will' in the anti-corruption crusade. As is evident from the findings of this study, lack of 'political will' is the leading driver associated with the widespread nature of corrupt behaviours since it influences on other variables, such as legal and social context. At the national level, for example, the government has created a mechanism where civil society organisations, particularly NGOs, are allowed to intervene on various policy issues. This, of course,

is a sign of behaviour change within public authority. At the local level, public authorities are more open to disclosing public services information to the public where, formerly, the public service fee was largely closed. With the intervention of the 3Is, it helps move the current impacts up to a higher level. Simply put, the 3Is helps improve changes in state authority perceptions and actions, or increase 'political will,' which then influences contextual traps, leading to the reduction of corrupt instances.

Improved changes in civil society perceptions and actions

Improved changes in civil society perceptions and actions result in the increase in 'public will' in the anti-corruption crusade. As was discussed earlier, lack of 'public will' is the second major issue which generates corrupt tendencies in Cambodia. An increase in 'public will' not only means an increase in participation in civil society with regards to social issues, including corruption, but also entails a reduction of public involvement in corrupt practices. For example, the general public, including NGOs, are more proactive, and they start to engage in various social events, such as attending communal development meetings, attending meetings to monitor the implementation of local development plan, and attending the public forums, and so forth. The data also reveal that the participation of civil society is more productive, they not only sit and listen, but they also raise issues and make inquiries whereas, in the past, such activities rarely happened since they were usually afraid of the public authority. Now they understand their strength and put pressure on public authority as a result. In short, improved changes in civil society perceptions and actions, or increase in 'public will,' greatly impact on contextual traps, which then lead to the reduction of corruption.

5.4. Generalisability of the Study

Although the phenomenon of this research is the role of NGOs in corruption prevention within the Cambodian context, this does not mean that it excludes the possibility of the generalisation of the findings to other national contexts. Generalisability is not the absolute term that the findings in one geographical setting are to be 100% copied, transferred and applied in other settings. Indeed, it is not totally valid to all places and at all times. It is about a degree that the findings of a

study are applicable to other contexts. As is claimed by Guba (1981), the intent of transferability between contexts is dependent on the degree of similarity between those contexts. Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) call it 'external generalisation,' when the findings of a study are expandable beyond the setting of the research. Given that the findings of this study cover multiple disciplines and integrative approaches, where applicable, the research findings can be generalised into other settings as appropriate.

In this study, the proposed framework is developed grounded in perceptions of both local and international NGOs with years of work experience in this post-conflict and emerging democratic country. Therefore, it is likely that the findings of this study could be applicable to other contexts which are similar to the situation in Cambodia. Generalisation can be enhanced if more studies are conducted in other national contexts to test the validity and refine the proposed framework.

5.5. Limitations of the Study

Since research into the role of NGOs in corruption prevention has been largely ignored within the academic community, and, since corruption prevention research has been relatively under-theorised, the development of the integrated substantive theoretical framework in this study is a major departure from extant literature, and opens up potential avenues for further improvement in corruption research. Indeed, the proposed framework, which incorporates dimensions, components and their embedded elements emerging from the data, represents potential strength. In saying that, this does not mean that this study is without weaknesses. All kinds of research have strengths and limitations; limitations can never be completely avoided because we cannot conduct research on everyone, everywhere and stay involved with the subjects of analysis over a longer period of time, say ten years. Moreover, working with human subjects can never be free from biases. Better understanding of them, and setting out better measures to their minimisation, is essential and, at the same time, discovering ways for further refinement and improvement. The findings of this study are essential for use as a foundation for comparison in future corruption research.

In this study, there are three main limitations: its confinement to the Cambodian context, its confinement to governance-oriented NGOs, and its confinement to qualitative research. Firstly, the limitation of the research to the specific geographical coverage of Cambodia, a post-conflict country in South East Asia, wonders whether to what extent the proposed framework has the potentiality of transferability of its application to other post-conflict and emerging democracies in Asia, such as Myanmar, Laos, Vietnam and Bangladesh, and in most African countries, as well as other countries in the middle east, including Syria, Iraq and others. As noticed, the framework identifies different variables, including dimensions, components, and elements, and this would attract the interest of scholars to look into details of the relationships of NGOs and corruption prevention in other settings. Testing the framework in other countries may help refine the conceptual validity of the framework and expand its generalisability.

Secondly, the confinement of the research to governance-oriented NGOs is another limitation of the study. Although purposive selection of participants is a strength because researchers attempt to choose those who are knowledgeable and have years of experiences that would provide rich information to the topic of research, subjectively there may be a potential of bias because, in this case, it looks at perspectives only from NGOs. There might be a bias of perception of NGOs between external constraints (contextual traps) and their internal constraints. This is because the findings of this study seem to reveal a stronger emphasis on contextual traps than the NGO organisational constraints. This might be the case because, undeniably, researchers cannot force the subjects of the research to be honest. Since corruption is a cross-cutting issue and impacts on everyone, it is useful that further study would extend to cover the viewpoints of stakeholders, such as development-oriented NGOs, academia, associations and, particularly, the public sector and businesses. Including these people in future studies may help balance the opinions and validate the emerging concepts, as well as fine-tune the framework.

The final limitation also found from this research is its confinement to the qualitative paradigm. This research uses qualitative interviewing and observation for its best fit with the complexity of the research topic and the research question. In future, other methods, such as focus group discussions and quantitative inquiry, such as survey questionnaires, could be used to help to develop and strengthen the findings. This is because some data in this study may be able to be measured

statistically. This is in line with a claim made by Morse and Niehaus (2009) that any phenomenon could not be comprehensively understood through a single method of inquiry. Qualitative phenomenology explores the essence of the lived experience of the participants of the study. This may be a limitation since different participants may interpret meanings of the phenomenon subjectively (Dukes, 1984). Also, the findings of this study represent the perceptions of the participants as it exists at one point in time. As such, future research of the phenomenon would provide crucial insights and be refined to the changes of the environment over time.

However, the limitations identified in this study pose little threat to the relevance and importance of the findings; instead, they provide potential for future studies to confirm the findings, as well as to improve future approaches to the study of NGOs and corruption prevention.

5.6. Chapter Conclusion

This chapter discussed the contribution of the study, covering theoretical, practical and methodological contributions. Theoretically, this research contributes to theory through the development of two different but interrelated frameworks—framework (p) and framework (s). Framework (p) discusses the current state of problems and surrounding environments where NGOs operate, the current state of their strategic actions, and their associated organisational constraints. Framework (s) discusses possible solutions to the problems identified in framework (p), through the development of the 3Is approach. It also described new concepts developed based on the data of this study, as well as the contribution of this research to methodology. In terms of practical contribution, this interprets the framework in practices. Basically, it discussed how the 3Is approach helps practitioners and policy-makers improve practices. It also provided a description about the expected outcomes and impacts resulting from the intervention of the 3Is. Finally, the limitations and possible generalisation of the study were discussed. The next chapter assesses the results of the thesis against the research questions and objectives of the study. It also provides recommendations for further action, and directions for future research.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

6.1. Introduction

This chapter will draw this study to a close. In doing so, it will first assess the extent to which the research aims and objectives have been met, and how the research questions have been answered. Next, it will outline suggestions for future research and will conclude by making some recommendations for improving practices in NGOs working in the corruption prevention space. The chapter ends with my personal concluding remarks.

6.2. Assessments against Research Questions and Objectives

The results of this research are assessed against the sub-research questions and specific research objectives set forth in this study. Accomplishing these research sub-questions and specific research objectives means the core research question and core research objective are met. The connection between the research questions and objectives are shown in the following table, and these are discussed below.

Table 4: The connection between research questions and objectives

Research Objectives		Research Questions
Core Research Objective		Core Research Question
To explore how NGOs can become more effective in preventing public sector corruption in Cambodia.	→	How can NGOs become more effective in preventing public sector corruption in Cambodia?
Specific Research Objectives		Research sub-questions
1. To explore the extent to which the current theories help address corruption.	→	1. To what extent does current theory adequately explain corruption prevention?
2. To identify roles played by NGOs in preventing public sector corruption in Cambodia.	→	2. What roles (right, responsibility, activity) can NGOs play in promotion of good governance/corruption prevention?
3. To discover factors perceived by NGOs that hinder their functions in preventing corruption.	→	3. What are factors that obstruct the operational processes of NGOs in corruption prevention?
4. To discover actions taken by NGOs to address challenges and to improve their operations.	→	4. What factors make NGOs effective in preventing corruption and holding the government responsible for its actions?
	→	5. What factors make NGOs effective in stimulating political participation in resisting corruption?
	→	6. What measures can NGOs take to encourage top government leaders to have real political will in combating corruption?
	→	7. What factors make NGO intervention gain credibility and public support?
5. To develop an integrated substantive theoretical framework that will help inform research and practice.	→	Grounded in the findings A theoretical framework developed
6. To set out future directions to improve practices and study.	→	Grounded in the findings Future directions and study recommended

6.2.1. Research Objective One

Research Objective One is satisfactorily achieved by responding to the following research sub-question:

> To what extent does current theory adequately explain corruption prevention?

As discussed in Chapter Two, while there has been much research on corruption in general, the specific area of corruption prevention is relatively underdeveloped and under-theorised. Even though corruption is generally considered a problem that has serious impacts, and although there are significant global efforts being undertaken to promote good governance, democracy and human rights, research on corruption prevention has attracted relatively little interest from the academic community. Currently, there is no specific theory of corruption prevention developed for its own field. Most of the corruption research to date tends to test existing theories borrowed from other disciplines. For example, sociological-based theories such as contingency theory, have been used to test the effect of human development and national culture on corruption (Sims et al., 2012), and institutional theory has been used to analyse the interaction of culture and corruption (Pillay & Dorasamy, 2010). Economic theories, such as a principal-agent model, have also been applied to political corruption (Groenendijk, 1997), to test the relationship between party system competitiveness and corruption (Schleiter & Voznaya, 2014), as well as the use of game theory to examine the relationship between natural resources, democracy and corruption (Bhattacharyya & Hodler, 2010) and the inability of Chinese authorities to deter corruption (Zhu, 2012). Theoretical perspectives have also been borrowed from criminology such as a situational crime prevention theory to control corruption (Graycar & Sidebottom, 2012).

As a result of this, research results are fragmented and practitioners find it difficult to gain useful insights from research. This is because early corruption research has largely been atheoretical (Judge et al., 2011), and the research that does adopt theory tends to be confined to silos of particular disciplinary perspectives. It is no surprise then to see that economists work on economic causes, effects and solutions; law academics focus on legal antecedents and legal solution, ethicists

research moral behaviours and solutions, and so on. As a result, research tends to not be truly cumulative, leading to a lack of the development of a coherent body of models and theories that explain corruption and ways to prevent it occurring (Judge et al., 2011). Further, due to the disparate nature of research, those theoretical assumptions and frameworks that are employed often conflict, and the constructs and variables applied appear as antecedents and effects.

The few studies that do attempt to establish a specialised perspective tend to still borrow from other disciplines. For example, by combining game theory with the institutional perspective (Collier, 2002), and the examination of corruption from the combined perspectives of political science and economics (Nas et al., 1986). This lack of theory about corruption prevention not only poses hurdles to corruption study, but also to policy makers and practitioners. Therefore, more theory development to curbing corruption is needed to help address this complex social problem.

Anti-corruption research thus far fails to help because it provides only partial explanations about public sector problems without considering the involvement of non-state actors in the processes. It provides explanations of 'what should be done' but limited discussions of 'how it should be done'. In the area of public sector reform, for example, there has been a lack of inclusion of independent non-state actors, particularly NGOs. Bearing in mind that in developing, as well as less democratic, countries in general, the governance, legislative and judicial systems are fragile, the power is in the hand of the executive, and thus a check and balance mechanism is mainly disabled. Within such circumstances, the government usually, if not always, has no real political will to make changes to the system from which they get benefits, unless there is pressure from outsiders. Thus, the involvement of NGOs is of great significance, not only to control corruption in the public sector on their own endeavours but also, at the same time, to empowers the public to actively participate in corruption prevention and put more pressure on government to make positive changes. As such, research that attempts to develop a collaborative approach between state and non-state actors in corruption prevention would be of great help.

In addition to theoretical problems, there are also a number of methodological issues. So far, much of the corruption research effort has been quantitative and Bose et al. (2008) warn that the existing data on corruption has a number of shortcomings that poses hurdles for empirical research. This is probably because of the very

sensitivity surrounding the issues of corruption. Sending out questionnaires for respondents to complete in the form of, for example, closed questions or pre-determined responses will probably not yield deep insights into what is really happening on the ground. Respondents tend to be reluctant to give complete responses, and, at times, the provided response-space is not enough for them to share their experiences of corruption. It may be the case that qualitative inquiry is more appropriate; it offers the researcher flexible techniques to obtain in-depth responses from participants and provide detailed contextual information about the situation on the ground. Participants are allowed a 'voice', crucial for gaining data about their experiences and how they interpret their experiences. Additionally, researchers and the researched meet face-to-face in a two-way communication from which researchers can unearth unexpected thoughts, and the researched are able to make inquiries and clarify on what they are unclear about.

In spite of this need for sound data, there are relatively few studies that are grounded in data. The literature on corruption is replete with review papers. As a result, there is little to offer concrete and current solutions to inform policy-makers and practitioners in the fight against corruption. While review papers are important in the development of theory in that they do provide significant insights and guidance for further empirical, contextual research that may help respond to the current failure in the war against corruption, there also needs to be a concomitant stock of research papers that are based on sound data collection and analysis.

However, without the extant literature, researchers would have little to base their research on. Studies relating to causes, effects of corruption, and its remedies, are important in that they provide a basis from which we can begin to understand it and develop prevention strategies, as well as mobilising broad support and participation. In spite of its limitations, corruption research to date has provided valuable insight and guidance. The extant literature represents a stock of knowledge relating to corruption and, as such, informs researchers of available information in the field of study, and provides a base for further discussion and research.

6.2.2. Research Objective Two

This specific research objective is appropriately achieved by responding to the following research sub-question:

What roles (right, responsibility, activity) can NGOs play in promotion of good governance/corruption prevention?

The findings from Chapter Four clearly shows that NGOs play three significant roles in promotion of good governance or corruption prevention. These can be classified into three broad categories, encompassing civic empowerment, civic advocacy, and civic oversight.

Civic Empowerment

According to the analysis, civic empowerment is made up of the combination of three important categories: civic education and awareness raising, civic mobilisation, and bridging and facilitation. For the first category, NGOs attempt to provide education and awareness raising to all important stakeholders, including the general public, CSOs, state authority, and business. However, they appear to pay more attention to the public and less consideration to business. The results suggest, for example, more knowledge and understanding of the public and CSOs on issues like good governance, corruption and rights and roles of citizens and government officials, increases participation and demand for the government to take responsibility for its activities; and greater understanding of state authorities working in the democratic environment improves their openness and cooperation with non-state stakeholders. However, NGOs seemed to ignore the involvement of the business sector in the process, whereas this sector takes significant responsibility in tackling corruption because corruption occurs when the private and the public sector meets.

Civic mobilisation, within this context, refers to the process of mobilising the general population struggling to make their voices heard, and to seek a particular objective and changes to current social issues that impact them. The process usually takes the form of gathering the public to attend public forums, awareness raising campaigns, and meetings with communes or districts, and so forth. One of the mobilisation campaigns which all of the participated interviewees were proud of was the clean hand campaign, where they collected one million thumbprints from the general public proposing the adoption of the anti-corruption law. Without such massive popular mobilisation, the anti-corruption law would not have been passed.

However, sometimes these activities are seen to be very confrontational and, at times, responded by aggressive actions from the government, such as termination of the operations, intimidation and chase of arrest.

Bridging and facilitating was also found to be an important factor to empower CSOs to actively participate in social issues, and this promotes participatory governance. Due to the fact that the gap between relevant stakeholders in society, particularly between CSOs and the government, remains huge, the data suggest that bridging and facilitation between diverse stakeholders is of great importance. Within this context, bridging and facilitation is meant to create connection and narrow the gap between relevant stakeholders, usually of different viewpoints, and to promote their mutual communication in order that they understand and work together more productively, and that all relevant stakeholders' views are heard and taken into consideration. Bridging and facilitation is made up of the combination of four emerging subcategories between: NGOs and government, citizens and government, citizens and political parties, and CSOs and CSOs.

Bridging and facilitating plays a crucial function to make the two sectors, state and non-state sectors, especially citizens and government, to come closer and work together. It was also found that bridging and facilitating empowers the public, through which they have more courage to talk with, to consult with and demand public authority to be transparent and accountable for their actions. This is, undoubtedly, an ideal effort to promote good governance and the concept of democratisation which is essential for national development. However, NGOs seemed to ignore the involvement of the business sector in the process, whereas this sector takes significant responsibility in tackling corruption because corruption is more likely to occur when the private and the public sectors meet.

Civic Advocacy

In terms of civic advocacy, the data suggest two apparently contradictory kinds of advocacy utilised by NGOs within the current Cambodian context, bilateral advocacy and unilateral advocacy. Bilateral advocacy refers to whatever activity and event is conducted with the involvement of state authority in the advocacy process. This type of advocacy seems to be conducted through a constructive dialogue between state and non-state actors. As such, it is less confrontational and may be the

most effective strategy to make the two sectors come closer. Unilateral advocacy refers to any organised advocacy activity or event where there is an absence of involvement of the state actors in the process. This type of advocacy is frequently conducted in the form of campaigns, demonstrations, protests, press releases or public announcements. It is more confrontational and attracts more resistance from state actors since it is mostly conducted to criticise government actions and point out the problems, rather than provide solutions to the problems. Overall, participants in this study see the significant role of advocacy as putting pressure on the government to be transparent and accountable, and, to a certain extent, to take action on certain issues.

Civic Oversight

According to the analysis, civic oversight surfaced from the combination of three categories, including monitoring, research and access to information. Within this context, monitoring refers to an act of keeping a close watch over government activities over time to ensure they are on the right track, as well as shedding light on them, reminding and seeking corrective actions. According to the data, monitoring is divided into two separate subcategories: an act of monitoring taken by NGOs, and an act of monitoring conducted by the general public. Grounded in the data, there are a variety of activities that NGOs are involved with in monitoring government actions.

Overall, NGOs seemed to have been involved in monitoring most of the major elements of the government. The act of monitoring is observed to have been undertaken to oversee the effectiveness of budget allocation and use, and the development process against the laws, regulations and whatever else that has been put in place. For example, some conduct specific projects to oversee the effectiveness of national budget expenditures, whereas some NGOs claimed to have conducted monitoring on corruption in the court of law, some create programmes or a hotline system where they are able to make reports on corrupt cases, and others attempt to monitor government revenues to be received from extractive industries. For the public, their act of monitoring is normally conducted through daily contact with public authority, and what they routinely experience and observe happening in society in general. However, the general public seemed to give little consideration to what they experience since there is no proper mechanism facilitating them to take

action.

In terms of research, the majority of participants in this study give value to the significance of research in supporting the effort to control corruption, as well as promote good governance. Research is knowledge development based on contextual situations and strong empirical-based evidence that NGOs employ to work and intervene with the public sector. It is also a useful source of information for NGOs to base many activities on, such as dissemination to the public, making plans, and making public announcements. There are various different forms of research suggested in this study. For example, research can be conducted through perception surveys, case studies, exposure visits, and the use of social accountability tools, such as citizen score cards.

Promoting access to information was recognised by most informants in this study as an essential approach to corruption prevention. The data suggest two kinds of emergent interventions relating to the access of information category; namely, demanding the disclosure of government-held information, and dissemination of information to the public. Most participants believe that when the public has access to government-held information, as well as other related information, they are able to assess whether what the government does is transparent and accountable, which then enables them to demand an explanation. For example, some organisations have been pushing the government to create a legal framework concerning the disclosure of government-held information, such as a law on access to information. Some organisations have been demanding for the disclosure of national budgets and documents relating to state expenditures, while others have been pushing for the adoption of a law on political party finance, and for the disclosure of electoral campaign spending. However, the results found that the public, including professional NGOs, access to government-held information is extremely limited as the law on access to information has not yet been passed. Limited access to information just makes it difficult for citizens, as well as NGOs, to effectively monitor government actions, or work with state actors meaningfully and constructively.

6.2.3. Research Objective Three

This specific research objective is appropriately achieved by responding to the following research sub-question:

> What are factors that obstruct the operational processes of NGOs in corruption prevention?

The results from Chapter Four shows that the operational space for NGOs means they are faced with two major challenges, including both external and internal. Externally, NGOs are faced with the surrounding environments where they operate which, in this study, are referred to as contextual traps; and internally, they are faced with organisational constraints. All of these are discussed below.

▒ Contextual Traps

According to the data, contextual traps consist of political, legal, social, cultural and economic aspects. All of these aspects are driving factors responsible for the prevalence of corrupt practices, and are also challenging factors faced by NGOs in their operations.

Political Trap

The data suggest that politics is the leading driver contributing to corruption in Cambodia, as well as a constraint to the operational space for NGOs in corruption prevention efforts. This links to two critical categories; namely, the lack of 'political will' among elite officials to fight against corruption, and the lack of 'public will' among the general public to actively participate in corruption prevention endeavours. Grounded in the data, the association between corruption and the lack of 'political will' falls into five elements: (a) political vested interest, (b) limited openness and cooperation from state actors, (c) narrow views of state actors toward civil society organisations (CSOs), particularly those that work on governance or democracy, (d) a mere political rhetoric of the state actors, and (e) lack of consistent strategy and campaign. Alongside the lack of 'political will' to fight against corruption comes the

lack of 'public will', which is also responsible for the increase in corrupt tendencies in Cambodia and a challenge faced by NGOs in their anti-corruption efforts, although the latter is influenced by the former. According to the analysis, the lack of 'public will' includes (1) lack of public trust, (2) limited public participation in corruption crusade, and (3) public involvement in corrupt practices.

Legal Trap

The data suggest a strong link between legal and corruption. According to the analysis, legal trap is made up of the integration of three emerging categories, including (1) the separation of power, (2) substandard anti-corruption law and unit, and (3) lack of law enforcement of implementing agencies. All of these are associated with the generation of corruption, and also may limit operational space for NGOs. Legal trap tends to be strongly influenced by the lack of 'political will' of top political elites within the government apparatus who intend to leave loopholes in the legal framework during the creation and enforcement of the legislation so that they are able to interpret it for the benefit of their group.

Social Trap

According to the data, social trap refers to the social context that frames the behaviours of the public to act in a certain way. It also plays a significant part in contributing to the generation of corruption practices and places challenges on interventions by NGOs. The analysis suggests that social trap emerged from the combination of three categories including: (1) fear factor, (2) social norms, and (3) limited knowledge of the public. Regarding fear factor, the data suggest three elements which make people become fearful: (a) the legacy of the Pol Pot regime, (b) political pressure, and (c) fear of losing benefits. Social norms are composed of two emergent subcategories, including mutual exchange, and socially constructed. The data suggest two important aspects to be taken into account relating to limited understanding of the public about the rights and roles of people, as well as the roles and responsibilities of public officials, which partially contributes to the widespread nature of corrupt practices. First, limited understanding of the public may make them end up engaging with corrupt behaviours. Second, limited understanding by the

public makes them lose the opportunity to participate in preventing the menace of corruption.

Cultural Trap

The analysis reveals two significant categories associated with the link between culture and corruption. They are composed of (1) traditional cultural influence, and (2) newly-emerged habit. These are partly responsible for the generation of endemic corrupt behaviours and a challenge for NGOs to effectively work with the public. According to the analysis, three emerging subcategories constitute traditional cultural influence. These include hierarchical and paternalistic tradition, respect of public authority and rich people, and 'egg-vs-rock' mindset. Regarding newly-emergent habit, according to the data some Cambodian people at present have been creating such a corrupt culture by asking corrupt questions, such as 'earn?', 'oily?' or 'oily job?'. This is often heard when two or more people who know each other meet, public officials in particular.

Economic Trap

Economic trap is another contextual variable that contributes to the endemic of corruption in Cambodia, and to the operational challenges faced by NGOs. According to the data, economic trap is made up by combining two emerging categories, including (1) poverty and (2) lack of government incentive system. Regarding poverty, the data suggest that it not only encourages people to engage in corrupt practices but also discourages them from participating in promoting good governance or controlling corruption. The lack of an incentive system within the public sector is greatly associated with the growth of corrupt practices, according to the observation of the participants in the study. Civil servants' salaries are still far below their subsistence level compared to the price of goods in the market. Furthermore, this does not include the consumption of utilities, such as electricity and water. This contributes to the growth of corrupt behaviours within the public sector. The data also reveal that it is baseless to use poverty as an excuse to make public officials to get involved in corruption. Indeed, some people who engage in corruption are those who are rich and live a luxurious lifestyle. Corruption is about

greed and opportunity. Indeed, public officials are greedy for power and wealth because they have the opportunity to do so.

Organisational Constraints

Organisational constraints consist of three broad components, including management and leadership constraint, corruption and governance constraint, and financial constraint. Apart from external challenges, all of these internal challenges are also major factors that limit the effective operations of NGOs in corruption prevention efforts.

Management and Leadership Constraints

Management and leadership capacity ensure the quality and effective operations of an organisation, and, vice versa, limited management and leadership quality constrains the smoothness and effectiveness of its performance. Grounded in the data, management and leadership constraint is constituted by the integration of two emergent categories. These include limited knowledge and experiences, and lack of staff. As is evident from the data, limited knowledge and experiences were fit over the combination of two emergent subcategories, including limited management capacity and limited leadership capacity. Overall, some participants in this study claimed that management and leadership capacity is very challenging, while others seemed to be reluctant to provide an account of management and leadership as their issues of concern. The data also reveal the barrier due to the lack of human resources of NGOs which constrains their smooth operations. For example, one participant in this study indicated that her coalition organisation has only three people, which makes it very difficult for them to fulfil their work roles with many activities to complete. Lack of organisational staff is also closely associated with financial issue of NGOs and this will be discussed in the financial constraints section. Participants in this study reveal no significant constraints about management style imposed by international funders, such as top-down approach and other funder's requirements. This is contradictory to previous research that reveals that donor's management approach and requirements make governance projects ineffective since they focus on meeting their goals, objectives and requirements, rather than respond to local

situations, needs and concerns.

Corruption and Governance Constraints

The data reveal that the reputation and the effective interventions of NGOs have been impacted by issues relating to governance and corruption. According to the data, corruption and governance constraint surfaced through the combination of two emergent categories. They are composed of the scandals of NGOs, and limited governance capacity of NGOs. In terms of scandals, for example, some NGOs are involved in corrupt practices, some are just business-like NGOs, and others are deeply involved in politics. The differences within the NGO sector also act as a constraint on their advocacy efforts. The limited governance capacity of NGOs is also a challenge. As highlighted by participants, NGOs work on governance issues but they lack knowledge and experiences about governance. This, no doubt, negatively impacts on their performance. The majority of participants in this study accept that governance is quite a new concept to Cambodia. Decentralisation, for example, one interviewee indicated that his organisation is *'learning by doing'* from the experiences of other countries. Some added that they lack advocacy skills; others claimed that due to the lack of capacity in governance issues, only make some NGOs that cooperate with the public sector just like to accompany rather than to advocate or provide constructive ideas for government to consider.

Financial Constraints

The data suggest: (1) factors which lead to financial constraint faced by most NGOs, and (2) factors caused by financial constraint which influences the intensity and effectiveness of their operations. The factors leading to financial constraint is composed of political conditions and lack of local fundraising, while the factors caused by financial constraint encompasses limited activities, limited human resources development and lack of interest of skilful people. The political conditions in Cambodia are one reason which makes most NGOs face financial constraint. It is claimed that Cambodia has made no significant progress after years of reform with donor's support. This has disappointed donors, and forced them to turn to other countries, which reduces the flow of aid on governance issues to Cambodia. In

addition, media NGOs lose incomes to support their operations since businesses dare not advertise them. The analysis also reveals that NGOs are not interested in doing fundraising within the country, although local fundraising appears to be available. Indeed, local fund raising should not be overlooked by NGOs. In terms of factors caused by financial constraint, the analysis reveals that financial constraint leads to the decline of strength and influence of NGOs since various potential areas are restricted. This means that NGOs have to reduce some of their important project activities, such as postponing certain operations and limiting extensive human resource development. Lack of funds makes them unable to recruit capable employees because they cannot afford to pay them a higher salary, thus potential job seekers look towards other sectors.

6.2.4. Research Objective Four

Research Objective Four, the most important objective of the study, is appropriately achieved by responding to the following research sub-questions:

> What factors make NGOs effective in preventing corruption and holding the government responsible for its actions?
>
> What factors make NGOs effective in stimulating political participation in resisting corruption?
>
> What measures can NGOs take to encourage government elites to have real political will in combating corruption?
>
> What factors make intervention by NGOs gain credibility and public support?

This objective is satisfactorily accomplished through the development of an integrative 3Is approach. The 3Is approach is conceptualised from the perceptions of participants in this study. It is composed of three interrelated and integrated interventions, encompassing organisational reinforcement, work reinforcement, and promoting institutional recognition and support.

▒ Organisational Reinforcement

Grounded in the data, there are a number of critical starting points on the ground to be considered for organisational reinforcement. These include: reinforcing organisational policy, reinforcing organisational management systems, and reinforcing information and monitoring systems. Through this iterative and interrelated process, it not only helps improve the proper functioning of the organisations, and prevents the incidents of organisational misconducts, but also, at the same time, builds trust and support and restores the reputation of NGO sector.

Reinforcing Organisational Policy

It is evident from the analysis that reinforcing organisational policy is made up of the combination of three emergent subcategories. They are composed of fiduciary safeguard, personnel policy and other policy measures. In terms of fiduciary safeguard, participants paid remarkable attention to establishing various policies to ensure that organisational budgets are well managed and not leaked at any point. According to the analysis, there is evidence of considerable attention given by participants in this study to developing personnel policy, including staff agreement and contract, as part of a solution to discourage corrupt incidents. The data also suggest various rules and mechanisms to prevent misbehaviours by staff. Some were, for example, interested in the development of a statute and internal rule of regulation, while some paid attention to creating a code of conduct or code of ethics, and so forth. This not only helps improve the proper functioning of the organisations, but also involves taking measures to prevent the incidents of organisational misconducts.

Reinforcing Organisational Management Systems

According to the analysis, reinforcing organisational management systems comprises two emergent subcategories; namely, organisational structure and management system, and human development. The majority of participants recommended reinforcing the organisational structure and management systems as they help the organisation enhance their performance. This ranges from setting up a clear strategic plan, clear goals, a clear organisational structure, a clear structure of

command and a clear line of supervision. Some participants suggested clear implementing strategies and an oversight system to monitor the progress. Human development is also recommended by participants in this study. This is because the analysis showed that NGO employees have limited capacity, both technical and managerial, and especially around the concept of governance, which they intend to promote. As such, strengthening the capacity of NGO staff should be done on a continuous basis, whether through formal means such as training programmes, or informal, through learning from the best practices of other countries, or through the exchanges of information with partners within and outside the countries. Human resource proliferation also enables organisational employees to cope with social changes and global tendency.

Reinforcing Information and Monitoring Systems

Grounded in the data, there were two emerging subcategories: information disclosure system, and monitoring and feedback system, made up of reinforcing information and monitoring systems. Information disclosure system is important for a couple of reasons based on the perceptions of participants in this study. Through this information system, NGOs not only are able to disseminate information to the public but also provide accessibility to those who wish to obtain NGO information and other available information. A monitoring and feedback system serves as both internal and external communication mechanisms through which NGO staff, and the general public, can assess and criticise general activities of the organisations, as well as any corruption cases they encounter. For example, some participants commented on the importance of the establishment of a report and complaint mechanism. Through this mechanism, either NGO staff or the public are able to make a report or lodge any complaints, not only relating to the organisational staff misconduct, but also any corrupt practices they experience in general. It is also the mechanism to gather feedback on their project activities from relevant stakeholders and the beneficiary. Appropriate measures to protect whistle-blowers make the report, or complaint mechanism, even more effective.

▒ Work Reinforcement

According to the analysis, work reinforcement stood out by integrating three emerging categories grounded in this fieldwork data. They consist of: (1) cooperation and coordination, (2) networking and coalition building, and (3) evidence-based intervention and adaptation. Through this iterative and interrelated process, it makes the activities of NGOs become more operationalised, and makes the two sectors, state and non-state, come closer and work together on a mutual understanding basis. Through networking and coalition building, the NGO sector unites and makes the voice of advocacy become stronger, more persuasive and influential. In addition, through evidence-based intervention and adaptation, it may make the operations of NGOs become more credible and responsive to contextual situations.

Cooperation and Coordination

The data suggest four subcategories which constitute the cooperation and coordination category. These are composed of cooperation with the government sector, cooperation among NGOs, cooperation with the public, and cooperation with partners. It is evident from the data that there were a range of stakeholders that NGOs cooperate with, but the data releases little account of NGOs working with businesses. All participants recommended working closely with the public sector as long as NGOs wish to improve their operations and impacts. However, in actual practice, cooperation between CSOs and the government is at a low level. In most cases, it is in the form of informing state authorities of what NGOs are going to do, inviting government representatives to attend NGO-organised forums or radio talk shows and so forth. More cooperation and coordination is needed. Cooperation and coordination between government and NGOs should not be just in the form of informing; rather, it should be through the process of sitting, discussing and finding solutions to the problem together.

Strengthening cooperation with the public sector is essential; at least it makes NGO operations and activities workable. Without it, and lack of communication with state authorities, the projects are potentially in trouble. Recent experiences have shown that lack of cooperation and communication with the public sector makes some NGOs remain inaccessible to government sector and, at times, some of their

project is inapplicable. Criticising or attacking government wrongdoings and misconducts from the outside hardly makes the interventions of NGOs effective, or helps improve the situation; rather, it creates polarisation between them. Although the majority of participants in this study accept that cooperation with the government is a good strategy to improve their interventions and impacts, at the same time, they also recognise the difficulty they may face in doing so.

Besides trying to intensify cooperation and coordination with the government sector, the data also suggest that NGOs have to cooperate with other CSOs. This means that to be more effective and influential NGOs have to unite, and work together as a network and coalition (see details below). For instance, some participants claimed that NGOs can work together to conduct a big campaign to push the government to make changes in policy, and to enforce the law. Some claimed NGOs have to cooperate with the media. On the contrary, if they compete with each other they diminish the voice of advocacy. As such, their voices will be less persuasive, or unheard, and their force will never be influential.

It is evident that NGOs work with and serve the general public. This is natural; without public support NGOs may be voiceless. NGOs work with the public and help build their capacity and empower them to work with state authorities and, at the same time, mobilise them to participate in and support their activities. Adding to suggestions on strengthening cooperation with the government, CSOs and the public, the data also suggest that NGOs have to cooperate with development partners, including the international community. NGOs need to cooperate with donors, such as ADB, and the World Bank, in order that their interventions become more operationalised and effective.

Networking and Coalition Building

In this society, working alone is not a good choice. Being united and working together as a coalition or network is an ideal option to secure the operations of NGOs and ensure that their forces cannot be broken down. These are the overall beliefs of participants in this study. Building networks and coalitions is an approach that NGOs should consider to strengthen their forces and operations. This category is made up by combining two emerging subcategories; namely, increasing cooperation with extant networks and coalitions, and, at the same time, creating and working with new

networks. Increasing cooperation with extant networks and coalitions is highly valued by most interviewees. This does not mean that NGOs did not previously work together as a network and coalition, but they have to scale up even more. Working as an individual organisation, the NGO sector will never be strong and influential. No matter whether an organisation is big or small, they have to help and support each other. Adding to the knowledge that networking and working together would contribute to making the voices of NGOs stronger, and their operations more effective, some participants in this study indicated that networking also serves as a channel allowing NGOs that are inaccessible to the government to become accessible. Networking and coalition building is important, regardless of whether NGOs are in the city or in the provinces, and in the country or outside the country.

Apart from building up cooperation with existing networks and coalitions, data from this qualitative research also suggests that NGOs have to create and work with new networks in order to improve their functioning. For example, they help people at the grassroots level to create networks within their communities, and youth to create clubs. Sometimes NGOs create a special working group to deal with certain emerging issues. For instance, NGOs create a group of jurists to help people to know their rights and to seek for a lawyer to assist them in a court of law, and in land disputes. All of these make their advocacy voices heard, stronger and more likely to be considered by the state authority.

Evidence-based Intervention and Adaptation

According to the analysis, evidence-based intervention and adaptation is another important aspect that NGOs should consider to enhance their operations, otherwise they may not be properly functional. This category is made up by combining two emerging subcategories; namely, evidence-based interventions, and adaptation to contextual situations. It is recommended that the actions of NGOs have to be evidence-based. Without concrete evidence and facts, NGO interventions may end up in conflict with government. It is noticeable that governance-oriented NGOs cannot advocate based on feelings. All activities such as advocacy, public announcements, face to face dialogues, and public forums, have to be based on reliable evidence, such as research and surveys. Field data suggest that to become more effective in their operations NGOs have to update themselves and adapt to

contextual situations. This is, for example, because the functioning of public administration is normally not static and the society develops over time. Therefore, it is essential that NGOs have to adjust to contextual changes so that they are responsive to new emerging circumstances and situations.

▒ Promoting Institutional Recognition and Support

The data suggest that NGOs are able to build a reputation, and make their work become more effective, by promoting institutional recognition and support. According to the analysis, promoting institutional recognition and support is constituted by combining two emerging categories including (1) demonstrating good governance practice, and (2) building institutional trust. Through this iterative and interrelated process, the voice of NGOs is more credible and their actions may make a significant impact on society. By contrast, if the work of an NGO is not clean or does not set by example, their intervention fails to gain public trust and support and becomes less influential. As such, to accomplish this essential goal, NGOs have to, for example, act as a role model, be clean and incorruptible, be neutral in their work, be processional, and be pragmatic and responsive. As such, demonstration of good governance practices, and building institutional trust, are essential to gain credibility and support, as highlighted by most participants in this study. Indeed, if one wishes someone to be clean they have to be clean first, otherwise their preaching will be considered nonsense. Put simply, fix your own mess before fixing others. All of which are discussed below.

Demonstrating Good Governance Practices

Based on the data in this research, it is worth noting that NGOs, especially those that work on governance or corruption-related issues, have to strengthen organisational good governance practice. Good governance practice is made up by integrating three emerging subcategories, including being a role model, anti-misconduct, and mainstreaming an anti-corruption mechanism into their projects. Through these interrelated processes, NGOs may not only be able to reduce organisational constraints but also gain credibility and support for their cause. In terms of being a role model, according to the data, some of the most noticeable

phrases frequently suggested, for example, were: *'be a good model to lead others', 'own good governance', 'be clean', and 'start from itself'*. This means that NGOs have to make themselves clean by strengthening self-discipline, and not getting involved in any corrupt behaviour. They also have to be an anti-corruption kick-starter, meaning that NGOs have to start by strengthening organisational transparency and accountability systems and expand outside its sector. It is also clear from the data that NGOs can act as a role model by adhering to the set organisational policies and rules, and have a sufficient legal system to govern its operations.

Similar to suggestions to acting as a role model, the analysis also suggests that NGOs have to show the public that they are committed to take action against any kind of institutional misconducts. Anti-misconduct helps them stay clean in their operations and, importantly, also builds their institutional reputation and public support. On the contrary, as observed in recent NGO scandals, the involvement of NGOs in corruption has polluted the whole NGO sector, not only those that are corrupt. This not only makes them less incredible and lose support from the general public, but also makes their operations less effective and influential. Perhaps based on this recent evidence, the NGOs that participated in this study were more cautious. Still, most of them recommended the creation of an anti-corruption policy and to take action against those involved in corrupt practices.

In addition, the data also suggest that NGOs to incorporate an anti-corruption approach as part of their organisational projects. This is not limited to NGOs that work on corruption or governance issues. Indeed, it applies to the NGO sector in general, no matter whether they are humanitarian or development oriented NGOs, such as in education or health. They have to mainstream an anti-corruption mechanism into their projects. This is because, as mentioned above, one corrupt NGO defames the whole sector, as the old Khmer adage attests, 'a bucket of fish when one is spoiled, the other is too'. Mainstreaming anti-corruption mechanisms into their projects may help reduce instances of organisational corruption.

Building Institutional Trust

The analysis suggests that building institutional trust is created by the integration of three subcategories. They include being neutral, being professional, and being pragmatic. Through these strategic actions, NGOs may attract more trust

and support from the public, and also attention and cooperation from the government.

In terms of political neutrality, this refers to the idea that the operations of NGOs have to be based on evidence and not offer support to any individual or any political party. Political neutrality is vital in terms of maintaining NGO reputation. NGOs are able to keep themselves neutral by being impartial in their work. This means that NGOs have to work with all political tendencies, regardless of whether they are from the ruling party or the opposition party. Supporting one political party and opposing against another party only makes them lose credibility and trust, from both the public and government. In addition, some participants pointed to the need for NGO staff to not be involved in activism for any political party. Some organisations agreed that NGOs have to remain neutral; however, they appeared to accept that any NGO staff members are able to use their rights as a citizen of a country where everyone enjoys the right to politics, yet they cannot use the name of the NGO if they do. Indeed, they are able to engage in any political event or campaign as a private citizen only. Therefore, it is worth noting that NGOs should consider the neutrality of their organisation, and the influences of their actions, on the political rights of each individual citizen where the law of the nation entitles them to participate in political life.

Adding to the suggestion about being neutral in their work, it is important that NGOs have to build expertise in their area of work and perform their work professionally. Being professional may draw more support from the public, as well as attention and cooperation from the government. Limited capacity and unprofessional work may first lead to the idea that what they are doing is not credible. Second, it may lead to the barrier that the government does not believe in the capacity of an NGO because they lack knowledge in their working area, and, even worse, when the work of an NGO is not based on evidence; rather, on assumption or emotion.. On the contrary, when NGOs work professionally they are able to mobilise more public support and credibility; thus, their voices are more influential.

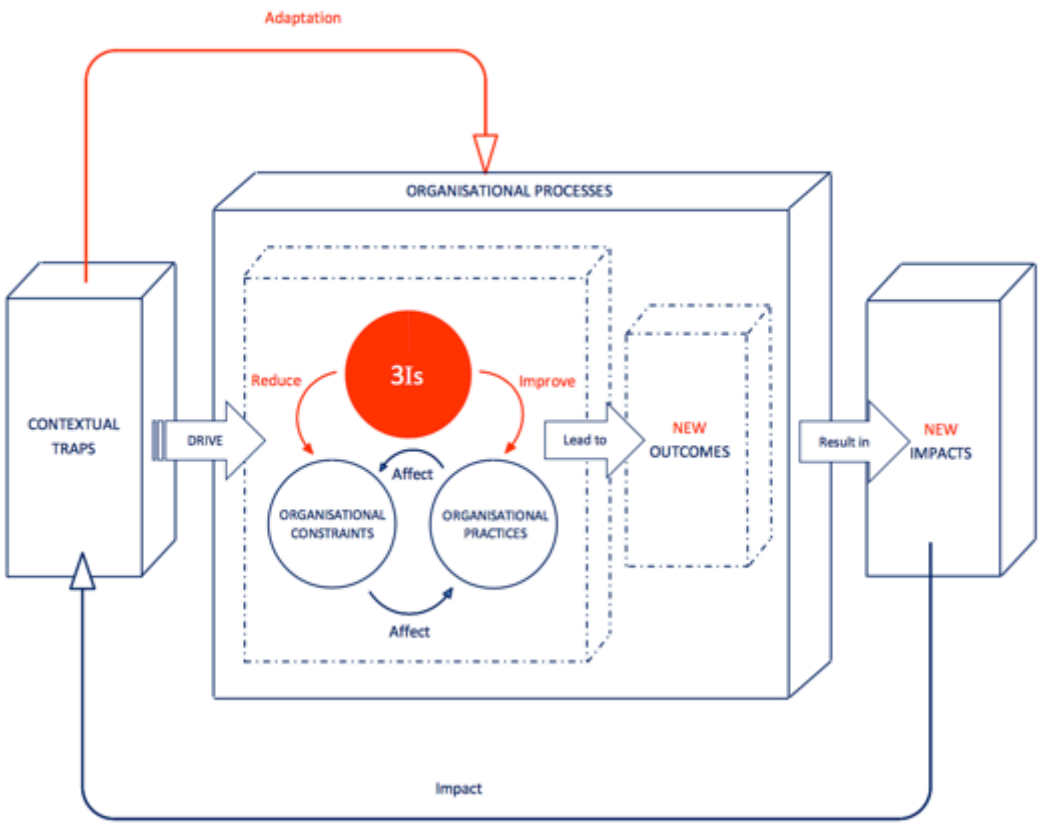
Further, the analysis suggests that NGOs may pull more support from the public and consideration from the public sector if they are pragmatic in their work. In this context, being pragmatic refers to the notion that NGO interventions have to be responsive to the needs of the public and based on actual situations. Participants in

this study indicated that doing the right thing, or working on the thing that has an influence on people's livelihood and society, means that NGOs are making the efforts to help respond to the needs of the general public. As such, working on preventing corruption and promoting good governance is the right thing to deal with and this makes NGO intervention more credible and gains more support from the public. The work of NGOs will be credible and gain public support even more when they involve relevant stakeholders into their projects, gather information and respond to their actual situations. At the same time, when the work of NGOs is based on the actual situations they may gain more cooperation from the state authority. By actual situations or factual events, participants in this study referred to information or events that have reliable sources, such as research reports and actual cases that happened, rather than by just being heard, or from their understanding and feelings.

6.2.5. Research Objective Five

A proposed framework (s): an integrative 3Is approach to corruption prevention is a response to this research objective. The development of the framework (s) also addresses Research Objective One, which identifies a shortage of theory development in existing corruption research literature. Since corruption research thus far has been underdeveloped and undertheorised, this substantive theoretical framework is perhaps a major departure in corruption research and expands the stock of theoretical knowledge to the literature. The framework is developed through a combination of the whole findings of this study. Again, the framework (Figure 70) is illustrated as follow.

Figure 70: Framework (s): An integrative 3Is approach to corruption prevention



6.2.6. Research Objective Six

Research Objective Six is concerned with directions for future actions and study. As such, it will be discussed separately in the next part, Part 6.3 below.

6.2.7. Response to Core Research Objective

The core research objective of this study is to explore how NGOs can become more effective in preventing public sector corruption in Cambodia. The results from Chapter Four showed that NGOs can become more effective in corruption prevention through three broad actions which were conceptualised into the 3Is approach, encompassing organisational reinforcement, work reinforcement and promoting institutional recognition and support. The 3Is is a roadmap to help guide policy-makers and practitioners in their effective decision making and actions. Moreover,

through the incorporation of the 3Is concept to develop a theoretical framework, an integrative 3Is approach to corruption prevention substantially contributes to a shortage of theory development in corruption research literature. The framework is a major departure responding to the lack of previous research into the role of NGOs in corruption prevention and may initiate a useful starting point for scholars interested in NGOs and corruption issues. More research to test this framework is essential for its refinement and validation, as well as expansion of its possible applicability in broader contexts.

6.3. Directions for Future Actions and Study

6.3.1. Directions for Actions

In light of these findings, six primary recommendations for further actions are suggested:

1. ***Working together to promote good governance/fight against corruption (Collaborative governance)***

   Grounded in the findings highlighted in Chapter Four, collaboration between NGOs and the government gains special consideration from participants in this study; however, it is at a low level. According to the participants, collaboration refers to the involvement of relevant stakeholders in any organisational activities or projects. Stakeholders can be the government, private sector, development partners, NGOs, media, and the general public. The most frequently seen collaborative actions are in the form of inviting relevant stakeholders to meetings, workshops, forums, seminars and conferences. The data reveal no significant collaborative approach undertaken. In actual practice, collaboration remains at the top layer of the collaboration concept. The data provide no account of intensive collaboration between relevant stakeholders working collectively and collaboratively on common social diseases, including corruption; for example, setting the problem and sitting around the table and working together to address the problem. Even at this level, however, the majority of participants in this study claimed that collaboration is essential. For instance, collaboration with the government would operationalise the interventions of NGOs and bring the two

sectors closer together with a greater understanding of each other. With other non-state actors, including the public, collaboration would make their voices more heavy and influential. According to the data, none of the NGOs who participated in this study gave any significant consideration to collaboration with the business sector. The data show a more sensible account of coalition and networking with the NGO sector.

Therefore, it is strongly suggested that NGOs have to cooperate with the public sector. They have to acknowledge the value of cooperation between the two sectors, state and non-state. This is not to say that there has been no cooperation between the two sectors. Nonetheless, cooperation thus far has been at the very basic level: mostly in the form of asking permission from the state authority to conduct any project activities or events, inviting government representatives to attend a meeting, a forum, a seminar or a radio talk show, and the like. There has been little evidence to show that the two sectors cooperate in a meaningful manner; for example, setting agendas, sitting and working to address basic social problems and evaluating progress together. Bearing this in mind, the NGO sector is part of the society and is working on issues that the government is doing, aiming at filling the gaps and improving performance. As such, seeking appropriate, possible measures to sit and negotiate and find solutions to the problems together may yield greater results than just pointing out the problems from outside. Accordingly, cooperation between NGOs and the government is, above all, necessary.

In addition, strengthening cooperation with the public sector is essential; at least it makes the operations of NGO activities workable. Without it, and lack of communication with state authorities, their projects may be in trouble. Recent experiences have shown that due to lack of cooperation and communication with the public sector, some NGOs remain inaccessible to the government sector and, at times, some of their projects become inapplicable. Criticising or attacking the government wrongdoings and misconducts from the outside hardly makes the interventions of NGOs effective or helps improve the situation; rather, it polarises them. Although the majority of participants in this study accept that cooperation with the government is a good strategy to improve their interventions and impacts, at the same time, they also recognise the difficulty they may face in doing so.

2. ***Being a role model for good governance***

In light of the findings discussed in Chapter Four, NGOs still have lots of internal problems which impact the effectiveness of their operations in working with, or influencing, the government. For example, the first major problem found in this study includes the involvement of NGOs in corrupt practices. As long as NGOs are involved in corrupt behaviours themselves, there is no way that they are able to push the public sector to be clean in its operations. The second main problem relates to the demand of NGOs to remain outside the framework of the state legal framework. NGOs merely want the government officials to be governed by the state law, but they want to keep themselves outside the legal framework. This position shows the problem within the NGO sector, which is that it is difficult for them to work effectively as they cannot act as a model to show the government that they are open, transparent and accountable in what they are doing. The third major problem is the practice of upwards accountability (to donors) rather than downwards accountability (to citizens, the beneficiaries). Such practice is influenced by both the inherent Cambodia hierarchical and paternalistic tradition where people in higher positions often make decisions on behalf of the lower, which encourages dependency as well as discouraging participation, and by the challenges imposed by donors which place much more emphasis on upwards accountability, rather than downwards accountability (Malena & Chhim, 2009).

Therefore, to be more effective in their operations, and to demand the government to be transparent and accountable, NGOs must themselves act as a role model for good governance. The following are just a few suggestions:

- First, NGOs have to make themselves clean by strengthening self-discipline by not becoming involved in any corrupt behaviour. They also have to be anti-corruption kick-starters, meaning that NGOs have to start by strengthening the organisational transparency and accountability system, and expand outside its sector.
- Second, they have to adhere to organisational set policies and rules, and have a sufficient legal system to govern its operations. If they don't, they are just like the public sector who adopts laws and regulations but lacks enforcement, or only enforces them selectively.

- Third, the analysis suggests that NGOs have to show the public that they are committed to take action against any kind of organisational misconduct. Anti-misconduct helps them to stay clean in their operations and, importantly, build their institutional reputation and public support. In this context, misconduct refers to either actions or decisions and omissions of either actions or decisions made by an NGO organisation, a group or an individual staff of NGOs that negatively impacts on the regular functioning and effectiveness of an NGO, and/or reputation of the NGO sector. Anti-misconduct refers to actions taken to put sanctions on all kind of organisational misconduct.
- Fourth, the data also suggest NGOs to incorporate an anti-corruption approach as part of their organisational projects. Indeed, this is not limited to NGOs that work on corruption or governance issues, it also applies to the NGO sector in general, regardless of whether they are humanitarian or development oriented NGOs, such as in education or health. They have to mainstream an anti-corruption mechanism into their projects. This is because, as mentioned above, one corrupt NGO defames the whole sector; as the old Khmer adage says 'a bucket of fish when one is spoil, the other is too'. Mainstreaming an anti-corruption mechanism into their projects may help reduce corrupt instances.

By improving their own internal governance practices and systems of transparency and downwards accountability, NGOs will become more effective in their interventions and gain more support from both the public and the government. It is also essential that NGOs have to publicly disclose organisational information, including programmes and budgets, with beneficiaries and others upon request. All of these demonstrate actual practices of good governance rather than mere rhetoric, just like the government usually practices.

3. *Proliferating local connections and engagement*

It is evident from the data that NGOs make local connections by serving, helping and, to a certain extent, working with the general public. This is a normal practice and essential; without support and involvement from the public the work of NGOs may be ineffective. NGOs make local connections through most of their

strategic actions; namely, civic empowerment, civic advocacy, and civic oversight. The most common approaches found in this study are public forums, training workshops, and popular campaigns etc. NGOs work with the public and help build their capacity and empower them to work with state authorities, and, at the same time, mobilise them to participate in and support their activities.

Within this context, making local connections is to be discussed more than just serving, helping or working with the public, as suggested by the findings of this study. It is to be expanded into active and meaningful involvement of the public, including CSOs, unions, associations, educational institutions and other interested agencies into the various programmes and project activities of NGOs. Global experiences have shown that achieving good governance requires not just efforts on the part of government, but active demand from citizens (Malena & Chhim, 2009). They also claim that citizens, including CSOs, have an essential role to play in helping the government to be effective and accountable. Government by and for the people is a democratic term that requires citizens play an active role, not only by voting for elected representatives, but also by communicating opinions, needs and concerns to public officials, providing feedback on policies and plans, monitoring and providing feedback on government actions, and holding government accountable. However, the roles of NGOs in improving democracy or good governance are limited since they are not built on the basis of grassroots participation, voluntary movements and social activism. For example, the public opinion poll found that less than 3% of citizens report belonging to a local NGO. This shows a significant lack of grassroots linkages (Malena & Chhim, 2009).

Although this research reveals that NGOs work with and serve the public, they lack meaningful and sustained connections with them. As noted above, NGOs make local connections through mobilising the public to participate in forums, training workshops, and campaigns etc.; however, the results show little sign of significant engagement of the public in organisational project activities through the project life cycle, such as planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating project outcomes or impacts. It is also observable that the connection between NGOs and the public appears to finish when the project is completed. Therefore, it is highly recommended that NGOs acknowledge the essential role of citizens to demand for transparent, responsive and accountable government by

fully engaging them in any project based on their priority needs and concerns. Additionally, follow-up activities should also be conducted to assess the impact of the project, and further actions are needed to ensure the sustainability of those outcomes and impacts.

This research also found that NGOs are dependent on financial support from foreign donors. NGOs in Cambodia are not interested in fundraising within the country, although local fundraising appears to be available. As was claimed by one participant in this study, his organisation was successful in local fundraising to support its project activities. Foreign sources of funds may not secure the sustainability of NGO projects because funders may withdraw or limit their support. As such, local fundraising is important since it not only ensures internal sources of funds but also to have strong connections with the public inside the country, which may ensure their strength and sustainability. Raising funds from inside the country may motivate them to feel that they are part of the solution to the problem. Indeed, there are many private organisations which may become sources of funds that NGOs could turn to if they are able to demonstrate that they are for the good cause of the nation and free from corruption.

4. More Coordination among NGOs

The data reveal that there are separations within the NGO sector. For example, there are differences among coalitions that have been established, and some groups support, while others are against, the government sector. The data also find that NGOs compete with each other for the sources of funds. The differences among NGOs only make their common voices split and, thus, the force of advocacy is less effective and influential. Therefore, they have to coordinate more and work with one voice. No matter whether an organisation is big or small, they have to help and support each other. Working together as a network and treating each other well not only contributes to making the voices of NGOs stronger, and their operations more effective, but also serves as a channel, allowing NGOs that are inaccessible to the government to become accessible. It may also help promote the effective system of information sharing among them at all levels. On the contrary, if they compete with each other, they reduce the power of their voices in relation to advocacy. As such, their voices will be less persuasive, or unheard, and the push for change will never be influential.

5. *Political Neutrality*

The results from Chapter Four reveal that political tendencies and the business-liked nature of NGOs make the reputation and operations of NGOs problematic and ineffective. The results reveal that some NGOs play their roles beyond the frontier of civic organisation to serve the interests of the general public by participating in political life, attacking one party and mobilising the public to support another political party, as claimed by some participants in this study. Such a position shows the partiality of NGOs in their intervention. Political neutrality is vital in terms of maintaining the reputation of an NGO. NGOs are able to keep themselves neutral by being impartial in their work and by working with parties from all political tendencies, regardless of whether they are from the ruling party or the opposition party. Supporting one political party and opposing against another party only make them lose credibility and trust from both the public and government. Therefore, NGOs have to stay between the state and the private by working independently and neutrally.

6. *Being Professional and Pragmatic*

The results from Chapter Four further highlight that NGOs lack knowledge and experience in the area they are working. Indeed, governance and advocacy capacity remain a big challenge for them. As highlighted by some participants, NGOs work on governance issues but they lack the knowledge and experience about governance. Without a doubt, limited governance capacity and advocacy skills negatively impact on their performance. Moreover, limited capacity and unprofessional work make the work of NGOs lose credit, trust and support from both the public and the government side, and, even worse, when the work of NGOs is not based on evidence, and based on assumption and emotion. On the contrary, when NGOs work professionally they are able to mobilise more public support and credibility; and thus their voices are more influential. Therefore, NGOs have to strengthen their governance and advocacy capacity and work professionally. Without concrete evidence and facts, the interventions of NGOs could lack public trust and also may end up in conflict with government. It is highly recommended that NGOs be pragmatic, objective and never advocate based on feelings. All activities, such as advocacy, public announcements, face to

face dialogues, and public forums, have to be based on reliable evidence, such as research and surveys.

6.3.2. Directions for Future Study

In light of this research, I suggest six recommendations which are worth consideration for future study:

1. ***Conducting more empirical research into the roles of NGOs in corruption prevention***

   The results from Chapter Four generate some interesting questions which are worth looking into in future research with regards to the three broad concepts of the roles of NGOs, including civic empowerment, civic advocacy and civic oversight. More research into these roles would provide in-depth insights into their effectiveness, as well as intensify and validate their essence, especially looking into how these roles help stimulate public participation and political will amongst government elites in combating corruption.

2. ***Paying attention to the development of corruption prevention theory in its own field***

   As discussed in Chapter Two, corruption research in contemporary literature has been in the form of testing theory borrowed from other disciplines, such as economic theory and sociological-based theories. For example, the use of game theory to examine the relationship between natural resources, democracy and corruption (Bhattacharyya & Hodler, 2010), and the use of contingency theory to test the effects of human development and national culture on corruption (Sims et al., 2012). As such, there is a need to develop corruption prevention theory within the field of corruption, as an alternative to borrowing from other disciplines. Since corruption attacks most societal contexts including political, legal, economic, managerial and administrative, at a minimum level, future study should pay considerable attention to building theories around these contextual themes. For example, it is essential to develop a theory for political corruption prevention, and a theory for legal corruption prevention, or something similar. At a higher level, corruption prevention should have its own principal theory. Any attempt to

develop a theory of corruption prevention would be of great help in corruption study and the crusade against corruption.

3. ***Undertaking multidisciplinary research to corruption prevention***

A review of contemporary corruption literature highlights the fragmentation in corruption research. Previous corruption research is confined to the silos of a particular disciplinary perspective. For example, economists work on economic causes, effects and solutions; law academics focus on legal antecedents and legal solution; ethicists research moral behaviors and solutions, and so on. As a result, research tends not be truly cumulative, leading to a lack of the development of a coherent body of models and theories that explain corruption and ways to prevent it occurring (Judge et al., 2011). As such, future researchers should consider looking beyond their own disciplines and establish a multi-sectoral approach to combat corruption, which would provide more coherent perspectives to inform useful insight into practices.

4. ***Exploring the inclusion of NGOs in corruption research***

The review of the contemporary literature in Chapter Two and the findings from Chapter Four showed that corruption research to date focuses on solutions from within the government sector, meaning that seeking the corrupt administration to address corrupt problems within its administration. It was found that such an approach fails to make improvements in the fight against corruption; corruption continues to grow. Perhaps one of the major reasons for the failures of such an approach is that corrupt elites within the government functionaries lack political commitment to make changes to the circumstances in which they enjoy both financial and political (power) benefits, unless there is pressure from non-state actors. To this end, future studies need to consider the inclusion of NGOs as an integral part of the process of the corruption prevention endeavour, and this would be an effective alternative approach to the corruption crusade. It is a way of working together to promote good governance and fight against corruption.

5. ***Testing and validating the theoretical framework developed from this study***

As discussed in Chapters Four and Five, the frameworks (s): an integrative 3Is approach to corruption prevention is a contribution and a major departure of research into the roles of NGOs in corruption prevention. Although the proposed framework, composing of dimensions, components and their embedded elements, which emerged from the data, represents potential strength, a single study could not completely cover the breadth of issues within the phenomenon being investigated, and there are potential limitations inherent in its confinement to the Cambodian context, its confinement to governance-oriented NGOs, and its confinement to qualitative research paradigm. Accordingly, more studies should be conducted in other national contexts to test the validity and refine the proposed framework as a whole, or to focus on any specific component and/or element of the framework. As the findings of this study indicate, political context is the first and foremost driver contributing to the prevalence of corruption since it impacts on other variables (i.e., legal and social) and limits the operational environments for CSOs, media and the general public to participate in social issues. Therefore, more empirical research into its conditions would help validate the framework even more.

6. ***Redirecting appropriate research methodology to corruption research***

Redirecting the methodological approach to corruption studies by conducting more qualitative empirical research is worth consideration. This does not mean that quantitative approaches should be ignored; instead, the selection of methodological approach should be based on the nature, the complexity and sensitivity of the subject of research. In this case, corruption is a complex and sensitive issue where a quantitative paradigm shows little room of fitness. The application of qualitative inquiry into corruption research may mean that the researcher has paid special attention to (1) utilise qualitative inquiry for topics that may not be easy quantifiable like corruption, and (2) to not choose other methods of inquiry because the topics of research (i.e., corruption) are difficult to access through a qualitative paradigm. It should be noted that some phenomenon or social reality, such as a behavioural phenomenon, is not easy to measure quantitatively (Grix, 2010) and is unable to be measured statistically (Silverman, 2000). According to L. Richards and Morse (2007), topics that suit a qualitative

approach have often been ignored in the literature because they are inaccessible to researchers. As such, selecting a method of inquiry based on such a position seems inappropriate.

6.4. Concluding Remarks

While much research investigates solutions to the corruption problem by looking into the roles of the corrupt administration to addressing corruption in its machineries, my research is different from those in that it looks into the roles of NGOs, an independent institution to corruption prevention. This arose from the observation that the government on its own fails to solve the problem. Corrupt government elites hardly change the corrupt situations from which they gain benefits, unless there is involvement from non-state actors to help, or put pressure on them. As the findings of this study indicate, this research results in the development of a substantive theoretical framework that was conceptualised grounded in the knowledge and experiences of participants working in governance-related issues and corruption. The framework contributes to the expanding stock of theoretical knowledge of existing corruption literature, and also informs practitioners and policy-makers to guide their practices.

However, a single study could not cover the breadth of the phenomenon under investigation. There are some potential limitations as were highlighted earlier. This means the findings found from this study do not represent a final result; the results may be applicable within the setting subject to the research and settings with similar situation to Cambodia, however there is more work to be done to extend the results of this study beyond the setting of the research. This qualitative study has generated questions for future research beyond the scope of this study as discussed above.

Also, and importantly, the expansion of research into the roles of NGOs in corruption prevention not only yields benefits from the contributions it makes to theory and practice, but it also contributes to the development of a vibrant civil society, which is fundamental to democracy and human rights. Participation of NGOs in social issues may be an effective way to promote democracy. Democratic participation is essential to promote good governance as well as to prevent corruption; indeed, denying participation of NGOs in the corruption prevention

endeavour shows a lack of commitment by the government in the corruption crusade. As such, more research into the roles of NGOs helps promote democracy and a vibrant civil society. There is no reason that one should deny the concept of working together for the common goal of achieving a clean society, since everyone is affected by corruption.

Reflecting on the findings of this study, I would like to include my personal thoughts for your consideration as follows:

> The enemy of development, good governance, human rights and democracy is corruption, so if one has not helped enhance them, do not ruin them. A Khmer proverb refers to this as: 'if you have not helped row, do not slow the boat'. A poor beggar can be better than corrupt government elites because s/he has not done anything to affect on the nation or anyone, but corrupt government elites have.
>
> As the findings of this study indicate, the wound of corruption is massive since it greatly impacts on the political, legal, social, cultural and economic contexts. This means that the wound of corruption needs to be healed before it is too ingrained. A true and committed fight against corruption can be today's pain but it can be tomorrow's tremendous gain.
>
> As long as political elites keep destroying each other for individual and party power and wealth, Cambodia will never prosper. A culture of 'pitching the sprout' must be totally stopped and, in turn, support those who are championed and standing out. The right, and possibly the only way, for Cambodia to move forward is that it has to be united, and put national interests ahead of other interests. The pride of the nation will exist when Khmer loves Khmer.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Consent Form

Curtin University

Curtin School of Business
GPO Box U1987, Perth, WA 6845
Kent Street
Bentley WA 6102
+61 8 9266 9266

Consent Form

Project Title: Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Corruption Prevention in the Cambodian Public Sector

This Consent Form is to be collected and maintained by the researcher in secured location. It will be destroyed at the completion of the project.

- I, the undersigned, voluntarily agree to take part in the study specified above.
- I have read and understood the Information Sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation by the researcher of the purpose and likely duration of the study, and of what I will be expected to do.
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of the study.
- I understand that all personal information relating to research participants is held and processed in the strictest confidentiality and that any information that might potentially identify me will not be used in any published material.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without prejudice.
- I confirm that I have been informed of and understand the purpose of the project and freely consent to participating in this study.

Name of participant (BLOCK CAPITALS): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name of researcher (BLOCK CAPITALS) _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix 2: Information Sheet

Curtin School of Business
GPO Box U1987, Perth, WA 6845
Kent Street
Bentley WA 6102
+61 8 9266 9266

Information Sheet

Introduction
We are conducting research on "Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Corruption Prevention in the Cambodian Public Sector" and invite you to be part of this research project. This sheet describes the main ideas of the project in plain language, so please read it for better understanding before making decision to participate.

Purpose of the Study
Corruption hinders economic growth, undermines the promotion of good governance and delays the effort of poverty reduction. Corruption affects everyone, and obviously a government on its own cannot solve the problem then collective responsibilities and actions must be reinforced in its fight. As such the aim of this research is to explore how NGOs, as an agent for change, can become more effective in preventing public sector corruption/promoting good governance in Cambodia.

Type of Research Intervention
This research will involve your participation in an individual face-to-face interview of approximately 60 minutes. The interview consists of open-ended questions about your experiences regarding corruption/governance issues in the Cambodian public sector which is part of the focus areas of your organisation.

Selection of Participants
You are being invited to take part in this research because we believe that your experience as executive director or project manager can contribute to our understanding and knowledge of corruption/governance issues on the ground. This study explores the perceptions and life experiences of NGO leaders at various levels; if you lead a team at any level, we are also interested in your responses.

Right of Participants
Participation is totally voluntary and you may withdraw your consent at any time. There will be no consequence for refusing or withdrawing from participation. You also have the right to choose not to answer any of the interview questions.

Procedure
We are asking you to help us learn more regarding corruption/governance issues in Cambodian context and inviting you to take part in this research project. If you accept, you will be asked to participate in an interview with Mr **Borann Som,** a PhD research student at Curtin University. During the interview, **Borann** will sit down with you in a comfortable place of your choosing. If you do not wish to answer any of the questions during the interview, you may say so and the interviewer will move on to the next question. No one else but the interviewer will be present unless you would like someone else to be there. The interview will be recorded by a digital audio recorder. The information recorded is confidential and will be stored in secured locker provided by the University. Electronic data files including transcripts will be stored on a password-protected computer.

Borann will transcribe the audio recording. No one except the interviewer and supervisor will have access to the audio recording. The transcribed interview is confidential and anonymised. No one other than the researcher and supervisor will have access to the written transcript.

Risks
The data collected from this research will be stored electronically and in hard copy by the researcher and supervisor, Associate Professor David Pick. All information will be anonymised and stored on a password-protected computer and we never report our results in ways that could potentially identify a participant.

Benefits
You will be able to add your voice anonymously to the research study which will be reported publicly. Importantly, the reward is your contribution to building knowledge concerning corruption prevention/promoting good governance in Cambodian public sector as well as to improving the roles of NGOs working in this area.

Confidentiality
The information that we collect from this research project will be kept private. Only the interviewer will know the correlation to your name and your anonymised number, and this information will be secured under a password-protected computer. It will not be shared with or given to anyone. You will not be identified in any of the reporting of the data. The information you provide will be kept in a secure environment for at least seven years.

Sharing the Results
Nothing that you tell us during the research will be shared with anybody outside the research team. However, the results of the research will be collated and analysed in the thesis, journal articles and conference presentations.

Who to Contact
This study has been authorised by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval number: HR 80/2014) which means that all project information must be kept confidential in accordance with the University policy.

If you have any queries or concerns about any part of the research study, please do not hesitate to contact Mr Borann, his supervisor, Associate Professor David Pick or the Secretary of Human Research Ethics Committee (details below).

Thank you for your participation and interest in this study.

Borann Som Curtin Business School/School of Management Mobile: +61 4 7058 4581 Email: borann.som@postgrad.curtin.edu.au	A. Professor David Pick Curtin Business School GPO Box U1987, Perth Western Australia 6845 Tel: +61 8 9266 2705 Email: David.Pick@cbs.curtin.edu.au
Secretary of Human Research Ethics Committee Curtin University GPO Box U1987, Perth Western Australia 6845 Tel: +61 8 9266 2784 Email: hrec@curtin.edu.au	

Appendix 3: Letter of Introduction

Curtin University

Dr David Pick
Associate Professor
School of Management
Mobile: +61 8 9266 2705
Facimile: +61 8 9266 7897
Email: David.Pick@cbs.curtin.edu.au

Curtin School of Business
GPO Box U1987, Perth, WA 6845
Kent Street
Bentley WA 6102
+61 8 9266 9266

29 May 2014

Letter of Introduction

Dear Sir/Madam,

This letter is to introduce Mr Borann Som who is a PhD research student at Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia.

Borann is conducting research leading to the production of a thesis or other publications on the subject of "Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Corruption Prevention in the Cambodian Public Sector". As the title suggests, the focus of this research is on the work of NGOs, specifically of how NGOs can become more effective in preventing public sector corruption and promoting governance in Cambodia. It will not be concerned with researching corruption itself, or any particular acts or omissions which might be considered to constitute corruption.

Borann would be most grateful if you would volunteer to spare the time to assist in this project by granting an interview which touch upon certain aspects of this topic, including roles/activities, perceptions, contributions and further actions of NGOs. Your participation will be of great potential in building new knowledge and exploring appropriate approaches not only to resisting corruption and promoting governance in Cambodia but also applying to other national contexts. Around one hour on one occasion would be required.

Be assured that any information provided will be treated in the strictest confidentiality. None of the participants will be individually identifiable in the resulting thesis, report or other publications. You are, of course, entirely free to discontinue your participation at any time or to decline to answer a particular question without any consequence.

You will be given a chance to review the interview transcript and the draft report in order to make clarification and suggest amendment to a particular part dealing with the information you have provided. You are also able to add something you think you miss during the interview.

Any enquiry you may have concerning this project should be directed to me by email or telephone, the details of which are given above.

This research project has been approved by the Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee (Approval number: HR80/2014). If needed, verification of approval can be obtained either by writing to Curtin University Human Research Ethics Committee, Office of

Research and Development, Curtin University of Technology, GPO Box U1987, Perth WA 6845 Australia or by telephoning +61 8 9266 4301 or by emailing hrec@curtin.edu.au.

Should you agree to participate, please print your name, sign and date at the allocated space under 'Name of participant' at the bottom of the Consent Form provided.

Thank you for your attention and support.

Yours sincerely,

D. Pick.

A. Professor David Pick

Appendix 4: Letter of Invitation

Curtin University

Borann Som
PhD Research Student
Mobile: +61 4 7058 4581
Email: borann.som@postgrad.curtin.edu.au
borannsom@ymail.com

Curtin School of Business
GPO Box U1987, Perth, WA 6845
Kent Street
Bentley WA 6102
+61 8 9266 9266

29 May 2014

Letter of Invitation

Dear Sir/Madam,

First, allow me to introduce myself. My name is Borann Som, a PhD research student at Curtin University of Technology, Perth Western Australia. I am currently conducting research on a project titled: "Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Corruption Prevention in the Cambodian Public Sector". The purpose of this research is to explore how NGOs can become more effective in preventing public sector corruption/promoting good governance in Cambodia.

I invite you to be part of this research project. I would be most grateful if you could participate by providing information regarding this topic which focuses on roles/activities, perceptions, contributions and further actions of NGOs. Your contribution is essential to building knowledge concerning corruption prevention/good governance promotion and generating appropriate approaches and recommendations to improve the work of NGOs on this area.

Your information will be kept private and under a secured protected computer password. You will be fully anonymous. Your participation is voluntary and you are at liberty to withdraw from the participation at any time without any consequence. You will be given opportunity to overview the interview transcript and the draft report to make clarifications and suggest changes to ensure that all information will not have effects on you.

I am conducting the research under the supervision of Associate Professor Dr David Pick. Dr Pick can be contacted at: David.Pick@cbs.curtin.edu.au or call +61 8 9266 2705. For more details of the project please refer to the Information Sheet provided.

Should you agree to participate, please print your name, sign and date at the allocated space under 'Name of participant' at the bottom of the Consent Form and then we can set date and time for the interview.

I look forward to have your consent confirmed and thank you for your attention and support.

Yours sincerely,

Borann Som

Appendix 5: HREC Memorandum

Curtin University

Memorandum

To	Associate Professor David Pick, Management
From	Professor Peter O'Leary, Chair, Human Research Ethics Committee
Subject	Protocol Approval **HR 80/2014**
Date	12 May 2014
Copy	Borann Som, Management

Office of Research and Development
Human Research Ethics Committee

TELEPHONE 9266 2784
FACSIMILE 9266 3793
EMAIL hrec@curtin.edu.au

Thank you for your application (4687) submitted to the Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC) for the project titled "*Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and corruption prevention in the Cambodian public sector*". Your application has been reviewed by the HREC and is **approved**.

- You have ethics clearance to undertake the research as stated in your proposal.
- The approval number for your project is **HR 80/2014.** *Please quote this number in any future correspondence.*
- Approval of this project is for a period of 4 years **13-05-2014** to **13-05-2018**.
- Your approval has the following conditions:
  - (i) Annual progress reports on the project must be submitted to the Ethics Office.
  - (ii) Please address section 4.8.18 of the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research, the HREC recommends daily email check-in's with the research supervisor. .
  - (iii) Please advise how will data be secured overseas? (Is there an encryption process?)
  - (iv) Data must be stored securely on Curtin IT servers.
- **It is your responsibility, as the researcher, to meet the conditions outlined above and to retain the necessary records demonstrating that these have been completed.**

Applicants should note the following:

It is the policy of the HREC to conduct random audits on a percentage of approved projects. These audits may be conducted at any time after the project starts. In cases where the HREC considers that there may be a risk of adverse events, or where participants may be especially vulnerable, the HREC may request the chief investigator to provide an outcomes report, including information on follow-up of participants.

The attached **Progress Report** should be completed and returned to the Secretary, HREC, C/- Office of Research & Development annually.

Our website https://research.curtin.edu.au/guides/ethics/non_low_risk_hrec_forms.cfm contains all other relevant forms including:

- Completion Report (to be completed when a project has ceased)
- Amendment Request (to be completed at any time changes/amendments occur)
- Adverse Event Notification Form (If a serious or unexpected adverse event occurs)

Yours sincerely

Professor Peter O'Leary
Chair Human Research Ethics Committee

Appendix 6: Interview Questions

Interview Questions

General Question

1. Tell me the background of your organisation's involvement in governance/ corruption issue?
   -

NGO Roles/Activities

2. What roles (right, responsibility, activity) can NGOs play in promotion of good governance/corruption prevention?
   -
3. What governance/corruption projects has your organization worked on in recent year? Give me an example?
   -

NGO Perceptions

4. What are the factors that support your organization's work (governance/corruption)? Internal and external?
   -
5. What are the factors that hinder your organization's work (governance/corruption)? Internal and external?
   -
6. What do you think about the strategies taken by the government to address corrupt issue?
   -
7. What do you think are the determining factors behind the success or failures of the government strategies?
   -
8. What do you think about the attitude of government toward your organisational project on governance/corruption issue? Supplement or Obstruct?
   -
9. What measures would you take to overcome challenges to your operations and collaboration with government?
   -
10. How can NGOs become more effective in preventing corruption and holding the government responsible for its actions?
    -

NGO Credibility and Achievements

11. What do you think are factors which make your organization credible and gain public support?
    -
12. What are the contributions/achievements your organisation has made to good governance?
    -

NGO Ways Forward

13. Tell me about your organisation's next step? What other activities would you expect to expand on in the future?
    -

Approximate Time: 60 minutes