



universität
wien

MASTERARBEIT / MASTER'S THESIS

Titel der Masterarbeit / Title of the Master's Thesis

Community-based monitoring as a citizen-driven
participatory instrument.

A case study of anti-corruption grassroots efforts in Italy

verfasst von / submitted by

Dott.ssa Elisa Orlando

angestrebter akademischer Grad / in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts (MA)

Wien, 2019 / Vienna 2019

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme code as it appears on
the student record sheet:

A 066 824

Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt /
degree programme as it appears on
the student record sheet:

Masterstudium Politikwissenschaft

Betreut von / Supervisor:

Univ.-Prof. Dr. Sieglinde Rosenberger

Acknowledgements / Ringraziamenti

I would first like to thank my thesis supervisor Univ.-Prof. Dr. Sieglinde Rosenberger for her assistance with the idea definition, and for her comments and feedbacks that improved the thesis.

I would also like to thank my family, my friends and my colleagues, who supported me during my studies and during the time I have been writing this thesis. A special thanks to my dearly beloved Silvester, for his love and his continuous support. The time he dedicated to read and discuss the text with me has greatly contributed to this script.

Infine, un grazie speciale a Leonardo, per il tempo trascorso a lavorare insieme a Torino, a cui devo l'ispirazione e la realizzazione di questa tesi. Senza il suo accorato e irriducibile impegno e la capacità di trasmetterlo, questa tesi non sarebbe stata possibile. A lui e all'intero progetto di Com.mon auguro il miglior successo in tutto quello che è ancora da intraprendere.

Contents

1. Introduction	4
2. Theoretical background	7
2.1 Participation & democratic studies	7
2.1.1 Understanding political participation	8
2.1.1.1 Conceptualisation and terminology	8
2.1.1.2 Empirical participation research	13
2.1.2 Innovating participation: the mainstream participatory framework of Open Government (OG)	17
2.1.3 “Democracy in our times”	24
2.1.3.1 The concepts of <i>monitory democracy</i> and <i>monitorial citizen</i>	24
2.1.3.2 Monitory forms of civic action	31
2.1.4 A particular case: Community-based monitoring	33
2.2 Anti-corruption research	38
2.2.1 The concept of corruption (public corruption)	38
2.2.2 “Public corruption” as a social practice	40
2.2.3 How to tackle corruption: different approaches of anti-corruption	43
2.2.3.1 State and governmental instruments	46
2.2.3.2 Civic instruments	50
2.3 Research hypotheses: investigating participatory processes of anti-corruption community-based monitoring	57
3. Research design	58
3.1 Case study “Com.mon” (Italy)	58
3.2 Methods	59
3.2.1 Fieldwork and observation	59
3.2.2 Document review	60
4. Analysis of the empirical data	62
4.1 Anti-corruption community-based monitoring: Com.mon	62
4.1.1 Background history and context	63
4.1.2 Genesis, organisation and objectives	66

4.1.3	Organising, supporting, and funding entities	69
4.1.4	Process description: participants, methods and tools used	73
4.1.5	Public interaction	82
4.2	Data analysis	84
4.3	Discussion of the results	88
5.	Conclusion	90
	References	92
	Appendix I	97
	Appendix II	98
	Appendix III	101
	Abstract / Zusammenfassung	102

1. Introduction

Political participation is a concept whose understanding has enormously evolved over the last century, along meaningful societal and technological transformations. Some notions central for understanding participation, such as “citizenship” or “democracy”, have varied in their connotation as well, dependent on space and time. In particular, in the last decades we could observe the expansion of both the *domain* and *repertoires* of political participation actions, that is the development of new areas of socio-political interest (e.g. local urban planning, environmental protection, etc.) and new instruments made available to those willing to participate (e.g. Information and Communications Technologies, new legal instruments such as FOIAs, etc.) (see for instance: Schudson 1998; Keane 2009a; van Deth 2001, 2014). Among the models that have been adopted to innovate citizen’s participation to democratic life during the last decade, the conceptual and operational framework of the Open Government (OG; Lathrop & Ruma 2010) seems to have gained particular relevance. There is not yet a single accepted definition of Open Government, but it is possible to identify three recurrent elements in its rhetoric: transparency, participation and collaboration (Administration of B. H. Obama 2009; Heller 2012). However, this framework has faced many criticisms with regards to citizen participation (see: Yu & Robinson 2012; Janssen et al. 2012; Meijer et al. 2012), since in practice the focus is predominantly on transparency and information exchange (i.e. Open Data and digitisation), and there is a distinct surplus on the institutional side, that is all initiatives adopt a clear top-down approach. In addition to it, this participatory model can result in being ineffective at all if a lack of institutional trust is registered from the public side, or if the institutions themselves prove not to be “exemplary” (lack of political will, misconduct, etc.). In the context of this thesis, I assume that this is the very case of situations of widely spread public corruption, where civic society initiatives need to take place outside formal spaces and consider the possibility of conflict with the institutional actors.

In the light of this problematisation and according to the concept of “monitory democracy” (Keane 2009a), I will investigate the participatory instrument of community-based monitoring (CBM) as monitory form of civic action. Specific objects of monitoring actions are commonly topics of public interest, and (material or immaterial) resources which are “highly valued” by the communities (Constantino et al. 2012). This is the case, for instance, of environmental protection, biodiversity, urban

planning, public service delivery, public expenditure and allocation of public funds, political and administrative decision-making, electoral promises, etc.

In particular, this master thesis aims to analyse participatory processes of community-based monitoring and to locate them in the concrete case of anti-corruption civic action. According to the 2011 “World Speaks” surveys¹, conducted by GlobeScan for the BBC World service, corruption ranks first among the most talked-about and most serious global problems, i.e. corruption is perceived as higher on the list of global issues than extreme poverty, unemployment, the cost of living and crime, violence and security. According to Warren (2015: 42), when democracies go bad, for instance, citizens are likely to place corruption on the top of the list of problems and among their reasons for disaffection. Corruption has, indeed, been recognised as one of the most pressing contemporary issues, as it is expected to have enormous costs for all societies. There are some controversies about the capacity to estimate the costs of corruption, in monetary values. Those who have been trying to calculate it on a global or national scale have ended up with huge, multi-zero numbers. For instance, in 2004, the World Bank estimated the costs of corruption worldwide as \$1 trillion dollars, i.e. about 3% of the global GDP². We should consider this (and similar) numbers rather as “educational numbers” than accurate estimates: in fact, it is almost impossible to count all the actual costs of the damage caused by single-case or systematic patterns of corruption, but also the costs of lost opportunities (i.e.: what would have been otherwise the benefit created in absence of corruption?) and “intangible” losses such as the erosion of public trust. In any case, the growing global interest in the topic reflects its undeniable relevance for all societies for the enhancement of democracy, rule of law, social justice and a prosperous economy. Accordingly, anti-corruption has come to be a prominent issue on the civic and institutional agenda worldwide. This is reflected, for instance, in the UN Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, which have been unanimously adopted by the international community to address the main challenges faced by the humanity as a whole. Among the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals, Goal 16³ focusses explicitly on reducing level of corruption worldwide.

¹ See the press release here: <https://globescan.com/unemployment-rises-as-qmost-talked-aboutq-problem-global-poll/>

² See:

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/NEWS/0,,contentMDK:20190187~menuPK:34457~pagePK:34370~piPK:34424~theSitePK:4607,00.html>

³ See: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/peace-justice/>

Even though a vital role has been yet largely recognised to the civil society in the enhancement of the democratic process and in preventing and fighting corruption, this study of the participatory instrument of community-based monitoring, as applied to anti-corruption, is attempting to contribute to the State of the Art in this rather unexplored research field. Accordingly, the central aim of this study will be to answer the following research questions:

Do community-based monitoring initiatives qualify as a citizen-driven participatory instrument?

What is the added-value of this approach in the prevention of and fight against corruption?

In order to do so, this study will employ a case study approach, based on the analysis of the project “Com.mon”, an initiative of anti-corruption community-based monitoring in Italy. Within the European scenario, this case study appears to be particularly explicative of the application of the community-based monitoring approach for anti-corruption grassroots participation. That is, after conducting background research on the topic, the following hypotheses will be empirically investigated and discussed:

H1: Community-based monitoring initiatives represent a citizen-driven participatory instrument by functioning as monitory form of civic action.

H2: In cases of public corruption, community-based monitoring represents a necessary approach for political participation.

H3: Community-based monitoring initiatives have the potential to make anti-corruption efforts participatory and citizen-driven.

The thesis is thus structured as follows. The second chapter introduces the theoretical framework of this thesis, with respect to political participation and anti-corruption. In the third chapter, the research design and methods are described. In the fourth chapter of the thesis, the empirical analysis and preliminary findings about the case study “Com.mon” are presented in order to draw conclusions about the validity of the research hypotheses and answer the research questions. Finally, limitations of this study and outlooks for future research are presented in the conclusion.

2. Theoretical background

This study is concerned with two theoretical strands: political participation, on one side, and anti-corruption, on the other. Accordingly, in the first part of this section I review existing literature on participation, exploring both conceptualisation and state of affairs of citizen participation to democratic life. In doing so, particular attention is given to the participatory framework of the Open Government, due to its apparently dominating role in the last decade in shaping the efforts of many governments around the world to innovate citizens' participation. This trend influences not only the institutional actions, but it determines also – in a parallel manner – the formal spaces of action that the civic society detains, in quality of citizens, communities or civic society organisations. As it will become clearer during this theoretical review, all the attempts to assess the latest evolution and state of political participation are inevitably ending up in assessing the state of our democracy. According to the concept of “monitory democracy” as “democracy in our times” (Keane 2009a), I finally investigate the participatory instrument of community-based monitoring as monitory form of civic action.

The second part of this section explores literature on anti-corruption. After a brief overview of the phenomenon “public corruption”, I will distinguish between state and civic instruments to tackle it.

In the third part of this section I formulate my research hypotheses based on the theoretical findings. The research hypotheses will be empirically tested later on in this study, based on the aforementioned case-study.

2.1 Participation & democratic studies

For the purpose of this thesis we will first consider the attempts by scholars to grab the phenomenon and its classification, in order to derive a working definition suitable to this study. Then, we will turn to consider the empirical evidence provided by the already existing literature, both about political participation in its traditional realization and evolution in new forms.

2.1.1 Understanding political participation

2.1.1.1 Conceptualisation and terminology

The field of research concerned with political participation is impressive in its scope. At least for the past seventy years, many scholars have committed to investigate participation from the most disparate points of view: normative, analytical, empirical and methodological glances aimed at better understanding this phenomenon. *Do we need participation and why? Which participation do we aspire to have, and which participation do we observe in the real world? Who is participating, how and why? How is it possible to build participatory processes in a successful way?* And that way, we could keep asking questions about the issue for a while.

For overviews of the literature dealing with participation I make reference to van Deth (2001) and Fox (2013). As the authors mention, political science research on citizens' engagement in politics has been traditionally focused on *electoral* participation. Starting with the seminal studies of the 1940s and 1950s, by the early 1960s political participation was broadly understood as casting a vote or taking part in campaigning activities. It is by the late 1960s and early 1970s that we can recognise a remarkable extension of the concept: what had been defined as "conventional modes" of political participation until then, has been expanded by additional activities, such as fundraising, group activities, writing letters to officials, etc.; moreover, "unconventional modes" of participation started to be taken into consideration, that is modes of participation which were not in line with societal norms of the time. These included for instance (violent or non-violent) protests by the "new social movements", such as feminist, pacifist or anti-segregation movements. The most recent expansion of the concept in the academic literature took place in the 1990s, when the arguments were presented that many forms of social and civic engagement and membership in a number of organisations (including e.g. sport, cultural and charity associations) should be considered as political participation as well. Of relevance was for instance Putnam's study of associationism in Italy (1993) and its subsequent works focusing on the notion of "social capital".

More recently, there has been a renewed effort among scholars to conceptualise political participation, in the light of the latest societal and technological innovations. Looking at the newer channels of engagement which are coming to supplement traditional modes, Norris argues that "political participation is evolving and diversifying

in terms of *who* (the *agencies* or collective organizations), *what* (the *repertoires* of actions commonly used for political expression), and *where* (the *targets* that participants seek to influence)" (Norris 2002: 4; emphasis in original). In particular, Fox (2013: 500-502) recognises two elements of this change which have significant consequences for political participation: the growth and advancement of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs, in particular the Internet), with impact on the way people interact with each other, and the way they gather, create and share information; and globalisation, which has determined shift of power to inter- and supranational bodies, to regional and local authorities, to private corporations and not-for-profit organisations.

Van Deth and other authors pose their attention also on the expansion in the political *domain*, that is what is considered to be politics, or matter of public interest. Two trends have to be observed in this regard: on one side, government activities, spending and responsibilities have grown considerably because of the expansion of the welfare state or, more generally, because of the interdependence of societal, political and economic dimensions (van Deth 2001). For instance, the state is now considered responsible for public health and environment protection, acting through an enlarging number of public agencies and governmental laws. On the other side, for many people the distinction between public and private (or political and non-political) actions or areas has slowly disappeared, especially in European societies (Schudson 1998; van Deth 2001, 2014). For example, actions of responsible tourism or consumerism have gained political significance for the people practicing them. As a consequence of the combined increase in both the repertoire and the domain of political participation, van Deth argues, "these activities affect virtually all aspects of social life in advanced societies". He provocatively concludes that "the study of political participation has [thus] become the *study of everything*" (van Deth 2001: 4; emphasis in original).

Despite this huge expansion of the concept, it is obviously necessary to be clear about what the object under investigation is, to avoid the risk expressed by van Deth that studying political participation does really come to mean studying *anything*. This section does not aim to solve the wide theoretical discussion about finding a univocal (nominal) definition of participation, but I rather adopt the approach suggested by van Deth (2014), trying to outline an operational definition which can suit the purpose of my thesis.

In the field of participation research it is possible to find a long list of conceptualisations, often focusing on distinct aspects of the phenomenon. Just to mention two examples, in their seminal research Verba and Nie define political participation as “those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take” (1972: 2). Counter-trend is, for instance, the definition formulated by Nabatchi & Leighninger, which adopts a citizen-centred approach and does not mention government at all: “Public participation is an umbrella term that describes the activities by which people’s concerns, needs, interests, and values are incorporated into decisions and actions on public matters and issues” (2015: 6).

Nevertheless, it is possible to identify an underlying common understanding among the most disparate definitions, which van Deth calls the “minimalist definition” of political participation. He identifies four characteristics of it (van Deth 2001: 5, 2014: 351-352):

- 1) political participation refers to people in their role as *amateurs*, i.e. *citizens* and not politicians or civil servants;
- 2) political participation is understood as an *activity* (or *action*) – to hold a political opinion or attitude is not sufficient;
- 3) political participation is *voluntary* and not enforced by law, rules or threats;
- 4) political participation concerns the *government and politics* in a broad sense of these words (“political system”, “policy process”), i.e. it is neither restricted to a specific stage nor level (e.g. local, national, international, etc.) of decision-making.

Furthermore, van Deth (2014: 356 ff.) introduces the reader to other schemes useful to conceptualise the contemporary modes of participation:

- political participation does not have to take place *within* the sphere of politics, but it can be *targeted at* this sphere. For instance, this could be the case of a civic watchdog organisation demanding open governmental data about the spending of public money;
- activities aimed at *solving collective or community problems* can be considered as modes of political participation too, if clearly private or non-public activities are excluded. This could be the case of neighbourhood committees, for

example, organising to renovate and open to the citizenry the use of a public space or structure (so to say, a common good) that had been previously abandoned;

- and finally, non-political activities become specimens of political participation if they are used to *express political aims and intentions* by the participants. A common example would be political consumerism, but also attending a political poetry slam, or participating in gardening guerrilla.

The empirical application of van Deth's conceptualisation of political participation (Ohme et al. 2017) has indeed proved to be useful for avoiding the risk of an endless expansion of the concept, as questioned before. The findings of the study by Ohme et al. (2017) support the notion that Internet-based activities can occur across all types of participation comprised in van Deth's conceptual map, that is the distinction between online and offline activities does not represent a further expansion of the concept. In addition to that, Ohme et al. (2017) prove that newer, "unconventional" forms of participation can be also consistently comprised under this conceptualisation.

That is, drawing from these theoretical contributions by van Deth (2001, 2014), I can outline the working definition of political participation as follows:

Political participation consists in those voluntary activities by private citizens aimed at influencing political decision-making, at any of its stages and levels, or at solving collective or community problems. Non-political activities can be considered modes of political participation if they are used to express political aims and intentions.

To conclude this discussion, it has to be mentioned that, according to the Aristotelian tradition, participation also fulfils the need of human beings for self-expression and self-fulfilment (e.g. development of pride, self-esteem, the feeling of freedom of choice), that is it performs an expressive function. However, for the purpose of this study, I decide to consider its expressive function only with regard to those which are normally considered as non-political activities. Apart from that, I concentrate on the instrumental functions of participation (see the provided definition), as suggested by van Deth (2001: 4) being relevant for empirically oriented approaches.

With regards to the terminology, it seems to be worth to briefly discuss the use of two terms in the academic literature before proceeding with the rest of the analysis: *public* and *political* participation. As for the literature reviewed so far, the term "political

participation” seem to be more specifically used by authors (e.g. van Deth 2001, 2014; Fox 2013; Norris 2001) to refer to the instrumental function of participation. The focus is on the objective of the actions under examination, that is influencing the process of political decision-making at any of its stages or levels. This is meant to refer to the targets of such actions too, that is the political actors who have a say on the decision-making process – who do not inevitably have to be politicians. The authors referring rather to “public participation” (e.g. Barnes et al. 2007; Nabatchi & Leighninger 2015) focus their attention on the participants of such processes, identifying them as all actors who find themselves outside the power institutions. Moreover, it can be further argued that politics ultimately concerns everything which is of public concerns, making the line between public and private often running similar to the line between political and non-political. As we will investigate later, the distinction between public and political will be in fact of great relevance in defining the phenomenon of corruption. As referred to participation, instead, I will no longer distinctly refer to political or public participation while continuing the analysis.

Other terms such as *civic engagement*, *civic activism*, *citizen engagement* or *citizen participation* are also relevant for this study, because they are employed to a significant extent in the discourse, especially by practitioners. I will include these terms only as far as they are used as synonyms of political participation, that is in a way which is consistent with the already provided working definition.

Finally, as far as the typology of participation is concerned, I will refer to conventional participation as those modes of participation fully suitable to the form of representative democracy. As unconventional participation, conversely, I understand all participatory innovations introducing little or substantive challenges to this traditional form, e.g. introducing direct or deliberative democratic elements. This is, of course, a personal conceptual position-taking within a rich theoretical debate, to best suit this study.

To understand participation, however, we do not just need to define the term, but also explore it in some of its empirical variations. Thus, I will successively explore the contribution of empirical studies on political participation.

2.1.1.2 Empirical participation research

How do we assess the current state of participation? Almost all the literature explored for this thesis report that many among academics and media commentators are worried about the contemporary state of public participation. They have been arguing that public participation is declining, based on evidence of sinking electoral turnout, rising anti-party and anti-political sentiments, and the decay of membership in civic organisations (see among others: Hooghe & Dejaeghere 2007; Norris 2002). Nevertheless, there seems to be a large array of literature aiming to demystify this myth. As already briefly mentioned above, van Deth (2014: 349 ff.) suggests that a challenge is posed by the conceptual ambivalences in the field of research. Because of this, the ones adopting a more restrictive and conventional conception of participation inevitably and systematically end up identifying a strong pattern of declining participation, while those with a more inclusive conception discern instead a change in the *modes* of participating. So, as an attempt to reply to Fox's (2014) question "Is It Time to Update the Definition of Political Participation?" – the answer is: yes, it is definitely time.

Accordingly, Norris argues that, in fact, "indicators point more strongly towards the evolution, transformation and reinvention of civic engagement than its premature death" (2002: 4). According to her, some studies seriously misinterpret the evidence by focussing exclusively on conventional indicators, that is failing to catch a glance on contemporary evolutions in the phenomenon. Based on a systematic empirical analysis, she concludes that citizens are in fact becoming more actively engaged via alternative mechanisms of political activism.

Other empirical evidence seems to suggest that citizens, i.e. people who are not policy experts or public servants, are indeed making increasingly sophisticated contributions to the governance and improvement of their communities. A few examples provided by Nabatchi & Leighninger (2015: 4-5) show that, for instance, people have put in place initiatives to map crime patterns, assess zoning policies, develop bus schedule apps and monitor water quality, making use of new technologies and available open government data. That is, citizens appear to be willing to actively contribute to public problem solving, yet they are more often frustrated with the conventional processes for governance. The empirical evidence indicates that initiatives of conventional participation are often temporary and limited to single issues, incapable to

meaningfully change the institutional structure and the political meaning of democracy. In these cases, some scholars argue that conventional participation can even have negative effects for both citizens and institutions (see for instance: Barnes et al. 2007; Nabatchi & Leighninger 2015): they often prove to be inefficient in terms of money and time spent, and ineffective in terms of the results they wanted to achieve (e.g. worsening the quality of decision-making); furthermore, unsuccessful, isolated initiatives can have a long-term negative impact on the public in terms of feelings of powerlessness, political disinterest, institutional distrust, lack of government legitimacy and credibility. Nabatchi & Leighninger (2015: 321) also claim that conventional participation usually dominates people's perception of participation, making them less receptive of innovative participatory processes. So, why do we still rely so much on conventional participatory schemes, both ideally and in practice? The authors argue that this is the case because conventional participation is supported by what they call our current "participation infrastructure" (Nabatchi & Leighninger 2015: 6).

Their definition of participation infrastructure comprises "the laws, processes, institutions, and associations that support regular opportunities for people to connect with each other, solve problems, make decisions, and celebrate community" (Nabatchi & Leighninger 2015: 6). In their analysis of the current state of affairs of these infrastructures (Nabatchi & Leighninger 2015: 7-8), they differentiate among:

- Legal infrastructure: laws, rules, and regulations (at the local, national or any institutional level) that are intended to help citizens participate in democratic life. According to the authors, they often fail to do so, or even obstruct and delegitimise democratic innovations.
- Governmental infrastructure: government staff tasked with informing and interacting with citizens, either in a particular issue area or by working in collaboration with citizen groups and organisations. These staff members often lack skills and capacities necessary for productively engaging the public and operate predominantly with a representative rather than participatory mindset.
- Civic infrastructure: formal and informal associations, from civic watchdog organizations to neighbourhood and parent groups, that exist to engage citizens in public affairs. Such organisations can face the problem of representativeness, and many of them function rather as fundraising or lobbying organisations than participatory ones.

- Electoral infrastructure: electoral process (e.g. definition of electoral programme and campaign) during which candidates and parties could engage citizens in policy questions. This rarely happens, so that citizens at large are not able to have any other effects on this process than selecting among candidate platforms they did not help to create.
- Educational infrastructure: educational schemes to help people develop civic key competences and basic skills of participation. Among the many possibilities provided to the public (especially in schools), the authors argue, a comprehensive and coherent system of civic education is missing.

This typology of participation infrastructure seems to remark the existence of many structural challenges concerning citizens' participation to democratic life, in regard to possibilities, capacities and political willingness. In Nabatchi & Leighninger's opinion, overall "this infrastructure is based on, and works to reinforce, a set of outdated assumptions about participation and about citizens" (2015: 38).

Barnes et al. (2007: 8 ff.) seem to resume the same idea of a "surrounding environment" (either supporting or impeding participation) by suggesting that such infrastructure is strongly shaped not only by the practice but also by the official discourse on public participation, that is the one generated by the state. Starting with the review of UK's development of public participation official narrative, they identify and analyse four different discourses that have proved particularly influential in directing public policy and service provision, also internationally. In brief these are: *empowered public*; *consuming public*; *stakeholder public*; *responsible public*. I will not go into details about them, but it is relevant to note that each discourse generates different expectations about the role of the state in public participation, the desirability of civic engagement on an individual or collective basis, the power relationships between the state and the citizens, and finally normative implications for the kind of democracy that would best suit the public under consideration (Barnes et al. 2007: 21). These considerations are not supposed to rule out the civic society. At the same time, indeed, the civic actors are expected to generate their own discourses that may contribute to or conflict with those of the organised state (Barnes et al. 2007: 9).

Thus, for the emerging "unconventional" citizens-driven initiatives to produce substantial impacts and benefits, we expect them to need to be sustained by a

favourable narrative and a robust, renovated participation infrastructure. These considerations are fundamental from the point of view of practitioners, which have to adapt their commitment either according to or challenging the mainstream infrastructures or discourses.

Also, in order to overcome the current limitations of participation, it is necessary to move on from the vision that sees participation as purely engaging citizens within the confines of a primarily representative system, where almost all the decisions continue to be made by elected officials (Coelho & Von Lieres 2010; Nabatchi & Leighninger 2015). I have already discussed how much political participation has evolved over the time. The new wave of innovation in participation is being driven by a fundamental shift in the capacities and attitudes of citizens, while it has been demonstrated that primarily republican systems of government are largely inadequate for responding to and capitalizing on that new citizen energy (Nabatchi & Leighninger 2015: 319-323). Innovations in participation, therefore, are not to be understood simply as tools dedicated to solving problems on how people participate in democracy. They are actually meant to open the way to a new question: what kind of democracy do people want to participate in?

In the next two sections, I will further concentrate on following two aspects of this discussion. First, I try to assess the participatory framework of the Open Government, recently adopted by a large number of governments to try to innovate both participation infrastructure and discourse. For reasons we will have time to undergo in the next section, Open Government has proven to have become a mainstream framework worldwide, but it remains of course just one of many aspects of participatory innovation. For the purpose of this paper, however, I am not interested in further investigating literature on participatory innovations, which is predominantly either very fragmented or normative. Although it could be interesting from a theoretical point of view, this may eventually end up in a gigantic undertaking and, most importantly, provide little help to understand the state of affairs of participation practitioners have to deal with on a daily basis. Later on in the thesis, this will prove to be functional to the empirical analysis of the case study.

Second, given the general overview on participation, I take a closer look on its relation to the contemporary understandings of democracy and citizenship. I adopt the conceptualisation of monitory democracy (Keane 2009a) and monitorial citizen (Schudson 1998) to bring me closer to analyse the participatory instrument of community-based monitoring and the topic of anti-corruption.

2.1.2 Innovating participation: the mainstream participatory framework of Open Government (OG)

During the last decade, the conceptual and operational framework of the Open Government (Lathrop & Ruma 2010) has established itself as a mainstream model adopted by governments to innovate citizen's participation to democratic life.

The term “open government” has been used at least since the 1940s with different connotations in the research literature, and its origin is politically tied to the long legislative campaign that brought the United States to promulgate the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) in 1966 (Yu & Robinson 2012: 184 ff.). The term was used for many decades to come as synonym for public access to previously undisclosed (i.e. considered to be secret) government information.

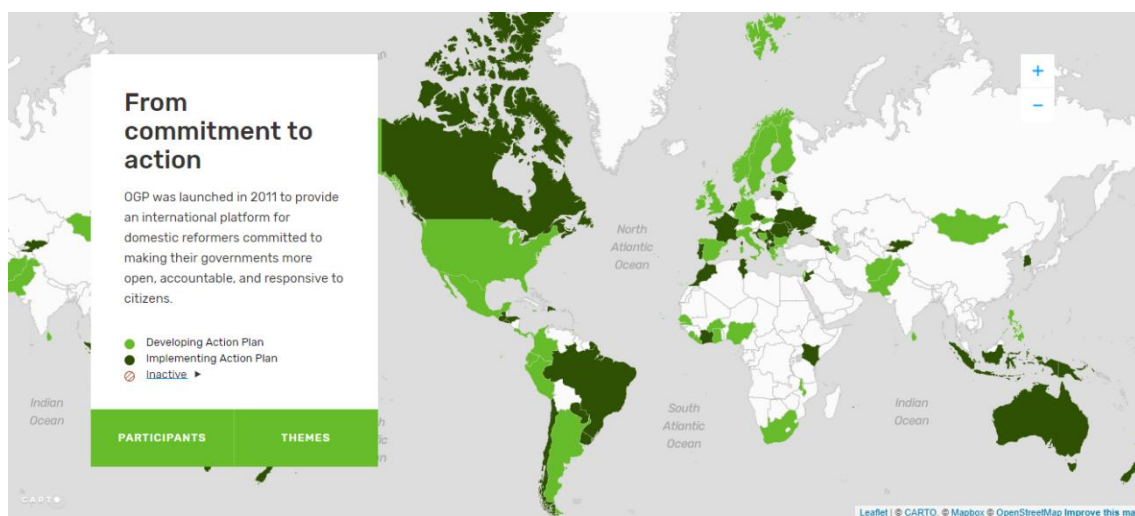
The quite recent evolution of the concept coincides with political initiatives, i.e. the endorsement by the Obama Administration, which exerted great influence on its understanding and on the spread of its use on a global scale. There is not yet a single accepted definition of Open Government, but in the dominant discourse its core understanding includes the three elements formulated by the Obama Administration: transparency, participation and collaboration (Administration of B. H. Obama 2009). According to their research review, indeed, Hansson et al. (2015: 546-547) found that almost all articles taken into consideration define Open Government along this definition.

From the point of view of practitioners, especially civic actors, the working definition provided by Heller⁴ (2012) for the NGO Global Integrity seems to have established

⁴ Nathaniel Heller is co-founder of Global Integrity and has been Executive Director of the organisation between 2005 and 2014. Global Integrity is one of the world's leading transparency and anti-corruption non-governmental organisations. For more information see the official website: <https://www.globalintegrity.org/>

itself as one of the most recognised and influential one. In fact, it has been also adopted by the Open Government Partnership⁵ (OGP 2015; Figure 1), a global platform launched in 2011 which brings together governments and civic society organisations of the 79 participating countries to collaborate in creating action plans that make governments more inclusive, responsive and accountable to citizens, according to the framework of OG.

Figure 1. Screenshot taken from the OGP's homepage, visualising the participant countries on the global map. 18 April 2019. (Source: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/>).



Heller likewise identifies three elements of the concept under discussion, while employing a slightly different terminology than the one provided by the Obama Administration. The three elements are to be understood in the following way:

1. Information transparency: the public understands the workings of their government;
2. Public engagement: the public can influence the workings of their government by engaging in governmental policy processes and service delivery programs;
3. Accountability: the public can hold the government to account for its policy and service delivery performance.

⁵ For more information see the official website: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/>

At first sight, this conceptual framework seems to be well-intentioned. In its rhetoric, the participation infrastructure is expected to be built in order to offer the public the possibility to participate on different stages of governance: access relevant public documents, contribute to the decision-making process or to frame the public service-delivery, etc. Nevertheless, we can already observe a difference in the terminology employed by the state, building upon the Obama Administration's definition (2009), and by civic actors, exemplified in Heller's definition (2012). The first two elements are essentially equal in both definitions, while the third element changes in its substance. For the official discourse, that is the one of the state, the third element is "collaboration". This term suggests a cooperative relationship between state and civic actors, who are seen as "partners" to the institutions. In Heller's definition (2012) the third element is "accountability". This reflects more closely the point of view of the civil society and suggests it can detain power to make the government responsible for its decisions and responsive to the demands of the public. Overall, the conceptual framework of OG is relevant for this study as far as all three elements are connected to anti-corruption and integrity efforts.

There is a vast body of literature analysing the framework of OG, both in its notion and practice. Overall, Hansson et al. (2015: 547) found out in their research review that the basic notion of OG is seldom questioned, and researchers rather assume transparency, participation and collaboration being beneficial for the system; greater focus lies on the question of how to reach OG. Despite this rhetoric, critics point out to the fact that participation and collaboration are not addressed in any meaningful sense in practice (see: Hansson et al. 2015). Hansson et al. (2015: 540) highlight two main issues in their assessment of OG: (a) the practice of OG is predominantly focused on transparency and information exchange, while ignoring fundamental democratic issues regarding public participation and representation; (b) "trapped" in the rhetoric of "partnership", the concept of the public is inadequately considered as a homogenous entity rather than a diversified group with different interests, preferences, and abilities. Thus, I will now discuss these two aspects in greater detail.

a) Transparency and information exchange.

Some problems concern the "promise" of transparency. First of all, the quality of the data provided to the public is a necessary condition for transparency: not only should

institutions make their data public, but they should guarantee that these are published as *open data*. The label “open” as applied to information holds two meanings: at a technological level, it implies the use of computers to handle information much more efficiently and variously compared to manual processing; at a philosophical level, it implies that all the people should be able to share and use the information in a democratised, accessible way (Yu & Robinson 2012: 188-189). Provided data are thus defined as *open data* if they fulfil the following ten criteria, developed by the Sunlight Foundation (2010):

1. The data are complete, including raw data, derived data and metadata.
2. Datasets are primary source data, including details on how the data were collected and the original source documents.
3. Real-time information updates are provided, or at least as quickly as the information is gathered and collected.
4. The physical and electronic access to the data is easy.
5. The data are readable by machines.
6. The access to data is non-discriminatory, i.e. any person can access the data at any time without having to identify him/herself or provide any justification for doing so.
7. Data are stored in widely-used or open standards file formats.
8. Data are available without restrictions on use as part of the public domain.
9. The information is permanently available online in archives.
10. The access to and use of data is free-of-charge.

As recommended in point 1, some authors mention that “raw” data can be not enough to draw meaningful conclusion on a topic, thus it is of great importance to provide the public also with metadata or metadata interactive tools (for instance: Janssen et al. 2012). One of the exemplary cases going in this direction and often cited by

researchers is the platform “Where Does My Money Go?”⁶ – which permits to analyse and visualise information about UK public spending. This is a citizen-driven project active since 2009, which builds upon governmental open data and aims at overcoming the substantial challenges in terms of time and effort required to ordinary citizens for learning where to look for different pieces of information, and how to interpret them.

Overall, according to how far public disclosures fulfil these ten criteria, Yu & Robinson (2012: 182; 207) place them on a spectrum of *adaptability*, ranging from *inert* data (e.g. unorganised offline documents placed in a drawer of a public office) to fully *adaptable* data – depending on how easy or hard it is for social actors to make (innovative) use of the data. According to the authors, disclosure also vary in a second dimension – their actual or anticipated *impact* – ranging from *service delivery* to *public accountability*. Strengthening transparency certainly helps to improve the quality of life and enhance public service delivery, but its main goal should ultimately be to support accountability. However, this is not always the case. As Yu & Robinson (2012: 181-182) observe, due to this ambivalence in the objective, governments can provide open data on politically “neutral” topics and take credit for “open government” even as they remain extremely opaque and unaccountable to the public. Even within the framework of the OGP, which sets conditions for entry based on public accountability standards, it remains to be seen how much focus each state partner gives on making the government more efficient and more accountable. For instance, Yu & Robinson (2012: 204) briefly present some doubts related to the case of Kenya as OGP’s member. In her analysis of OG in the US, Shkabatur (2013) comes to the conclusion that transparency policies fail to strengthen public accountability, indeed. In her words: “The existing architecture of online transparency allows [federal] agencies to retain control over regulatory data and thus withhold information that is essential for public accountability purposes; prioritizes quantity over quality of disclosures; and reinforces traditional barriers of access to information” (Shkabatur 2013: 81). Hansson et al. (2015: 549) and Yu & Robinson (2012: 198) also argue that transparency policies generally have made available only documents that were already available in other online locations, not the ones that might be the most relevant for holding an agency accountable for its policy and spending decisions. In this regard, Hansson et al. suggest that strong collective actors outside the governmental area are needed to

⁶ See the platform here: <http://app.wheredoesmymoneygo.org/>

ensure that important data are produced and accessible (2015: 549, drawn from Fung 2013). OG European policies are also focused on digitisation and service delivery, and not on public accountability and democratic aspects of the OG infrastructure. For the European Commission (2010, 2018) – in a very restrictive approach – OG almost equates to eGovernment, and its main benefit is expected to be to “provide new opportunities for public administrations to become more efficient and effective, provide user-friendly services, while reducing costs and administrative burden” (European Commission 2018).

On the other side, the public must be able to access digital devices and interpret information. The entire transparency and information exchange scheme is based on digitisation and ICTs, but many scholars have been demonstrating that there are consistent democratic problems with accessing and using such technologies (for instance: Hansson et al. 2015; Norris 2001). Norris (2001) argues that ICTs have increased the inequality between the ability of certain societal groups to participate, because of the required level of digital literacy, social capital and economic resources. Janssen et al. (2012) point to the fact that the complexity for citizens to (meaningfully) access open data and the possibly resulting bad experiences with doing it might even undercut their level of trust in government. Furthermore, in opening their data, governments should be aware that they are not communicating their data unidirectionally, but they should expect or actively promote feedback and be able to make sense of this feedback (Janssen et al. 2012: 259). In this sense, as the authors argue, “open data on its own has little intrinsic value; the value is created by its use. Supporting use should not be viewed as secondary to publicizing data” (Janssen et al. 2012: 264).

b) The public as “partners”.

As Meijer et al. (2012) argue, OG should not only be about openness in informational terms, but also about openness in interactive terms. Similarly, Lathrop & Ruma (2010: XIX) emphasise that OG means that citizens not only have access to information but they can also become participants in a meaningful way. However, Meijer et al. (2012: 12) point out that the whole volume of Lathrop & Ruma (2010) basically consist of techno-optimistic “general assertions not yet founded in empirical study” (2012: 2). In the interaction with the public, the discourse of OG foresees citizens’ participation in

providing governments with information (e.g. as service users) and collaborating with them to achieve consensus over specific decisions. In this perspective the “public” is one and a joint decision is expected to be achieved through dialogue between the parts (Hansson et al. 2015; Meijer et al. 2012). In practice, in fact, Hansson et al. (2015: 550) and Meijer et al. (2012: 17 ff.) argue that this does not correspond to the reality of *many publics*, which are marked by different and sometimes conflicting interests (which compete to “be heard” by the institutions), and different capacities (which may enable them to make better use of opportunities than others, regardless of how representative they are). The outcome of information gathering also depends on who the “public” is, because people might produce or interpret information differently (Hansson et al. 2015: 550).

Moreover, Barnes et al. (2007: 195; 199) argue that the notion of “partnership” is highly problematic in defining the relationship between citizens and officials, due to the inequality between the actors’ resources of power. In their empirical analysis Barnes et al. (2007: 190 ff.) found out that public bodies – when interacting with the public – manage to retain large part of the power: public officials often constitute their public in a way that best suit their need; they set the rules and norms of engagement; and in many cases they set the agenda of what issues are (or are not) open to discussion with the public. At the end of the process of civic engagement, they also have the power to decide whether or not to take into account the interests expressed by the public (Barnes et al. 2007: 190). The authors also discuss how the official discourse on participation may require public bodies to engage in such processes (otherwise they will be likely to be judged on this) – but they do it only reluctantly. This results in initiatives of “fake” citizens’ engagement, that leave the process of decision-making unchallenged. In addition to that, speaking of the public as “partners” serves to position it as “non-antagonist” (Barnes et al. 2007: 199), leaving no space for possible conflicts, or challenges to the same rules and spaces of engagements.

In conclusion of this section, we can say that the participation infrastructure and discourse within the framework of OG show multiple shortcomings, in particular related to the dominant focus on transparency and information exchange (Open Data and digitisation), and the clear surplus on the institutional side as trying to engage the public

(top-down and conflict-free approach). At the same time, the OG infrastructure and discourse is not to be wholly dismissed. In Meijer et al. (2012: 20 ff.), the authors assess the positive effects of OG and argue that OG is important for its various functions as an instrumental value, that is not as an end in itself but as a means to other ends.

“Openness” in government is seen as a precondition for effective political participation and rule of law. Furthermore, it is seen as an incentive for integrity: as Meijer et al. (2012: 21-22) report in their research overview, social and legal science literature indicates that openness is needed to tackle corruption; also, giving the possibility to the public to observe how public money is spent and decisions are made works as deterrent to misconduct and conflicts of interests among official or civil servants. In organisational sciences openness is believed to be correlated to high degrees of integrity, transparency and responsibility. In the literature on whistleblowing, it is stressed how information is a basis of power. Power abuses can in turn be counterbalanced through the civic use of information disseminated by whistle-blowers. In addition to this, openness is seen as a precondition for trust (Meijer et al. 2012: 22), since opaque and unaccountable decision-making reinforces sentiments of public distrust and perceived illegitimacy of the decisions that have been taken. Enhancing improvements vis-à-vis the shortcomings of participation in OG is therefore fundamental to achieve these benefits, meaningful for our democratic system.

2.1.3 “Democracy in our times”

2.1.3.1 The concepts of *monitory democracy* and *monitorial citizen*

As it should have become clear so far, basically every study of political participation is grounded on the assumption that political participation and democracy are inseparable. The necessity of participation for the functioning of democratic life is never questioned, and debates rather focus on the desired degree and forms of involvement (see for instance: van Deth 2001).

Drawing from Rao et al. (2000), Barnes et al. (2007: 41-42) argue that a challenge to citizens’ participation lies within the structure of liberal democracy itself: liberal democracy is founded on the process of representation, yet at the same time it

postulates an active, participating citizen. This can lead to the elected representatives being sceptical about the involvement of citizens in decisions they still see as their prerogative. At the same time, several studies argue that such “competing” aspects can coexist too. For instance, Geißel et al. (2014) analyse case studies from Germany and come to the conclusion that combining elements from the representative, deliberative and direct models of democracy appears to be feasible and compatible with a well-functioning democratic system.

Anyway, neither the concepts of representative, deliberative nor direct democracy seems to be able to fully and uniquely describe “democracy in our times”. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, it is worth to take a fresh look on it with reference to the conceptualisation developed by Keane in “The Life and Death of Democracy” (2009a).

Keane's work has been recognized as one of the most successful and impressive attempts at putting into context the contemporary shifts in democracy, based on historical review. Keane's discussion of democracy is based on a fundamental premise: democracy is a human invention and, as he himself states, “[...] like all other human inventions, [it] has a history. Democratic values and institutions are never set in stone; even the meaning of democracy changes through time” (Keane 2009a: XV). What is interesting to this study, therefore, is to observe the evolution of democratic life in its latest substance and form, and subsequently identify the newly shaped possibilities for citizens to participate in it.

Keane names the contemporary historical form of democracy as “monitory democracy”⁷. As he proposes, the intellectual roots of monitory democracy track already back to the years following the Second World War and the outbreak of totalitarian regimes that had affected the whole world: according to him, contributions from authors as different as Albert Camus, Sidney Hook, Thomas Mann and Jacques Maritain all point out to the historical evidence that the mechanisms of majority-rule, representative democracy are not immune to the “devil of unaccountable power”, thus calling for a new form of democracy (Keane 2009a: 730-731).

According to Keane, monitory democracy represents “a variety of ‘post-parliamentary’ politics defined by the rapid growth of many different kinds of extra-parliamentary,

⁷ The adjective “monitory” derives from the Latin *monere*, to warn. For further discussion of the term, see the footnote in Keane 2009a: 688.

power-scrutinising mechanisms” (Keane 2009a: 688). That is, it distinguishes itself from the assembly-based and representative democracies of past times. This, however, does not mean that elections, political parties or legislatures disappear; but they clearly lose their *pivotal position* in politics (Keane 2009a: 689; own emphasis). Assembly-based and representative mechanisms stay in place and have been at the same time mixed and combined with new ways of publicly monitoring and controlling the exercise of power. On the other hand, monitory mechanisms are always accompanied by the efforts to revitalise the standard institutions of representative government, for instance by fostering civic interest in the work of politicians, parties and parliaments (Keane 2009a: XXVI).

A unique feature of monitory democracy is that *all fields of social and political life* come to be scrutinised (Keane 2009a: 695): the public is concerned not only with the power held by government and governmental actors, but also with civil society and areas of life once thought to be non-political, from family life to employment. Moreover, the growing discourse on human rights is tightly linked to monitory democracy: a global network of organisations and campaigns are directed to rights violations and defence. This focus on human rights, according to the author, also helps to solve one of the basic problems of representative democracy: if democracy is commonly understood as the *government of the people, by the people, for the people* – “who decides who ‘the people’ are?” (Keane 2009a: 735). Keane sees in this interlinkage the answer: in the age of monitory democracy every human being is entitled to exercise the democratic right to have rights.

Governments themselves are involved in this evolution. As to use the words of Keane, they often act as *watchdogs* or *guide dogs* of democracy. Their role as *watchdogs* is exemplified, for instance, in setting public scrutiny institutions – in the form of semi-independent government agencies – which are intended for creating an additional system of checks and balances on the possible abuse of power by elected representatives. Their work should somehow supplement the power-monitoring role of government representatives and judges (Keane 2009a: 713-714). In other cases, governments can act as *guide dogs* by introducing new monitory inventions designed to share institutional power with the civil society and the citizens – exemplary of which are initiatives of participatory budgeting (Keane 2009a: 715).

Keane, however, warns about the possible paradoxes of leaving monitory mechanisms up to governments' initiative: in cases of corruption, for instance, such institutional scrutiny mechanisms – which are ultimately established by governments – fail to monitor their workings. On the other hand, political unwillingness can prevent governments to voluntarily introduce new power-sharing channels of participation. This is where civil societies come to play a fundamental role: they often press for introducing these monitory mechanisms because of precedent unhappy experiences with governments (e.g. scandals of misconduct, failed attempts of collaboration, etc.) and, in addition or in alternative, they establish parallel grassroots channels of monitory action within the civil society.

It is rather difficult to provide a thorough list of such emerging extra-parliamentary power-monitoring institutions, as it is highly dependent on where we stand in space and time. It is however very useful to provide some explicative examples to the readers. Keane mentions for instance: *public integrity commissions, judicial activism, local courts, workplace tribunals, consensus conferences, parliaments for minorities, public interest litigation, citizens' juries, citizens' assemblies, independent public inquiries, think-thanks, experts' reports, participatory budgeting, vigils, blogging and other forms of media scrutiny* (Keane 2009a: XXVII).

Keane points out to the fact that these institutions do not only function within the *domestic* field of government and civil society, but many monitory mechanisms have begun to operate also in areas of life *below* and *beyond* the institutions of territorial states, with spreading efforts of monitoring for instance international organisations of government (such as the WTO, UN, etc.) or the human interactions with nature in general (e.g. for the preservation of biodiversity and biosphere) (Keane 2009a: XXVIII).

As identified by Keane, monitory institutions can operate in different ways and on different scales. Regarding the target of their monitory action, this can be directed at scrutinising power at the level of (1) *citizens' inputs* to government or civil society bodies; (2) *policy throughputs* (i.e. topics, actors, information, interests, etc. passing through the decision-making process); or (3) *policy outputs* produced by such organisations (Keane 2009a: 692). As far as their scale of impact is concerned, as already mentioned above, they can range from organisations (or groups) operating merely on the local level to global monitory networks.

Overall, monitory institutions' aim is to provide the public with better information about the functioning and performance of governmental or non-governmental actors. They are conceived for defining, scrutinising and enforcing "public standards and ethical rules" for the prevention of corruption or any other misbehaviour of those responsible for decision-making; moreover, they are committed to "strengthening the diversity and influence of citizens' voices and choices in decisions that affect their lives" (Keane 2009a: 693). The work of all monitory institutions relies heavily on innovations in Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs), which contribute to realise what Keane calls the contemporary state of "communicative abundance" (Keane 2009a: 736 ff.). As the author is aware of it, this spots a light on the possible challenge set by the divide between "media-rich" and "media-poor" citizens, which could contradict the basic principle of monitory democracy that all people should be equally entitled to get information, express their voices and subsequently take action.

The author's view, in this regard, proves to be far away from *naïve*: in his account of monitory democracy, he does not describe a normative world where the power-scrutinising innovations have created "a paradise of equality of opportunity among all its citizens and their elected and unelected representatives" (Keane 2009a: 743). Along some challenges to the concept of equality, as seen above, there is no lack of on-going examples of organised efforts by the powerful to abuse their power, and accordingly to keep their business away from public scrutiny. Equally important in the monitory age is the mobilisation to oppose such obstacles and abuses. For the purpose of this study, it is fundamental to stress this concept: monitory democracies are rich in conflict, as there is a permanent, energetic dynamics among institutional and civil actors (that touches them all) of questioning power, decisions, responsibilities.

Power-monitoring can turn out to be ineffective, or counterproductive, too: campaigns can fail to reach the public, and those who are accused can find ways of avoiding, confuting or simply ignoring their opponents; large numbers of citizens can simply find the monitory actions irrelevant to their lives as consumers, workers, parents, community residents and young and elderly citizens (Keane 2009a: 744 ff.). However, the expectation of the author is that, when monitory mechanisms are effective, they have many positive effects on the system. They are expected to create greater openness and justice within society, the markets and governments; enrich public deliberation with different voices; and empower both citizens and their chosen

representatives through meaningful schemes of participation. In my opinion, the major gain of this historical form of democracy is the change in people's perception of power and of the own role as civic actor. Within the world of monitory democracies, unaccountable power is seen with suspicion and "[...] people are coming to learn that they *must* keep an eye on power and its representatives, that they must make judgments and choose their own course of action. Citizens are thus tempted to [...] sharpen their overall sense that prevailing power relationships are not 'natural' but contingent" (Keane 2009a: 746; own emphasis).

As Keane indicates himself, his work builds upon the concept of *monitorial citizen*, theorised by Schudson in "The Good Citizen. A History of American Civic Life" (1998). Already in 1998, Schudson documents that in the popular political discourse the new resources of citizenship are rarely recognised while there is constant appeal to the ideals of the "informed citizen", whose theorisation dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century (1998: 308 ff.). According to Schudson, the institutional practices and arising societal complexity have made this model outdated and overwhelming. The model of "monitorial citizenship" rests on the idea that citizens should be *monitors* of political danger rather than being knowledgeable about everything which concerns politics (Schudson 1998). The definition and function of a "good citizen", so to say, has radically changed.

According to Schudson (1998: 311) the monitorial citizen engages in environmental surveillance more than information-gathering. He or she is a watchful rather the proactive citizen, but "poised for action if action is required" (Schudson 1998:311). This is therefore no "laid-back" model of citizenship: monitorial citizenship can be demanding, because it implies "that one's peripheral vision should always have a political or civic dimension" and that citizens "should be informed enough and alert enough to identify danger to their personal good and danger to the public good" (Schudson 2000:16). That is, the monitorial citizen is also far from being a lonely individual. To be able to take action as seen so far, he or she have to rely on relational and informational network and resources: personal trusted relationships, political parties and elected officials, interest groups and other trustees of their concerns, knowledge of and access to the courts as well as the electoral system, and relevant

information sources (Schudson 2000:16). In this way, according to the author's view, it is desirable to integrate citizenry competence with specialised expert resources (1998: 311-312). As Hooghe & Dejaeghere infer from Schudson's conceptualisation "The monitorial citizen has sufficient political knowledge to understand the issues, and he or she also has enough political efficacy to believe that participation can actually make a difference in the final decision-making process without having to rely on institutionalized intermediaries like parties or trade unions" (2007: 254). Traditional or conventional channels of participation, thus, are neglected by the monitorial citizen.

Schudson discusses also traditional measures for citizens' participation, i.e. percentage of voter turnout. On one side, he writes, we can oppose the idea that it is possible to affirm the decline in political participation only based on these numbers. On the other side, Schudson considers it to be still a relevant measure, indeed. As a matter of fact, voting is not only an act of citizen participation – instrumental to elect candidates – but it is also emblematic of general faith in the political system. That is, according to him, a decline in turnout can only be a worrisome sign for democracy, as much as high voter turnout cannot be a sign of "civic health" alone (Schudson 1998: 301; similar considerations are to be found for instance in Norris 2002).

It is very interesting the standpoint Schudson takes on institutional trust. He argues that Americans had far too much trust in major institutions in the past, to the point that they blindly accepted (or at least, did not question) misbehaviours from their side. In fact "a society cannot long endure without basic social trust, nor can a democracy survive without well-organized and well-institutionalized distrust" (Schudson 1998: 301). According to him, because of distrust, citizens have achieved to build a necessary system of checks and balances, and to put into place watchdog mechanisms. In any case, the observation that in many Western societies trust in institutions is declining remains valid. Nevertheless, according to Norris (2002) this represents a surmountable problem, as far as there are yet two possible solutions to it: (1) to reform the democratic system and institutions, enhancing more transparency and accountability, in order to restore traditional channels of institutional trust; (2) to promote new forms of participation that are more attractive to the new generation of monitorial citizens, that is to build new channels of communication between the public and the state where to establish a renewed trust between the two.

The works of Keane and Schudson analysed so far seem to me to be observing the same object from two different perspectives: Keane tries to conceptualise the evolution in the democratic institutions, while Schudson scrutinises those who vitalise such institutions, that is the citizens. It is no surprise that their conclusions are very specular, if not complementary. It is no matter of causalities between the two trends, but they are in fact different sides of the same phenomenon, inevitably evolving together.

Some more considerations are worth to be noticed while taking into account the two works. Schudson is writing about one decade earlier than Keane, thus possibly missing some more recent evolvments in the phenomenon. At the same time, the work of Schudson is focused on the American civic life (i.e. the one of the United States), while Keane makes a remarkable effort to investigate case studies from the Global South, such as Tanganyika, Senegal, Papua New Guinea and India. He considers this approach as essential to truly grasp the later *mutations* of democracy, for the reason that – he notes – democracy is “no longer a white-skinned, middle-class Western affair”, but it has evolved in “environments radically different from the earlier parent democracies of Western Europe, Spanish America and the United States” (Keane 2009a: 686-687). That is, Keane’s book, with its broader and later view on the democratic state of affairs, opens the way to the idea that Schudson’s considerations on the *monitorial citizen* remain no isolated observation of the American society, but they can in fact account for a global trend in citizenship. Such generalisation, like every observation of the social reality, has of course to be taken with all the necessary caution.

After having presented and discussed the theoretical premises, I now turn to the question: how does public participation look like in the age of monitorial democracy?

2.1.3.2 Monitorial forms of civic action

According to the frameworks of monitorial democracy and monitorial citizenship, we can observe the development of peculiar forms of public participation. They can be called *monitorial forms of civic action*. Drawing from Keane (2009a), Rogers (2016: 228)

operationalises the concept of monitory democracy and derives four key features which characterise monitory forms of civic action:

- 1) They are focused on *monitoring powerful social actors* through an informal civic space; that is, the power relationship between the actors is often unbalanced.
- 2) They *reject consensus-seeking models of civic action*, encouraging difference, disagreement, debate and change.
- 3) They foster formal and informal, public and private spaces of governance to be more *transparent and accountable*; this includes the monitors' own space of civic action.
- 4) They foster new forms of *informal political power*, outside of the formal structures of the government and/or private sector.

Monitory forms of civic action, therefore, seem to be able to compensate for the limitations of the participation infrastructure and discourse analysed so far. They are consistent with the new resources of monitorial citizenship and challenge the problematic notion of citizens as “partners”. They seek transparency and accountability about how powerful actors organise, make decision and manage public resources. In case of reluctant institutions (either for political unwillingness, or in case of misconduct), they allow civic actors to take action outside of the “invited spaces” (Barnes et al. 2007: 43), i.e. the formal spaces created by officials seeking to open up decision-making processes. The so formed “counterpublics” (Barnes et al. 2007: 43) create alternative spaces of engagement, because they have been excluded from the official public sphere or because they refuse rules and norms operating in such sphere.

In particular, for the purpose of this thesis, I assume that such participatory instruments are indeed *necessary* in situations of public corruption, where civic society initiatives *need* to take place outside formal spaces and consider the possibility of conflict with the misbehaving institutional actors.

What remains unclear, and will be object of empirical investigation, is how such participatory initiative build upon the initial level of institutional trust and whether, vice versa, they somehow impact on the final level of institutional trust. Building on the theoretical contributions of the previous paragraphs, it is possible to acknowledge different expectations. On one side, lack of trust towards institutions is seen as obstructing political participation and endangering democracy (see section 2.1.1.2 of

this study); on the other side, a certain level of “well-organized and well-institutionalized distrust” (Schudson 1998: 301) has enabled citizens to build a necessary system of checks and balances, and to put into place watchdog mechanisms.

Drawing from Norris (2001), monitory forms of civic action are expected to have a positive impact on institutional trust both restoring traditional channels of institutional trust (through more transparency and accountability) and building new channels of participation where to establish a renewed trust between institutional and civic actors (see section 2.1.3.1 of this study). Counter-trend, it could also be expected that through experiencing widely corrupted, unaccountable institutions, these participatory processes exacerbate citizens’ feelings of distrust.

2.1.4 A particular case: Community-based monitoring

The aim of this paper is to investigate the participatory instrument of community-based monitoring as monitory form of civic action. Before proceeding to the empirical discussion, I will now present to the reader the preliminary evidence on community-based monitoring (CBM) from the literature.

The literature dealing with this instrument encompasses different fields of research: from ecology to development and sustainability studies, to governance and democratic studies. That is, the definition of CBM and its characteristics often vary depending on the field of application. There is, so to say, a rather small and fragmented body of literature analysing CBM, that is this study is attempting to contribute to the State of the Art in this relatively unexplored area of study.

As the term suggests, the instrument of CBM is characterised by two main elements: it sustains itself over the organisational basis of a community, and operates as a monitoring action/process.

On suggestion of Barnes et al. (2007: 67), *community* may designate an “imaginary domain of social relationships” based on identity, or a “spatialised concept” of locality. These may of course co-exist. Empirical evidence seems to suggest that one promising way to overcome the shortcomings of participation seen so far is to make sure they become embedded in communities. Authors like Nabatchi & Leighninger (2015: 31), for example, argue that strong evidence about the link between

participation and community has emerged in the Global South, where communities have achieved “more sustained” and “durable” forms of participation, which – in turn – have stronger impacts on equity, government efficiency and trust. Similarly, Barnes et al. (2007: 190) found across their case studies that the most successful participatory processes (in terms of including marginalised voices, getting citizens’ experience and interests to be recognised and validated as a source of expertise) were those that had their origins in voluntary or community organisation. Buttiglione & Reggi (2015), in particular, analyse a case of civic monitoring⁸ of development policies in Southern Italy, i.e. EU or Italian projects funded by public money and aimed at mitigating the burden of the development gap between North and South which traditionally interests the Italian territory. As the findings from their study seem to suggest, civic monitoring has the potential to empower existing communities or create new one, as well as to directly improve the quality of policy-making at each stage – from the planning and allocation of resources, to the monitoring of implementation and the evaluation of the results achieved. When analysing the impact of open data and Open Government on the participation infrastructure on which civic monitoring initiatives are based, Buttiglione & Reggi (2015: 80) register that open data on public projects are increasingly provided to the public (although their relevance and quality seem to vary substantially). However, initiatives of OG which goes beyond the release of data and try to stimulate citizen participation on public policies are still to be considered marginal. The current challenges of the OG initiatives in this domain are mainly two (Buttiglione & Reggi 2015: 80): at the individual level, there are problems related to the capacities of citizens to access and interpret the provided information, because of (un)available digital skills and (missing) context for understanding the data. These considerations are consistent with the theoretical findings in section 2.1.2 of this study. The authors interestingly point out also to another dimension: at the collective level, the problem concerns the ability to include existing civic communities in the processes of using and interpreting data, or to create new ones. So to say, even if the citizens – individually – hold good capacities to access and interpret the data, only collectively they can generate power and influence decisions of institutional actors. This is highlighted, for instance, by Checkoway & Aldana, who argue that “organizing can strengthen feelings of power, build organizational capacity, and redistribute power in communities” (2013: 3). This

⁸ The initiative is called “Monithon” as a contraction of “Monitoring Marathon”. See the official website: <http://www.monithon.it/about-english/>

seems to reinforce the recognition of the added-value of monitorial *communities* rather than *citizens*. Molina et al. seem to sustain this idea by arguing that “if community monitoring activities are not carried out, or carried out by only a few citizens, their ability to uncover problems and put pressure on the government to provide accountability can be significantly reduced” (2017: 467). In turn, the authors (Molina et al. 2017: 466) claim that local norms and context affect the processes of CBM. In particular, participation in CBM initiatives may be influenced by the strength of the community to act collectively, which is in turn reinforced by a preceding history of grassroots participation in the community. The specific institutional (i.e., in this case: related to social norms and practices) history of service delivery, public participation and political accountability are also expected to be crucial in interaction with each other (Molina et al. 2017: 466).

Constantino et al. (2012) analyse the participatory instrument of CBM in relation with empowerment, coming to the conclusion that CBM promotes empowerment both at the individual and collective level, also when the initiatives were not purposefully aimed at it, i.e. it represented an unexpected outcome. Along the analysis of their case study, they mainly identified the challenge of long-term maintenance of such initiatives, finding that this is related to the communities’ capacity to constantly adapt to institutional transformations, new group dynamics, and evolving interests. That is, CBM appears to require an approach that is robustly embedded in the communities, context-specific, iterative, and adaptive (see also: Pollock & Whitelaw 2005).

The aspect of *monitoring* has been observed by scholars from different perspectives. In their study focused on public service delivery, Molina et al. argue that monitoring means “being able to observe and assess providers’ performance and provide feedback to providers and politicians” (2017: 463). According to the authors, (what they call) “community monitoring interventions” are beneficial for improving service delivery and reducing corruption in both the short and long run. In the short run, they may identify corruptive risks and inefficiencies in the system; in the long run, they may contribute to change the political and social norms and provide a new, transparent channel of communication between citizens and politicians or providers, to maintain a system of check and balances over the time (Molina et al. 2017: 463).

The aspect of *monitoring* has already been investigated in greater detail in the previous sections, vis-à-vis the concept of monitory democracy and monitory form of civic action (sections 2.1.3.1 and 2.1.3.2). It is worth, however, to make some conclusive remarks on the notion of *social accountability* as central to monitoring. Some authors, indeed, identify CBM as a mechanism of social accountability (see: Molina et al. 2017; Walker 2009). Walker (2009: 1036) defines accountability as not only an obligation for powerful actors to be called to account, but also their responsibility to be responsive to a less powerful public. Accordingly, *social accountability* is defined by Walker (2009: 1038) as the “approach towards building accountability that relies on civic engagement”, that is on the actions by citizens, communities, civic society organisations (CSOs) and independent media whose goal is to hold public officials and servants accountable. So to say, “social accountability seeks to invite society into the state” (Ackerman 2014: 310). According to Walker, the modes and applications of social accountability have emerged in the 1980s and 1990s initially in countries with a strong pre-existing civic society, such as India and Philippines (e.g. balanced scorecard and social auditing) and in Latin America (e.g. participatory budgeting). These have successively spread to other countries and evolved in various forms, such as processes of participatory planning, public-expenditure tracking, citizen monitoring and evaluation of public-service delivery, citizen advisory boards and oversight committees. As Walker argues, all these modes of social accountability recognise the rights collectively owned by citizens to “exercise authority over those accountable to them” (Walker 2009: 1038). As referring to the same issue, Ackerman (2014: 297) speaks of *rights of authority*. Of course, such considerations assume that some sort of citizen engagement is possible. In particular, according to Walker (but also as reported by other authors, for instance: Ackerman 2014, Barnes et al. 2007) accountability cannot be achieved without citizens’ capacity to exercise *voice*: through their *voice*, they require actions and responsiveness of power-holders, and call for sanctions when necessary. In the first instance, Walker says, citizens need to be *aware* of the rights to exercise their voice. Only afterwards, they can exercise their *voice* and enforce it through *agency* as active citizens. Barnes et al. (2007) remark some criticisms related to the praxis of voice and (social) agency. Although the authors found that the possibility to express voice was fundamental in many of the analysed case studies, material and/or institutional change was also necessary to sustain participation over time (Barnes et al. 2007: 201). Moreover, their evidence suggests that processes of political renewal (i.e. change of

political and social norms) were more likely to occur in case of new forms of social agency rooted in communities (Barnes et al. 2007: 204 ff.). At the same time, the success of such processes was endangered by the paradox that governments appear to be often uncomfortable with the forms of civic action associated with community activism, because of their challenging of governmental power. Molina et al. (2017: 467) point out to another potential concern, i.e. the possibility that the dynamic of accountability is broken down by the fact that the community or the citizens are not strictly needed for the institutional actor to stay in power. This may happen in case of loose electoral accountability chain or non-elective actors. That is, only a system of informal sanctions or rewards, or participation in independent governmental scrutiny mechanisms, may be expected to put in force accountability through CBM.

In the light of these contributions from the literature and for the purpose of this study, I focus on the following characteristics of CBM initiatives, which I accordingly define as follows:

Community-based monitoring comprises a variety of processes which see citizens organising themselves in groups based on identity or locality to monitor powerful social actors' actions by using or generating publicly held information; provide feedback on, and advocacy for, specific actions; demand response and responsiveness on these issues by the authorities and/or develop an own strategy of collective action (drawn from: Molina et al. 2017; Rogers 2016; Walker 2009).

Given the body of literature explored, specific objects of monitoring actions are commonly topics of public interest, and (material or immaterial) resources which are "highly valued" by the communities (Constantino et al. 2012). This is the case, for instance, of environmental protection, biodiversity, urban planning, public service delivery, public expenditure and allocation of public funds, political and administrative decision-making, electoral promises, etc.

In particular, this master thesis aims to analyse participatory processes of community-based monitoring and to locate them in the specific case of anti-corruption civic action. In the following paragraph I will subsequently explore literature on anti-corruption.

2.2 Anti-corruption research

The second body of literature this study is concerned with is the one of (anti-) corruption studies. I will start by providing a brief overview of the conceptualisation and phenomenon “public corruption”, then I will continue by distinguishing between state and civic instruments to tackle it.

2.2.1 The concept of corruption (public corruption)

In the last decades, corruption has affirmed as one of the most relevant issue among public, political and economic discussions. Corruption is expected to be matter of concern for political and economic decision-making because it introduces growing ineffectiveness, inequality and injustice – not only in less developed or authoritarian states, but also in consolidated, advanced democracies. Corruption, in fact, is expected to hamper the democratic model of delegation and the rule of law.

A corresponding growing interest in the topic is to be found among academics, which has ended up in a lively scientific debate. Nevertheless, understanding – let alone defining – corruption still represents a challenge for social scientists. One of the “standard”, most used definition of corruption is “abuse of entrusted power for private gain”⁹. This has, however, been contested as a too simplistic approach for defining corruption: since the norm or principle that is “abused” is not specified, this definition is empty and invites relativistic notions of what corruption is (see: Kurer 2015: 32; Rothstein 2014: 5). It could be meant in terms of legal norms alone: it is yet expected that legal definitions of corruption fail to capture some typologies of corrupt activities which occurs in respect (or in absence) of legal rules (Philp 2015: 22). Conversely, if social norms alone are meant, we could face a different problem: is (e.g.) the payment of a bribe to a public official not to consider corruption, if such is positively seen or normalised in a society? Even though agreeing over a univocal definition of corruption is still a challenge for this field of research, we can in fact recognise a common understanding, among ordinary people of different countries, of what corruption is (see for instance: Kurer 2015: 38). As Rothstein (2014: 5) suggests “one way to understand

⁹ This is the formulation provided by Transparency international, but many other definitions – closely resembling this one – are to be found in the literature and in the language of policy-makers, international organisations, etc. For some examples see *Introduction* in: Hough, D. (ed.) (2013). *Corruption, Anti-Corruption and Governance*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

why there seems to exist a universal understanding of what should count as corruption despite its enormous variation, both in types and frequency as well as location, is what could be labeled as a *public goods approach*” (emphasis in original). All societies, in order to survive, produce at least some basic forms of *public goods* (examples include security means, infrastructure, welfare – *if present*), i.e. goods which are expected to be governed and distributed according to a universalistic, public-interested principle. This principle implies that those who are assigned with the entrusted responsibility to manage the public good, i.e. public functionaries and politicians, should not act according to private wishes or in pursuit of private, partisan or sectorial gains. The practice of breaking this principle, concludes Rothstein (2014: 6), is recognised as *corruption* across space and time.

More specifically to the case of democracies, according to Warren (2004; 2015), this principle governing the management and allocation of the public good consist of the norms of *openness*, *publicity* and *inclusion*. Inclusion, as defined by Warren (2004: 332), means that “every individual potentially affected by a decision should have an equal opportunity to influence the decision”. In this sense, Warren speaks of corruption as a form of “duplicitous exclusion” (2015: 47-48): not only is the public excluded from having a say on the decision, but this decision subsequently benefits those who are included and harms those who are excluded.

In line with this approach and for the purpose of this thesis, we can outline the concept of corruption in distributive terms as follows:

Corruption in politics occurs where a public official (A) violates the rules and/or norms of office, to the detriment of the public interests and goods, to benefit himself/herself and a third party, who rewards or otherwise incentivises A to gain access to goods or services he/she would not otherwise obtain (drawn from Philp 2015).

That is, corruption involves at least three actors:

- the occupant of the public office (A);
- the expected beneficiary (B) of the public services, goods or decisions that A manages; this is, more in general, the *public* or the *citizens*;
- the actual beneficiary (C) of the corrupt exercise of the public office, i.e. the corruptor.

It is to be noted that I speak in this study of *public corruption*. In light of the literature and in my resulting understanding, the concept of public corruption is, in fact, comprehensive of *bureaucratic* (i.e. of public functionaries), *political* (i.e. of politicians, elected representatives) and *private-public sector* (i.e. of public contractors) corruption.

2.2.2 “Public corruption” as a social practice

The dominant approach in the social sciences is to consider corruption as a specific social practice, i.e. a type of behaviour that can emerge within particular relational contexts, where a more or less stable configuration of informal rules and enforcing mechanisms can in fact regulate the patterns of corruption (see, for instance: Vannucci 2017: 253). The rather value-based approach found in classical political theory¹⁰, which sees corruption as a perversion of “good” institutions (i.e. implicating a normative judgment of what “good” or “bad” means), will be not considered for this thesis.

Della Porta and Vannucci, in many of their studies (for instance: della Porta 2017; Vannucci 2015, 2017), distinguish between three paradigms for the analysis of corruption:

1. The first approach is the *economic paradigm*, which usually focuses on the principal-agent model of corruption. Corruption is considered the outcome of rational individual choices, which are determined by the factors defining the structure of expected costs-benefits.
2. The second approach is the *cultural paradigm*, which looks at the differences in cultural and social norms, and interiorised values, which shape individuals’ moral preferences and consideration of his or her social and institutional role. These elements can encourage public or private agents (not) to violate legal norms.
3. The third approach is the *neo-institutional paradigm*, which considers the mechanisms that allow the internal regulation of social interactions within corrupt networks, and their effects on individuals’ beliefs and preferences. Obviously, corrupt agreements cannot be enforced with legal sanctions, but

¹⁰ See, for instance, the concept of “corruption” in Aristotele, Macchiavelli and Montesquieu, among the classical political philosophers. For a theoretical review: Dobel, J. P. (1978). The Corruption of a State. The American Political Science Review. Vol. 72 (3). 958-973.

they can be secured by non-written rules (e.g. both actors have no interest in exposing the illicit because they would themselves undergo penalty), or “bad social capital” (della Porta 2017: 667). The latter could mean involving a third-party actor who has the resources to guarantee the corrupt exchange between agent and corruptor (e.g. members of mafia organisations who dispose of resources of violence).

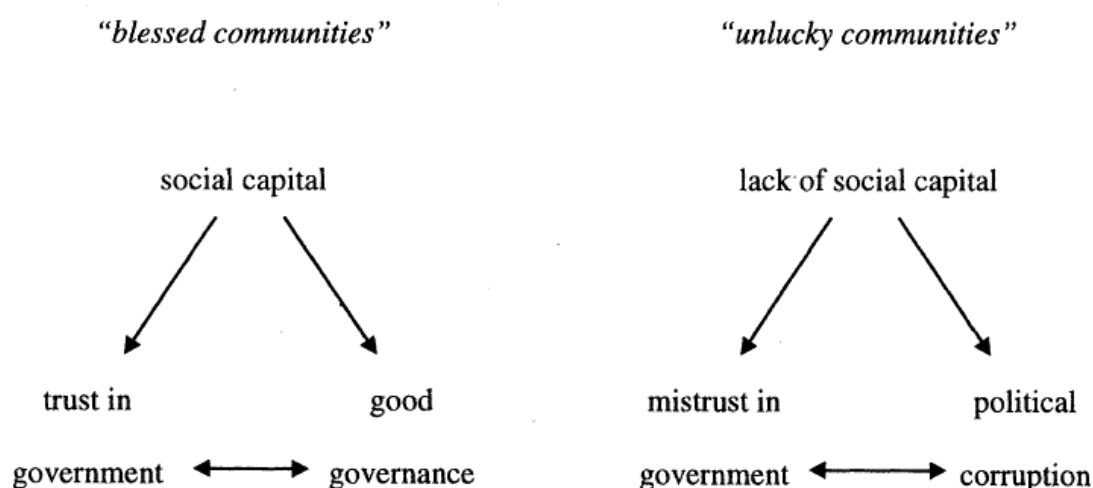
As a social practice, corruption deals with political and economic resources, converting the ones into the others – and *vice versa* (della Porta & Vannucci 1997, Vannucci 2017). This means that in a corruptive exchange, the political power of public officials to assign benefits (e.g. awarding a public contract) or impose costs (e.g. sanctioning fiscal irregularities) can be considered having a monetary value that can be paid by the *corruptor* to obtain or avoid the exercise of such political decision. In the same way, the economic power of the corruptor is transformed into political resource, capable to discretionally influence the process of decision-making. It has to be noted that, instead of monetary “payment”, also relational resources can have an economic value in such illegal exchange, e.g. by securing a job position in a friend’s company. Also, political resources not only could refer to decisions (or non-decision) but disclosure of confidential pieces of information, too. So to say, corruption “transforms the exercise of public authority into a form of ‘power business’” (della Porta & Vannucci 1997: 248). This *ratio* comes to substitute the universalistic, public-interested “rule of law” criteria for the allocation of the public good, introducing an element of “hidden and unaccountable *privatization* of public resources by public agents, which are preferentially assigned to those who have more monetary, political or relational resources to offer in exchange” (Vannucci 2017: 254; emphasis in original). This distortion, inevitably, negatively affects the channels of political delegation and fosters citizens’ indignation, frustration and mistrust. Moreover, it has been recognised by many scholars (see for instance: Heywood 2015; Kurer 2015; Vannucci 2017) that the recent neoliberalist trend in the governance of the postmodern state (including downsizing, sectorisation, privatisation, contracting out, deregulation etc.) has introduced new risks for corruption. The distinction between public- and private-sector has blurred: the interactions between public and private agents remain often unregulated, opaque and unaccountable and may therefore hamper the functioning of the markets, as well as the accountability and integrity of the public sphere. In fact,

many of the major corruption scandals of recent years have involved the interplay between governments and private-sector corporations (Heywood 2015: 7).

The actors involved in corruptive exchanges, of course, try to create or reinforce a “safe environment” for these illegal activities by reducing both vertical and horizontal accountability. As a consequence, “besides the socially wasteful outcome of such rent-seeking activities, an increase in the opacity of decision-making, a further escalation of economic and political inequalities, an adverse selection in political, economic and professional careers can be observed” (Vannucci 2017: 254).

Della Porta (2000) investigates the reciprocal relationships between social capital, trust in government and governmental performance to understand the conditions under which corruption is fostered or challenged. Della Porta adopts government performance (varying between good governance and public corruption) as the independent variable between the three elements (as illustrated in Figure 2).

Figure 2. The relationships of social capital, trust in government, and the government performance – with government performance as the independent variable – as discussed in della Porta (2000). (Source: della Porta 2000: 203).



Empirical evidence from France, Germany and Italy shows that perception of widespread corruption is inversely related to trust in government (della Porta 2000: 204). Accordingly, the author suggests that corruption worsens governmental performance (including maladministration), thus reducing trust in government’s capacity to address citizens’ demands and provide public services. Public mistrust, in

turn, actually favours corruption insofar as it drives citizens to look for alternative (particularistic) ways to gain access to decision-makers. That is, corruption and mistrust feed each other. A similar interaction concerns social capital: what della Porta calls “bad” social capital (alternative normative system and hidden network of power) facilitates the spread of corruption. Vice versa, systematic corruption reproduces this “bad” social capital, rewarding those who belong to corruptive networks and behave according to corruptive norms. According to della Porta (2000: 227) these vicious cycles help explain the dramatic increase in corruption in Italy in the 1980s. However, della Porta notes, corruption does not affect confidence in all institutions or forms of participation in the same way. The evidence from Italy suggests that despite the low degree of trust in representative institutions, Italians have demonstrated high degree of participation in both conventional and unconventional forms of civic engagement. Also, following the reveal of the Clean Hands scandal in the 1990s, public outrage about the widespread corruption and trust in the judiciary for fighting it have significantly increased. This has, altogether, set in motion a shift towards “good” social capital and good governance – which, I would argue in the context of this study, is still in progress. With regards to this, Warren (2015: 46) notes that “citizens should not necessarily trust legislators to represent their interests, since trust is misplaced in any context in which there are conflicting interests. But they should be able to trust the rules and procedures under which conflict is conducted, such that they have confidence that their opinions register and enter into compromises and that the reasons for decisions are public for all to see”.

2.2.3 How to tackle corruption: different approaches of anti-corruption

In response to the multi-faceted and complex nature of corruption, we can recognise different approaches to tackle it. As we have explored in the previous section, public corruption is the outcome of individual and collective behaviour, supported or discouraged by the institutional and relational structures, as well as social and cultural norms. The combination of these elements creates expectations, habits, beliefs, preferences, ways of thinking and value-based judgments on private or public actions, consequently influencing public opinion over corruption and its diffusion throughout the state, markets and civil society. In the light of this, according to Vannucci (2017: 272),

an effective anti-corruption strategy is basically expected to change – in positive – such elements through the introduction of material disincentives, societal recognition of the value of integrity and moral barriers. As the author argues, this comprises both the *vertical dimension* of formal regulation and enforcement mechanisms; and the *horizontal dimension* of informal constraints of moral (i.e. interiorised) and social accountability mechanisms (Vannucci 2017: 273). To put it in other words, in the vertical dimension we find *top-down* policies implemented by the state coercive apparatus; in the horizontal dimension, we find *bottom-up* strategies which see the mobilisation and empowerment of societal actors and groups. In particular, informal constraints can prove fundamental in enhancing or hindering anti-corruption. They alone can compete with or rather substitute ineffective formal institutions by introducing (moral, social, etc.) costs for corruption. The other way around, they can render the functioning of effective formal institutions useless, if they introduce competing values which see corruption as socially and culturally accepted. In any case, informal constraints are needed to complement formal institution for effective anti-corruption achievements.

In contraposition to maladministration and malfeasance, anti-corruption has come to constitute an essential aspect of furthering good governance (Moroff & Schmidt-Pfister 2010). Also, scholars argue that sustainable anti-corruption policies should contemplate corruption as a problem in the relationship between state and society in general, and in the functioning of democratic institutions (see: Ackerman 2014, Katsios 2016). Thus, anti-corruption policies should aim in the end to achieve social accountability as a tool for active citizens' participation in (transparent and accountable) decision-making processes. In fact, according to the analyses of Vannucci and della Porta (della Porta & Vannucci 2014; Vannucci 2015, 2017), in recent years social movements concerned with the fight against corruption ultimately commit to restore the quality of democratic life and achieve social justice. The (re-)emerging narrative thus intends politics – in its integrity – “as a contribution to a realization of the common good” (Vannucci 2017: 276).

In sum, as Vannucci puts it, “it is no matter of controversy – political or academic – that corruption could be curbed by reducing the monopoly rents and arbitrary power in their political or bureaucratic allocation, enhancing an open competition in the private and public sectors, increasing transparency and accountability of public actors, introducing

more effective controls and feedback mechanisms on the outcomes of public policies, strengthening moral barriers and societal control over the public sphere. It is an open question, however, under which political and institutional conditions effective reforms will be realistically approved and implemented to reduce the diffusion of corruption” (2017: 254). Thus, this remains far from meaning that there is a simple or universal “recipe” for anti-corruption. As many authors highlight (see for instance: Ackerman 2014; Vannucci 2015) context matters and strategies for preventing and fighting corruption should thus be adapted to specific patterns of corruption, but also to the societal informal framework of the place and time of interest. Anti-corruption strategies, mechanisms and instruments can thus vary a lot in terms of scope, promoting and involved actors, target groups, expected and produced impact, and level of action.

With focus on the analysis of anti-corruption efforts in Eastern Europe, Moroff & Schmidt-Pfister (2010) differentiate between three levels of anti-corruption action (and actors) with significant degrees of influence and connection with each other: domestic civil society (social movements, NGOs, national businesses and business associations, academics, etc.), governmental political machines (national governments, their agencies and administrations, politicians, and political parties) and international society (international organisations, international NGOs, private foundations, think tanks, multinational businesses, and some very active Western governments). The motivations of these actors to tackle corruption can be very different and their actions can be carried out by varying instruments at their disposal. As the authors point out (Moroff & Schmidt-Pfister 2010: 92 ff.), among the motives some “genuine” commitment to the cause can be found, as well as “self-interested”, instrumentalised action – driven by public relations reasons, monetary benefits, legitimacy crises, scandalisation of pervasive or high-profile corruption cases, opportunity for the expansion of the own sphere of influence, and so on. The interplay between the three levels of action can thus be influenced also by the motivations of the respective actors. Domestic and international civil society, for instance, can be found to collaborate especially in cases where the government is reluctant to change its policies and behaviour, as it is very often the case in development and transition countries (Moroff & Schmidt-Pfister 2010: 94). With regards to the instruments employed, as it will be analysed further in the following sections, the authors found that civil society is employing the broadest array of strategies; international actors have

developed mainly legal and financial mechanisms in the form of conventions and conditionality regimes; whereas national governments instituted anti-corruption agencies, laws and regulations. In conclusion of their study, Moroff & Schmidt-Pfister argue that national and international anti-corruption efforts appear to be “deeply intertwined, albeit not necessarily strategically coordinated” and recognise that “anti-corruption promotion is still in its very early stages”, as crucial national policy developments, as well as international policy and advocacy growing, have gained more substance only throughout the early 2000s (2010: 95).

In the following sections, I will explore the instruments at disposal of the actors committed to anti-corruption in greater detail, distinguishing between governmental and civic instruments.

2.2.3.1 State and governmental instruments

Governmental instruments may be found at the national, international and transnational level. As already introduced in the previous section, these are mainly legal and financial instruments, in the form of conventions and conditionality regimes, anti-corruption agencies, laws and regulations.

The most influential transnational instrument has been the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC)¹¹, as it is the only legally binding global anti-corruption instrument. It entered into force in 2005 and to the present day counts 186 signatories. The Convention covers five main areas of action: prevention, law enforcement, international cooperation, asset recovery, technical assistance and information exchange.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)¹² has produced the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, which entered into force in 1999 and now is signed by 36 OECD countries and 8 non-OECD countries. The convention has been reviewed and updated by the Working Group on Bribery in 2009 and 2019 (currently underway).

¹¹ I make reference to the official website of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime on the UNCAC: <https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/corruption/uncac.html>

¹² I make reference to the official website of the OECD on the Anti-Bribery Convention: <http://www.oecd.org/daf/anti-bribery/oecdantibriberyconvention.htm>

In the European region, the European Union¹³ has committed to anti-corruption by monitoring and fostering that Member States have effective anti-corruption policies. In article 69/B of the Treaty of Lisbon, corruption is recognised as “euro-crime”, therefore the EU holds legislating powers to regulate this area. Since 2005, the EU is signatory of the UNCAC, as well. Moreover, the Council of Europe (CoE) has developed anti-corruption regional tools, such as the CoE Criminal Law Convention on Corruption entered into force in 2002 and the CoE Civil Law Convention in 2003. In 1999 the Group of States against Corruption (GRECO) has been established, whose task now is to monitor the compliance of national measures with both EU standards and the conventions. At the same time, the accomplishment of anti-corruption yardsticks figures high on the agenda of the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), i.e. for evaluation of neighbouring countries willing to enter the EU. The European Union has had a direct influence on anti-corruption policies, especially on the 2004 and 2007 EU Eastern enlargements and on the current candidate countries through the ENP. However, some scholars argue that, after entering the European Union, membership conditionality seems to lose its potentiality of impact, even though the European Union may still hold resources of power by the mean of freezing funds over eventual concerns of corruption (Moroff & Schmidt-Pfister 2010: 97).

International instruments, such as the ones presented so far, operate through regular and highly formalised evaluation procedures and are often considered among the major governmental mechanisms of anti-corruption. However, scholars growingly agree that even though such symbolic legal mechanisms induced by the international level are in place, they are likely to run the risk of remaining ineffective due to a lack of implementation on the national level (for instance: Moroff & Schmidt-Pfister 2010). Moroff & Schmidt-Pfister (2010: 97) suggest that according to national elite perceptions international anti-corruption requirements are not properly adjusted to the local context. Similarly, Rothstein (2014: 5) argues that, because the international anti-corruption agenda represents specific Western liberal ideals, it is not easily applicable to countries outside that part of the world. Further criticism seems to concern the necessity to involve domestic actors for ensuring rooted societal constraints for corruptive

¹³ I make reference to the official website of the European Commission on corruption fight and prevention (a), as well as to the Treaty of Lisbon (b):

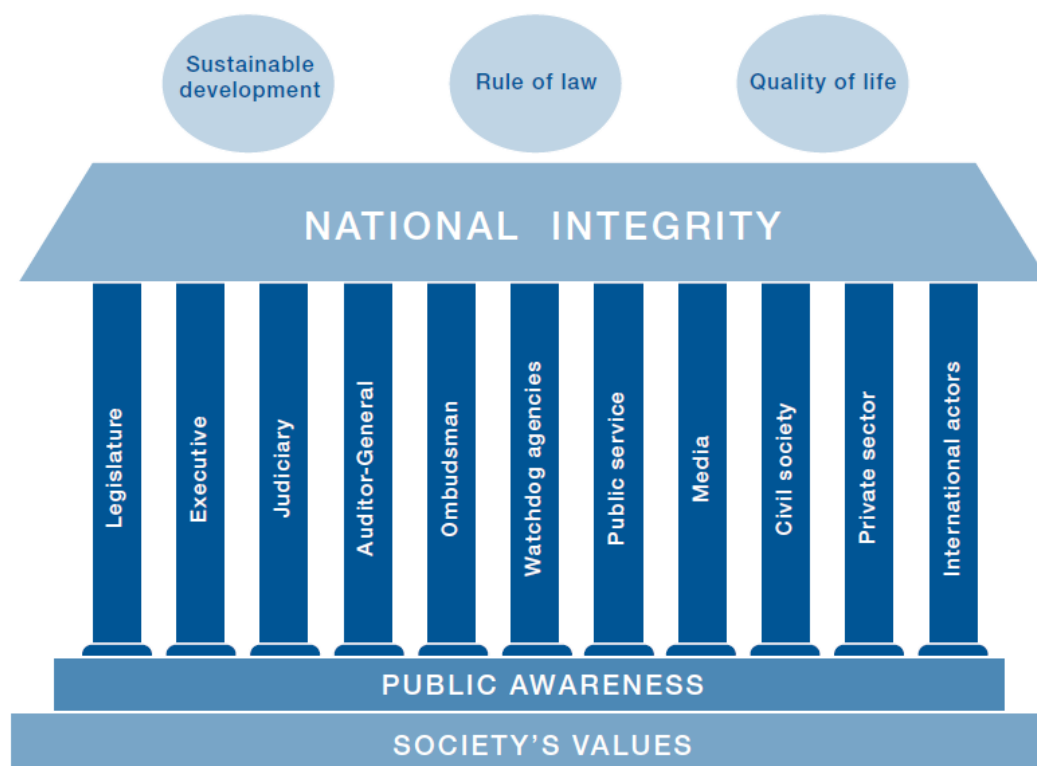
(a) https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/organized-crime-and-human-trafficking/corruption_en

(b) <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A12007L%2FTXT> [English version]

behaviours, as otherwise international legal instruments would fail in their efficacy (Moroff & Schmidt-Pfister 2010, but also Wheatland 2016).

On the national level, it is possible to identify different instruments and strategies. In his working paper issued for the Australian government, McCusker (2006: 8 ff.) reviews three key schools of thought on state strategies for corruption reduction and prevention. The first one is *interventionism*, in which the relevant authorities intervene when corrupt actions occur in order to capture and punish the offender(s). This is of course a very limited strategy, given that the majority of corruptive crimes remains undetected (i.e. the foreseen system of deterrence is unlikely to be effective) and the (societal) harm has already occurred when the system of punishment comes into effect. The second school of thought calls for *managerialism*, i.e. a strategy in which corruptive opportunities are tried to be reduced or eliminated by establishing appropriate organisational systems, procedures and protocols within state agencies. This, however, does not automatically prevent individuals from operating in contrast to such rules, as it does ignore the dimension of individuals' motivation to either comply with them or not. The third school of thought is the one of *organisational integrity*, in which norms of ethical behaviour are created within an organisation, targeting directly the organisational context in which individuals operate, rather than individuals themselves. This, as the author suggests, should be integrated with a structural framework that removes the possibility of corrupt practices, as well. Apart from judging their effectiveness, these strategies seen so far present two shortcomings: first, they consider institutional action alone; second, they may be meaningful in the bureaucratic arena rather than in the political one (Warren 2015: 47). Other entities, instead, advocate for a more holistic approach in national anti-corruption action. For instance, Transparency International (Pope 2000: 34) develops the idea of an anti-corruption strategy called "National Integrity System" (NIS). In this case, the institutional strategy is taken into account as part of a national coordinated effort, together with the contribution of all key civic sectors and actors – given the premises of robust society's anti-corruption values and awareness, for the final goal of achieving what they call *sustainable development, rule of law and quality of life* (Figure 3).

Figure 3. The National Integrity System as theorised in Pope 2000: 35. (Source: McCusker 2006: 11).



As to the empirical evidence from recent years, many governments have approached the issue by passing comprehensive anti-corruption reform packages, which “typically address several aspects of national governance, including civil society space, transparency in public finances, economic policy, the civil service, financial controls, judicial independence and institutional mandates” (Oldfield 2017: 1). Other evidence (see: Ackerman 2014) seems to indicate that one of the most popular anti-corruption state reforms has been the creation of (semi-)independent “pro-accountability” agencies, which are autonomous public institutions, responsible for holding government accountable in a specific issue area (Keane 2009 called them “public scrutiny institutions”), such as autonomous corruption control agencies, independent electoral institutes and auditing agencies. Such instruments aim at building “vertical” accountability, whereas it has been shown that the more they interact with the civic society, the more effective their action is, therefore contributing to enhance “horizontal” accountability (Ackerman 2014: 313). In fact, this brings us back to the question of social accountability: according to Ackerman (2014: 313 ff.), governments should complement reforms for strengthening top-down oversight with bottom-up “fire alarm”

mechanisms in order to be fully effective. This way, agencies can rely on (external) civic actors to detect when there are (internal) problems and then intervene in those particular areas. According to Ackerman (2014: 325), governments have the possibility to institutionalise participatory mechanisms at three different levels: participatory mechanisms can be built into the strategic plans of government agencies; specific agencies can be created to guarantee public participation in government activities; or participatory mechanisms can be required and ensured by law. However, the author notes, participatory mechanisms are usually vastly under-institutionalised, and governmental actors tend to only involve few NGOs or groups which are expected to do not conflict. Over-institutionalisation is conversely undesirable, as it undermines the autonomy of action of the civil society.

Overall, with regard to the role of the state in anti-corruption, a growing number of scholars have recognised the critical importance of the existence or lack of *political will* in the success or failure of governance and anti-corruption reforms (see: Martinez B. Kukutschka 2015). Political will proves to be of strategic importance because state actors, who should implement such reforms, are at the same time potentially the greatest beneficiaries of public corruption, that is they have personal incentives to use and maintain corruptive exchanges in government for their own benefit.

In conclusion of this section, governmental instruments can be regarded as essential to provide a structural (legal and symbolic) framework for anti-corruption, but they also face challenges with regards to their implementation and effectiveness, depending on political will, national and societal context (social and cultural constraints), involvement of the civil society. In order to overcome these challenges, thus, governmental instruments need to be complemented by instruments for civic action – as I will investigate below.

2.2.3.2 Civic instruments

Especially true for the European region, evidence from different studies (see, for instance, Moroff & Schmidt-Pfister 2010) suggests that civil society seems to take over as the main driving force behind anti-corruption, thus suggesting a shift from (inter-)governmental mechanisms to social movements.

The vital role of the civic society in fighting and preventing corruption has been almost unanimously recognised by practitioners and scholars in the past years. The UN Convention against Corruption¹⁴ – already presented in the previous section – provides for the obligations of the signatories to develop or maintain "coordinated anti-corruption policies that promote the participation of society" (art. 5, par. 1). Specifically, Article 13 "*Participation of society*" provides for the promotion of "active participation of individuals and groups outside the public sector, such as civil society, NGOs and community-based organizations in the prevention of and the fight against corruption" and for awareness-raising goals (art. 13, par. 1). As formulated in Article 13 (a) to (d), civic action should be thus strengthened by increasing the transparency of decision-making processes and promoting public participation in such processes; and by ensuring citizens' access to and use of public information, in respect of their Right to Know.

As different contributions from the literature have underlined, civic actors are relevant for producing contextual understanding of corruption; for improving anti-corruption policies by formulating specific demands and offering expert and local knowledge; for improving accountability in the public and private sector; for producing research into various areas of anti-corruption work; for producing anti-corruption discourses related to other issues of civic action such as environmental protection or public health; for experimenting with alternative forms of collective action (for overviews see: Mattoni 2017: 3; Wheatland 2016: 2). Public participation can play a fundamental role in preventing corruption, because the presence of citizens within the spaces of decision-making reduces the opportunities for corruption and the public does not have to wait for ex-post mechanisms of control (see among others: Ackerman 2014; Marín 2016). As already outlined, Moroff & Schmidt-Pfister (2010: 97-98) argue that the civil society is needed for international and technical anti-corruption approaches to take roots domestically. Also, only when official rules are complemented by coherent informal institutions they tend to produce the expected outcomes, that is the involvement of civil society and local community participation in anti-corruption policies is fundamental for making anti-corruption regulations really effective (Vannucci 2017). The public is recognised responsible for monitoring government activities and raise awareness

¹⁴ See the full text here:
https://www.unodc.org/documents/treaties/UNCAC/Publications/Convention/08-50026_E.pdf.

about the issue, thus building or reinforcing horizontal accountability. This can, in turn, raise the cost for politicians and public functionaries for corruptive behaviour, as well as the cost for issue's removal from the policy agenda or lacking personal commitment to transparency and anti-corruption. Katsios (2016) also recognises the role of civic society in enhancing anti-corruption governance, through a variety of actions (e.g. provide information to the government; maintain the pressure for a systematic and coherent policy implementation; indicate failures and suggest improvements; etc.) which closely resemble the already characterised monitory forms of civic action. As Ackerman (2014: 326) puts it, "good laws, open institutions, and pro-active public servants will do very little if civil society itself is not able to take advantage of these openings". Therefore, citizens who want to tackle corruption need to build their capacities to monitor and dialogue with institutions, and get together in (more or less) organised groups to assure a long-term sustainability of social accountability initiatives. Nevertheless, Ackerman recognises that there is a limit to the extent to which citizens can act as agents of accountability vis-à-vis the state. Co-management and co-operation can be incompatible with effective social accountability, so that it is desirable for societal actors to maintain a certain degree of autonomy with respect to state actors (Ackerman 2014: 328).

There are studies which present successful cases of citizen-centred approaches. For instance, Gaventa & Barrett (2012) investigated citizen initiatives across 20 countries and found that 75 out of 100 case studies have indeed produced positive social and governance outcomes in four broad areas: the construction of citizenship; strengthened practices of citizen engagement; building responsive and accountable states; and more inclusive and cohesive societies. Also, the study of Grimes (2012) has brought evidence that civil society initiatives have impact on reducing corruption, but only in presence of certain supporting factors, such as media freedom, high political competition (i.e. citizens have the true capacity to choose their representatives among different candidates) and government transparency. Even though, there is still limited systematic evidence about the impact of citizen-centred instruments on anti-corruption, because this mostly comes from specific case studies (Marín 2016: 6). Said that, the use (and success) of civic instruments of anti-corruption are, of course, highly dependent on contextual factors. In particular, as summarised in Marín (2016: 6 ff.), *enablers* of citizen engagement in anti-corruption are: effectiveness of oversight

institutions to seek accountability and apply sanctions; effectiveness of electoral accountability; political will; access to information; free media; plural, autonomous and organised civil society. In turn, *limits* of citizen engagement in anti-corruption are: limited civil society and citizen capacities; lack of political will or capacity to respond to the demands of citizens; lack of inclusiveness and co-optation risks.

As we have explored so far, various contributions from the literature and by practitioners pay increased attention to citizen-centred approaches to increase quality of democratic life, good governance and anti-corruption. Arguments advocating for this approach in anti-corruption – in sum – include the recognition of the model of social accountability, the role of informal constraints and bottom-up oversight, the importance of contextual knowledge and embedded action, the impact of social capital and institutional trust. In accordance with the findings presented so far, and following Marín (2016: 2 ff.), we can thus discuss various forms of civic action that promote good governance and anti-corruption:

- Civic actors can engage in the promotion of *transparency* for reducing the spaces and opportunities for corruption. Examples include the promotion of the Right to Know, access to and use of governmental open data, production and use of (missing, more or better) public information.
- Civic actors can engage in the promotion of *integrity*, which aim at building spread normative societal constraints against corruption. Examples include all educational and awareness-raising activities, such as trainings in schools, universities and public agencies, campaigns, demonstrations.
- Civic actors can run *monitoring* and *evaluation* activities, in order to expose and denounce cases of malfeasance, or lack of implementation of (for instance: anti-corruption) governmental policies. Through monitoring and evaluation activities, the civil society can subsequently advocate for institutional oversight mechanisms to apply formal sanctions or produce moral and reputational sanctions to public officials. Examples of such activities include public expenditure tracking and public revenue monitoring mechanisms, as well as citizen scorecards, report cards, citizen feedback models, public audits and even scandalisation through naming and shaming of corrupt individuals (e.g. on media).

There are also various ways in which the civil society may engage in such activities. On the one hand, civic actors can participate as individual citizens (including whistle-blowers), communities, research and educational entities, independent media, civil society organisations (CSOs) or loose network of like-minded citizens (see: della Porta 2017; Marín 2016: 3). On the other hand, civic actors can take part in institutionalised participatory processes or initiate their own. Evidence of the different effects that civic anti-corruption actions can have distinguish between direct short-term outcomes (such as sanctioning a public official, or improving the use of resources in the local public service delivery) and indirect long-term outcomes (such as building inclusive and cohesive societies, or strengthening the rule of law) (Marín 2016: 4-5). The former are often specific to one public sector or activity, while the latter include broad and diffuse impact.

Civil society employs a vast array of anti-corruption strategies. Della Porta (2017: 670 ff.) analyses different types of civil society actors contributing to bottom-up anti-corruption efforts, along their characteristics of *repertoires of action*, *mobilising resources* and *anti-corruption framing*. The first type she looks at is public interest groups, exemplified by Transparency International (TI): the author argues that their action is dominantly oriented towards lobbying, combining information collection and production (research, publications and tools), organising events, developing projects and fund-raising, networking with national and international elites (in politics, economics and academia). Inevitably, della Porta points out (2017: 671), “TI operates through negotiation and cooperation, refusing open confrontation”. Organisational activities are oriented towards mobilising resources (in particular fundraising) and the organisational structure is made up of professionals rather than activists; links with domestic social movements are only occasional. TI has framed the issue of anti-corruption in an inclusive way, oriented to forming a coalition of government, business, and civil society to a “generic” fight against corruption. Della Porta (2017: 674 ff.) presents then a second type of civil society actors, i.e. anti-corruption movements, such as the *Indignados* in Spain and Greece. These undertake mainly protest actions, from street demonstrations to sit-in; new technologies are used within a logic of crowd sourcing, producing also “online” mass aggregation. The anti-corruption movements often originate from previous waves of protest, aggregating more or less formal groups, characterised by horizontal forms of organisation and plurality in ideology, age,

ethnicity, religion, etc. They (re-)act especially towards (real or perceived) social and political crises, linking corruption to social inequality and the delegitimation of the political class. They point at the convergence of business and politicians, who are seen as representative of banks and financial power, rather than of the people. That is, they call on the “common people” to mobilise against the corruption of the system (or: of the elite). The third type of anti-corruption civil actors analysed by della Porta (2017: 679 ff.) are digital activists, also called *hacktivists* (from *hack* and *activisms*), exemplified among others by WikiLeaks. These actors employ advanced technologies for direct action directed towards free information, either disclosing reserved governmental information which bring evidence of malfeasance or supporting the action of (civic) whistle-blowers. Even though this is not the case of WikiLeaks, other hacktivists also make use of legal instrument of the Right to Know, organising for instance *hackathons* (from *hack* and *marathon*), events which bring together civic hackers, usually for one or two days, to simultaneously access information about a specific topic (which may change from time to time). Examples of this are the hackathons organised in Italy in 2014 by Spaghetti Open Data¹⁵, to gather information about confiscated assets from mafia organisations, monitoring the absence of irregularities in their reallocation and reuse. Digital activists mostly organise in horizontal and decentralised networks. In both cases, transparency in government and society achieved through free information is regarded as extremely relevant in the fight against corruption. The building of transparency is bridged with claims of social justice.

Mattoni (2017) also analyses the emergence and characteristics of anti-corruption civic actors who engage in data-activism. Mattoni focuses on two case studies, i.e. two long-lasting grassroots anti-corruption campaigns: “Riparte il Futuro” in Italy and “15MpaRato” in Spain are both presented as outcomes of bottom-up efforts to activate institutional powers to prevent or punish corruption, respectively directed at the legislative and the judiciary (Mattoni 2017: 3). The author argues that the two campaigns illustrate how transparency may be constructed from the bottom-up irrespective of government’s initiatives, in the context of grassroots opposition to corruption. In this case, in fact, citizens are not merely *recipients*, but *agents* of transparency, as they play a prominent role in the production and transformation of

¹⁵ For a brief historical overview of this example: <https://www.confiscatibene.it/la-storia>. Today the group is organised as onData, see the official website: <http://ondata.it/>.

information in form of digital data. The potential of using (and producing) digital data is not new in civic anti-corruption: well-known platforms such as “I Paid a Bribe”¹⁶ in India and “Not in My Country” in Uganda (not active anymore) are built on crowd-reporting mechanisms to monitor corruption from below. The cases analysed by Mattoni (2017: 24 ff.), however, have the peculiarity to embed digital data in grassroots movements’ action, with consequences on the quality of the transparency achieved, and on the empowerment of the public through forms of active citizenship. In particular, Mattoni draws very interesting conclusions about the agents of civic anti-corruption: both individual agency and collective efforts are to be considered as essential in the broader commitment against corruption. The case of data-related practices, for instance, sees individuals at the forefront of data creation but also return a primary role to social movement organisations for data transformation and for ensuring that individual engagements, collectively, succeed in obtaining impact and recognition (Mattoni 2017: 27). Such practices, therefore, “have the potential to rearticulate the interconnection between the individual citizen and collective actors” (Mattoni 2017: 28).

Finally, within the vast body of research and publications of TI, we can find reference to further civic instruments of anti-corruption, e.g. anti-corruption coalitions (Martini 2015) and civil society budget monitoring (Martinez B. Kukutschka 2016).

¹⁶ See the official website: <http://www.ipaidabribe.com>

2.3 Research hypotheses: investigating participatory processes of anti-corruption community-based monitoring

Drawing from the theoretical and empirical contributions from the literature seen so far, this master thesis aims to investigate participatory processes of CBM as monitory form of civic action, and their added-value for anti-corruption efforts.

Based on the analysis of my case study, in the next section of the thesis I will empirically investigate and discuss the following hypotheses:

H1: Community-based monitoring initiatives represent a citizen-driven participatory instrument by functioning as monitory form of civic action.

H2: In cases of public corruption, community-based monitoring represents a necessary approach for political participation.

H3: Community-based monitoring initiatives have the potential to make anti-corruption efforts participatory and citizen-driven.

3. Research design

3.1 Case study “Com.mon” (Italy)

In order to empirically answer the research questions, I employ a case study approach. In particular, I analyse the project "Com.mon" (Figure 4), which is the product of a collaboration between two Italian civic society organizations: "Gruppo Abele", based in Turin, and "Libera. Associazioni, nomi e numeri contro le mafie" (Libera. Associations, names and numbers against the mafia organisations; from now on only “Libera”), based in Rome. I briefly introduce my case study in this section, and then proceed with its analysis and more in-depth information in the following chapter.

Figure 4. Logo of Com.mon. (Source: <https://www.facebook.com/comunitamonitoranti/>).



"Com.mon" stands for *monitoring communities* (from the Italian: comunità monitoranti) and represents a project of anti-corruption community-based monitoring, both for the prevention of and fight against corruption cases. At the same time, "Com.mon" stands for *commons* and *common* people, as this reflects the general approach of the project, which places a strong focus on the development of a committed and networked civil society (in form of communities), also in the sense of a joint administration of the *common goods*. The project includes various initiatives of CBM, such as the monitoring of local level service delivery (waste management, water, public health, etc.) and public administration, or of some context-specific experiences from the Italian case, such as the management of assets confiscated from mafia organisations (see below for greater details). The project started in summer 2016, with some initiatives already in place beforehand, and nowadays counts about eleven communities active throughout the Italian territory (five of which are still in a development phase). The central office of

Com.mon in Turin provides for training (methodological and analytical tools for civic anti-corruption action), assistance, networking and coordination for the communities.

3.2 Methods

As in chapter 2 of this study, I have first reviewed existing literature on participation, Open Government and anti-corruption, exploring the state of affairs of civic participation to democratic life and anti-corruption civic actions. Furthermore, in order to empirically answer the research questions, this thesis employs a case study approach, combining (direct and participant) observation (see 3.2.1) and document review (see 3.2.2). The so-collected data are analysed qualitatively in order to meaningfully test, i.e. accept or dismiss, the research hypotheses. In addition to that, secondary data analysis may be conducted in order to better understand the previously obtained information about the case study and give a contextual overview of the phenomenon “public corruption”, i.e. providing information about the Italian socio-political and legal scenario and corruption perception index.

3.2.1 Fieldwork and observation

I engaged in a field research at the central office of Com.mon, hosted by the anti-corruption area of the organisation Gruppo Abele, in Turin (Italy). The fieldwork lasted for about four months, from September to December 2018, and took place in the context of an Erasmus+-funded traineeship.

Before starting the fieldwork, I have prepared some guidelines useful for the collection and organisation of the empirical material (see Appendices II and III). I collected and organised the material relevant to this study mainly during the office working hours, during which I was present in the same space where the daily activities of the organisation took place ordinarily. If necessary, I have discussed the material together with the staff of Com.mon, asking for greater details, missing information, specific understandings of terminologies and practices. In particular, during the time I engaged in the fieldwork, the office has been staffed by a single person, i.e. the main referent of the project. This has resulted as particularly relevant for the quality of the collected data, for two reasons. On one side, this person has been initiator of the project

Common, that is he has a historical memory of the genesis and evolution of the project, as well as he has contributed to the very idea and conceptualisation of the initiative. On the other side, he is the core organiser of all current activities, that is he holds complete and up-to-date knowledge about the project. Together, this has allowed a first-hand, precise reconstruction of the case study.

In addition to this, I took part in two field trips:

- mid of October 2018 I joined a workshop of about two hours with high school students in Como (Italy), on the topic of anti-corruption and CBM;
- at the beginning of November 2018 I took part in a field trip to Aosta (Italy), where I joined a local training for two days, aimed at empowering a local association of Libera to start a CBM initiative.

That is, during my fieldwork, both direct observation and participant observation of the CSO's and communities' actions are conducted. My attitude and behaviour as observer have spanned between moderate and active participation.

I took both descriptive and reflective field notes, in written and digital form. The textual data are originally collected in Italian. Only the parts relevant to this study are freely and personally translated into English and examined.

The aim is to get information about the management and implementation of community-based monitoring initiatives. Moreover, this allows me to gather insights from the practitioners' point of view about the challenges and incentives related to their field of action, strengths of this participatory instrument and further improvement possibilities.

3.2.2 Document review

Review of documents produced by the CSOs is conducted. These include:

- one internal strategic and analytical document made available for the purpose of this research, which registers the state of the project as by the end of 2018;
- one publication for practitioners (available both in digital or book format) "Anticorruzione Pop" (Ferrante & Vannucci 2017), which provides an

introduction to the topic of public corruption suitable for the wide public and formulates ten steps for civic anti-corruption action, with the instrument of CBM;

- the website of the organisations¹⁷ and social media site¹⁸ (Facebook) of the project, although these are a modest source of information, due to their limited usage.

The entire textual data are originally in Italian. Only the parts relevant to this study are freely and personally translated into English and examined.

The aim is to analyse the self-assessment of the organisation vis-à-vis its mission, activity, methodology as well as internal and external constraints. Moreover, these textual data are used to double-check, correct or complement the information collected during the fieldwork.

¹⁷ See: www.gruppoabele.org; www.libera.it/

¹⁸ See: www.facebook.com/comunitamonitoranti/

4. Analysis of the empirical data

4.1 Anti-corruption community-based monitoring: Com.mon

In order to be able to empirically answer the research questions, in the first place I provide descriptive and reflective information about the case study, based on the data collected during the (direct and participant) observation, as well as document review. The information is reported in a schematic way in Table 1, structured along the guidelines for the understanding of participatory processes suggested on *Participedia*¹⁹. The information is then discussed in greater detail in the following sections.

Table 1. Com.mon descriptive card. (Source: own depiction).

Com.mon descriptive card		
Overview	General issue(s)	Community development; accountability; social justice; Right to Know
	Specific topic(s)	Community capacity-building; anti-corruption
Location	Country	Italy
	Geographical scope	National, as referred to the whole project; Local, as referred to the CBM processes carried out by the specific communities
Purpose	Intended purpose(s)	Raise public awareness; social accountability; community-building
History	Starting time	Summer 2016
	Ongoing (as by April 2019)	Yes
Participants	Targeted participants (demographics)	General public
	Targeted participants (public roles)	Stakeholder organisations (e.g. NGOs, associations, etc.)
	Method(s) of recruitment	Open to all; mainly through Libera's network of local associations
Process	Method(s)	Com.mon method of community-based monitoring

¹⁹ *Participedia* is an online platform for researchers and practitioners to share knowledge about, compare and learn from (evolving forms of) participatory processes taking place across the globe. See: <https://participedia.net/en>.

	Facilitation	Yes (remote): staff of Com.mon
	Face-to-face, online or both	Face-to-face
	Type(s) of interaction among participants	Discussion, dialogue; informal social activities
	Targeted audience(s)	General public; elected public officials; appointed public officials; organised groups (e.g. NGOs, associations, etc.)
	Method(s) of communication with audience	Social media; traditional media; public hearings/meetings
Organisers	Type of funding entity	CSOs: Gruppo Abele and Libera
	Type of organising entity	CSOs: Gruppo Abele and Libera
	Type of supporting entity	CSOs/NGOs (varying according to specific cases); academic institutions, in particular Master APC

4.1.1 Background history and context

Gruppo Abele partnered with Libera in mid-2016 to start a CBM project across Italy. The project was launched in response to registered contextual needs and opportunities. First of all, the problem of corruption has been representing one of the most pressing issue in the contemporary Italian (civic and institutional) agenda, because of its harmful impact on the political, social and economic arenas. Italy, for instance, has proven badly in global rankings, standing on position 53 out of 180 countries of Transparency International's 2018 Corruption Perception Index²⁰ (CPI), with a poor score of 52 on a scale of 0 (highly corrupt) to 100 (very clean). This is so far the best result achieved by Italy, compared to the CPI of last years. In my observation about how the CSOs analyse the Italian context, corruption is regarded as tightly connected to other economic and socio-political phenomena of relevance for today. Widespread corruption feeds a welfare system that directs money towards the services that are most remunerative for corrupt agents, and not towards the ones that are really needed, with obvious impact on the quality, variety and scope of all public

²⁰ See the whole CPI 2018: <https://www.transparency.org/cpi2018>

services. This contributes to rising inequalities and poverty, and therefore, to rising levels of social conflict. The dominant discourse, however, tends to direct discontent elsewhere, for instance by pointing at migrants as scapegoats. In alternative, recent penal measures introduced by the Italian government and announced with the hashtag #spazzacorrotti²¹ (Wipe out the corrupt) reinforce the narrative that harshening penal sanctions against supposedly corrupt individuals will play a determinant role in combating corruption, ruling out the civil society. In contrast to such narrative, the fight against corruption is clearly a primary goal for civic actors such as Gruppo Abele and Libera, whose goals include achieving social justice and building sustainable, inclusive and peaceful societies.

As long as the institutional side is concerned, Italy has committed to anti-corruption on the international stage: Italy is signatory of the CoE Civil and Criminal Law Conventions against Corruption and the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention. Italy signed the UNCAC in 2003 and ratified it in 2009, undertaking its implementation. Also, Italy officially joined the Open Government Partnership in 2011, following which the country has more strongly committed to improving governmental transparency, integrity and disclosure of open data. Especially relevant for the instrument of CBM was the introduction of two national reforms in the legal and institutional framework, i.e. the anti-corruption law (n. 190/2012) in 2012, and the Freedom Of Information Act (FOIA) in 2016. The law n. 190/2012 is the first Italian law on preventing and combating corruption and illegal activity in public administration. It has established internal managerial and organisational mechanisms aimed at making the public administration less prone to corruptive behaviours (including a triennial plan for the prevention of corruption), and it has introduced the principle of transparency (based on the compulsory publication of governmental open data) as precondition for public accountability. The Anti-corruption National Authority (Autorità Nazionale Anticorruzione - ANAC) has suggested to agencies and administrations to involve the public in developing their three-year plan for the prevention of corruption. In 2016, the FOIA has introduced the right of access for all to the data and documents held by public administrations, other than those whose publication is obligatory, and has provided for partial disclosure when full disclosure is not possible. Both measures have come to revolutionise the institutional

²¹ For an account from the press, see for instance here: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-italy-corruption-law/italy-parliament-approves-corruption-crackdown-in-win-for-5-star-idUSKBN1OH25B>

approach on transparency and public accountability. Also, peculiar to the Italian case, access to information is specifically related, at the legislative level, to the model of prevention of corruption. That is, these measures have opened up new valuable opportunities for civic actors to monitor the institutions and to contribute to the national anti-corruption effort.

Now considering the civil society, as by the time to start the Com.mon project, Gruppo Abele and Libera registered the presence of mainly two kinds of civic action. On one side, there were many groups (which we may prevalently define as civic hacktivists) focused on open data and Right to Know - in which regard, it must be said, Italy's standards still lag behind the ones of many other countries²². The aim of these groups is to test the availability and quality of the information provided by the government, demanding for better or lacking data, or contributing to digitalise administrative documents. Their action is carried out on individual rather than collective basis, and on one-off rather than ongoing engagement. An example of such groups in Italy is the already mentioned *onData* (see: 2.2.3.2). In an exploratory attempt to map other Italian actors (or actions) of this type²³, I could identify also: AlboPOP²⁴, FOIA4Italy²⁵, Diritto Di Sapere²⁶, FOIAPop²⁷, Openpolis²⁸. Some of these experiences ceased to exist in the past years. On the other side, there are various civic actors, predominantly CSOs made up of experts, which started to collaborate with (or to target) the institutions within the framework of OG. Generally, these work as civic partners in institutionally promoted projects, or as trusted interlocutors through consultation and advocacy. As part of the exploratory mapping of Italian actors or actions of this type (see above), I could identify in this category: Civico97²⁹, Parliament Watch Italia³⁰, Amapola³¹, Transparency

²² The Italian administrative model does not provide for automatic data digitisation and academic studies have shown that published data are in many cases insufficient and of poor quality (see, among others: Buttiglione & Reggi 2015).

²³ This exploratory mapping is the result of website research and suggestions provided by activists of Italian civic organisations which are part of the network of Gruppo Abele, to whom I have asked (per e-mail) during my fieldwork. The tentative distinction into this and the following category is based on personal evaluation of the mission and methodology of action of the actors, as presented on their website. Both the mapping and categorisation proposed here are not meant to be in any way exhaustive of the issue.

²⁴ See: <https://albopop.it/>

²⁵ See: <http://www.foia4italy.it/>

²⁶ See: <https://blog.dirittodisapere.it/>

²⁷ See: <http://www.foiapop.it/>

²⁸ See: <https://www.openpolis.it/>

²⁹ See: <https://www.facebook.com/associazione97/>

³⁰ See: <http://parliamentwatch.it/>

³¹ See: <http://amapolaprogetti.org/>

International Italia³², Action Aid Italia³³, Cittadinanzattiva³⁴. Of course, it is misleading to imagine these two categories as neatly distinct from each other. Between the two categories we can place, for instance, the case of *Monithon*, which was object of investigation by Buttiglione & Reggi (2015), as we reported in section 2.1.4 of this study.

4.1.2 Genesis, organisation and objectives

Given the contextual factors examined above, Gruppo Abele in partnership Libera has decided to launch the CBM project “Com.mon” in Summer 2016. As previously mentioned, “Com.mon” stands for *monitoring communities* (from the Italian: comunità monitoranti) and, at the same time, for *commons* and *common people*, as this reflects the general approach of the project, which places a strong focus on the development of a committed and networked civil society (made up of amatorial citizens), also in the sense of a joint administration of the *common goods*.

Within the national scenario, Com.mon contributes to the objective of embedding the knowledge and use of the civic tools for preventing corruption in the civil society, as envisaged by law 190/12, specifically through the action of monitorial citizens who organise in form of community. To say it in other words, the monitoring communities are organised groups of civic activists who use the tools of the Right to Know, put at their disposal by the law 190/2012 and FOIA, in order to understand, oversee and keep accountable for how the state uses collective resources, organises itself, makes decisions. In doing so, they fully realise the system of prevention of corruption as understood in the law 190/2012 (and consistent with the conceptual framework of OG), which combines – on the one hand – the commitment of the institutions to be transparent by publishing open data and – on the other hand – the civic responsibility to supervise the institutions from the bottom-up, using those public data. Through their action, the monitoring communities promote the care and protection of the common good (understood as both material resources and resources of trust), going in fact beyond the mere role of *watchdogs* of the institutions. The project Com.mon differs

³² See: <https://www.transparency.it/>

³³ See: <https://www.actionaid.it/>

³⁴ See: <https://www.cittadinanzattiva.it/>

from other Italian civic initiatives (see 4.1.1) in several respects. Not only does the project entail access to governmental information and open data, but also citizen participation for transforming and using them with the purpose of anti-corruption action. Moreover, unlike other actors who also employ the instrument of civic monitoring, the peculiarity of Com.mon is to place the focus not on the technical process of monitoring – which, by the way, could be conducted by few experts sitting in their office – but on the participatory action of many citizens, organised in the form of (monitoring) community. That is, the monitoring action is carried out by amateur citizens, to whom the vocational staff of Com.mon offers guidance, support, empowerment. The underlying idea, and proposed approach, is that public corruption can be tackled only to the extent that anti-corruption efforts take form of widespread commitment in the civil society. Finally, the monitoring action takes place autonomously from the institutions, on the initiative of the civil society.

As already introduced, the organisational structure of the project is based on the monitoring communities: these can correspond to a local association of Libera, to another single association or a union of civic actors (individuals, different associations, etc.) which share the willingness to monitor the same territory or thematic area. In fact, most of them are organised around a local association of Libera, with some external participation. The community in Licata is the only one which does not involve the participation of Libera and it is, instead, organised around the local association *A testa alta*. That is, for almost all the cases, the communities are both based on locality (local scope of action) and on identity (shared purpose or affiliation to an organisation). To the present day, the project counts about eleven communities active throughout the Italian territory. According to the self-assessment of the staff of Com.mon, six of them are at an advanced stage of activity, whereas five of them are still in a development phase (community-building, organising their action, etc.). Some initiatives (in Licata and in Tuscany) have been already in place beforehand and have successively joined the network of Com.mon, for evaluating the work done up to then and planning future work together. In addition to these, there are several communities monitoring the confiscated assets at the Italian regional levels, related to the project “Confiscati bene 2.0”³⁵ (see below). We could consider these as part of the network, although more

³⁵ See: <https://www.confiscatibene.it/>

loosely linked to it. With regards to the thematic areas of interest, the action of the communities currently includes the monitoring of:

- Public procurements (3 out of 11);
- (Regional or local) public health system (4 out of 11);
- Work and organisation of (local) public administration (5 out of 11);
- Participatory three-year anti-corruption plan (1 out of 11);
- Management of confiscated assets from mafia organisations (2 out of 11, as well as the communities linked to Confiscati bene 2.0).

In some cases, single communities focus on two topics, as for instance the community in Pisa, which has monitored both public procurements and the work and organisation of the municipal administration.

According to my observation, processes of CBM, in the case of Com.mon, can emerge from the interest of a starting core of civic actors to continue their public participation within a new thematic area, or renew it in the light of new approaches (i.e. CBM) such as it is the case for some Libera local associations. In other cases, the motivation for starting such commitment is due to “emergency needs”, i.e. a supposedly corrupt administration is elected, signs of conflict of interest behaviour of public officials are detected, a catastrophic event (e.g. earthquake) leads to an influx of public money and an acceleration of the decision-making process, with high corruptive risks. The initiatives of CBM are generated autonomously from the institutions, both in cases of favourable or unfavourable conditions. For example, in Messina the local administration had expressed interest in supporting or collaborating with a monitoring community, recognising the fundamental role of the civil society acting as bottom-up “fire alarm” system. However, no CBM process has been initiated because there was no part of the civil society ready to activate.

At this point, before proceeding with further information, it has to be noted that, given the specific patterns and the numerous variables involved, the scope of this study does not include the investigation of the specific history of the monitoring process for every community. In this sense, ideally, a descriptive card as in Table 1 could be compiled for each community. Nevertheless, within the scope of this study, I will only discuss a couple of these experiences with greater detail, along and in function of the presentation and analysis of the case study.

4.1.3 Organising, supporting, and funding entities

Gruppo Abele (Figure 5) is a non-governmental non-profit organisation based in Turin. It was founded in 1965 and its work has been traditionally focused on social exclusion, related to issues like drugs, AIDS, alcoholism, mental illness, prostitution, homelessness, immigration. More recently, the organisation has developed other lines of social, cultural and political action. Among these, as most relevant for this study, Gruppo Abele has promoted the campaign *Riparte il futuro*³⁶ (full name: *Senza corruzione riparte il futuro*; Without corruption the future restarts), the largest digital campaign against corruption ever organised in Italy, and *Illuminiamo la salute*³⁷ (We shed light on health), a joint project aimed at improving legality and ethics and preventing corruption within the health care system. Both projects were developed in partnership with, among others, Libera. Gruppo Abele is, indeed, part of Libera's network and its partner in many joint projects.

Figure 5. Logo of Gruppo Abele. (Source: <https://www.gruppoabele.org/>).



Libera (Figure 6) is a non-governmental non-profit entity, as well as the major Italian network of associations, groups and schools against mafia organisations, founded in 1995. The central office is based in Rome, but Libera associations are present and active throughout the Italian territory, at the local level. Since the beginning Libera has worked on social anti-mafia and then also on anti-corruption strategies, in which Com.mon is one of its key actions. The other two key actions concern civic support and assistance to whistle-blowers, and education in schools (or other settings). Libera is part of the Open Government Forum, which was established in 2016 by the Italian government within the framework of OGP Italy and gathers organisations of the civil society to debate on the issues of "open government" together with the institutions.

Figure 6. Logo of Libera. (Source: <http://www.libera.it/>).



Specifically, in the context of Com.mon, Gruppo Abele offers know-how and year-long experience on community-building, and concretely provides for training (methodological and analytical tools for civic anti-corruption action), assistance, networking and coordination for the communities from the central office of Com.mon. Libera has made available its territorial network of associations, i.e. their social and human capital, to form communities interested in adopting and implementing the instrument of CBM. In this sense, despite having a primary commitment with Libera, the main referent of Com.mon sees future possibilities to support other entities in organising communities to monitor specific issues that directly affect their lives. A collaboration of this kind has been already experimented with Actionaid on the project *Integrity Pact Sibari*³⁸, aimed at monitoring the EU funded works of conservation, promotion and renovation of the National Archaeological Museum of Sibaritide and the Archaeological Park of Sibari. Com.mon is entirely and independently funded by Gruppo Abele and Libera.

Peculiar to the Italian case, the anti-corruption work of Com.mon touches repeatedly – and inevitably – the topic of anti-mafia, as well. The CSOs draws this approach from academic evidence (as already mentioned, for instance, in section 2.2.2: della Porta 2017; Vannucci 2015, 2017) that points out to the fact that corrupt agents are likely to be members of mafia organisations, either looking for profit and entry points into the legal economy, or acting as third party in the corrupt exchange, in guarantee of this.

³⁶ See the official website of Riparte il Futuro: <https://www.riparteilfuturo.it/>

³⁷ See the official website of Illuminiamo la salute: <http://www.illuminiamolosalute.it/>

³⁸ For more information on the project, see here: <https://www.facebook.com/integritypactsibari/>; and here: <http://monitorappalti.it/progetto/museo-archeologico-nazionale-della-sibaritide-e-parco-archeologico-di-sibari>.

The commitment of Gruppo Abele on this topic, apparently secondary to other goals of the CSO, is also shaped by the human and relational capital of the association: the founder of Gruppo Abele, don Luigi Ciotti, is also founder and charismatic leader of Libera; the project Com.mon is the product of a collaboration between the two CSOs; the very staff of Com.mon comes from personal past and present anti-mafia activism. So to say, according to my observation, there is great affinity, synergy and exchange of know-how and resources of various type in the work of the two CSOs, determined also by the actual relationship between the phenomenon of public corruption and the presence, activities and interests of mafia organisations.

As we have seen so far, Gruppo Abele and Libera are the main responsible for organising the project. When it comes to the communities, from case to case other CSOs, NGOs or local groups are supporting and participating in the initiative. This can be related to the focus of action of the specific community. Overall, the communities benefit from the large and diverse network of the two CSOs, so that, for instance, the referent of Com.mon can put them in touch with various experts from time to time, depending on training or agency needs. Examples of such support is provided by the network of *Avviso Pubblico* (for monitoring the public administration) and *Illuminiamo la salute* (for monitoring the public health system), or by the initiative of civic journalism *Cittadini reattivi*³⁹ (for improving public communication). Academic institutions strongly support the project, in particular the Master programme in “Analysis, Prevention and Control of organised crime and corruption”⁴⁰ (Master APC). The Master APC participates in the annual “Com.mon School” (see below), offers an internship agreement with the CSOs for the own students and provides for academic validation and research in response of the emerging needs of the project. Indeed, the staff of Com.mon has benefited from the presence of twenty interns from the Master programme during the last three years; during my fieldwork, two students of the Master were doing their internship there (most of the time from remote). “Anti-corruzione pop” (see below) is partly product of this collaboration, as well. Other academic institutions

³⁹ Cittadini reattivi is a project of civic journalism focused on the issues of environment, health and legality. See: <http://www.cittadinireattivi.it/>.

⁴⁰ The Master APC is jointly organised by the University of Turin, University of Pisa, University of Naples, University of Palermo and Libera. It represents the first academic experience in Italy oriented towards theoretical study and professional training on the themes of analysis, prevention and the fight against organized crime, and political and administrative corruption. See: <http://masterapc.sp.unipi.it/>.

and scholars support (or have supported) the project in a very similar way, e.g. (among others) the Laboratory of Analysis and Research on Organized Crime (Laboratorio di Analisi e Ricerca sulla Criminalità Organizzata – LARCO) at the University of Turin.

Other “branches” of Com.mon are:

- a) *Confiscati Bene 2.0*: the title of the initiative is a wordplay in Italian between “confiscated assets” and “properly confiscated”. Confiscati bene 2.0 is a data portal launched in 2018 and realised by Libera and onData with the goal to map all assets present on the Italian soil, confiscated from mafia organisations and (where applicable) assigned for social reuse by the state, as provided by the Italian law 109/96. In short, the portal is born in response to two needs: in the first place, to aggregate data which are (although obligatory) only partially and fragmentally provided by the public administration (e.g.: are there any confiscated assets on the territory? Have they been already assigned for social reuse?); in the second place, to integrate the governmental data with data created by the civil society, which is otherwise not produced by the institutions, e.g. information about the quality of the social reuse of the assets, transparency of the assignment, etc.
Confiscati bene 2.0 works thanks to the action of monitoring communities embedded in the territories and linked to Com.mon, which create the missing data and use this and other governmental information to advocate for a good management of the assets, in a very specific application of the CBM instrument.
- b) *E!state Liberi summer camps*: this is an initiative of Libera targeted at young people, which takes place during summer on confiscated assets across Italy. The participants spend about one week engaging in educational training, voluntary work and activism, traditionally focused on anti-mafia. Between 2017 and 2018, E!state Liberi has organised ten thematic camps together with Com.mon dedicated to the topic of monitoring citizenship, reaching out to around one hundred and fifty young participants. During the camps, the participants acted like small communities, monitoring issues related to the public health system, public waste management and confiscated assets.
- c) *Pilot trainings in schools*: in response to many requests from high schools, the staff of Com.mon has started some pilot trainings with pupils on the topic of civic anti-

corruption in general and CBM in particular. As part of my fieldwork, mid-November 2018 I took part in the first of three sessions of the educational training offered for a high school in Como. The participants were students of the 4th class of high school (in the Italian school system: between 17-18 years old) from different classes, who voluntarily joined the meeting for about two hours. The training took place in a large (but not dispersed) classroom where pupils and speaker were sitting frontally. Communication was mainly conducted by the speaker, nevertheless employing an informal language and multimedia (video, website, etc.), using storytelling that brought the narrative closer to the students' experiences and allowing the students themselves to introduce the presentation with theatrical sketches and interrupt it at any time with questions. The aim of this first training was to discursively introduce the students to the topic, whereas the following sessions (ended in December 2018) were concentrated on engaging them in small groups to monitor specific issues on their territory and to produce a simple digital output to communicate their "findings".

- d) *Pilot meetings with public administrations:* in partnership with Avviso pubblico, the staff of Com.mon has been invited to meet public administrations to introduce them to the concept of CBM. The meetings aimed at enriching the public administration with the civic perspective on the topic of anti-corruption, and explore the opportunities (provided by the law) and best forms to carry out institutional anti-corruption measures with the support of the civil society, e.g. participatory three-year anti-corruption plans.

4.1.4 Process description: participants, methods and tools used

The participation to the monitoring communities is voluntary and open to all, the participant recruitment mainly occurs through Libera's network of local associations. During the field trip to Aosta, I could indeed observe the process of participant recruitment and the composition of the participants taking part in the training aimed at empowering a local association of Libera to start a CBM initiative. Local civic stakeholder organisations (i.e. other local associations and NGOs, in this case: Legambiente, Cittadinanzattiva, Acli) were specifically targeted, i.e. their members

were invited to take part in the initiative, through informal communication between them and Libera. One representative of each invited organisation was present at the training. External participation of interested university students and pensioners without any affiliation occurred as well. Overall, the project is targeted at the general public, i.e. the participants do not have to belong to specific sections of the population. The participants in Aosta were indeed part of a diverse population⁴¹: from the age of high school students to pensioners; male and female about equally represented; with different degree of formal education and various professions (students, teachers, entrepreneurs, etc.); most of them living in Aosta or neighbouring villages; the ethnic composition of the group was instead homogeneous, also due to the characteristics of the territory. Even though it was difficult to assess it in a rigorous way, it is likely that most of participants held good civic skills and resources useful for activism, due to their background of previous and ongoing participation in some types of civic organisation. That is, although the project does not specifically aim to gather participants who are representative of the Italian population, in the end the communities consist of diverse demographics and can benefit from good social capital. Finally, it has to be noted that the two-day training took place during the weekend for enabling the largest participation possible.

The interaction between participants occurs face-to-face for all communities, which (formally or informally) meet on relative regular basis. According to my observation, it was clear how the interaction among participants occurs on the basis of dialogue and discussion, without any formal rules for making decisions or speaking in the forum. Informal social activities have accompanied the training activities in Aosta and usually accompany the work of the communities as well, helping to support the dynamics of community-building. Facilitation is provided (if needed) from the central office of Com.mon in Turin. The staff of Com.mon is also committed to be present on the territories as much as possible, especially during the developmental phase of the CBM initiatives. During the time of my fieldwork, the main referent of the project travelled to about ten localities across Italy for local meetings, trainings, guidance.

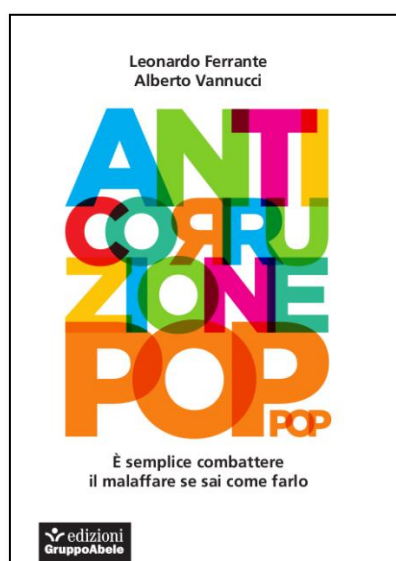
Besides the tools for accessing governmental information (provided by law), as already outlined, the initiatives of CBM make use of various material and training opportunities

⁴¹ More detailed information about this was in particular collected during informal social activities: coffee breaks, lunches, dinners.

provided by the staff of Com.mon. These tools are (a) “Anticorruzione pop”, (b) trainings and coordination from the central office, (c) annual Scuola Com.mon.

- a) “Anticorruzione pop. È semplice combattere il malaffare se sai come farlo” (Pop anti-corruption. It is easy to fight malfeasance if you know how to do it; Figure 7).

Figure 7. Cover of “Anticorruzione pop”. (Source: <https://www.gruppoabele.org/>)



“Anticorruzione pop” is a book published by Ferrante and Vannucci in 2017. The publication is meant by the authors to be “a small, temporary *vademecum*, [...] aimed at giving space to theories and practices of contrast and prevention of malpractice from below, combining them [...] with the aim of helping to establish a civic action against corruption” (Ferrante & Vannucci 2017: 14). The term “pop” in the title is therefore to be understood as “in line with the English tradition of ‘popular culture’”, i.e. “accessible to many” (ibid.: 14). In this sense, the authors openly commit to use “a simple but rigorous language” (ibid.: 15) and, in fact, repeatedly organise the narrative around images, symbols, metaphors, and myths which draw from the popular imagination. Exemplary of this is, for instance, the choice of opening the narration with the story of Adam and Eva, as narrative expedient for reasoning about corruption. This same story reappears then at several points of the text. Another example of such narrative expedients is the depiction of an imaginary social network of the corrupts, namely “faceless-book” (see ibid.: 116 ff.), as for reasoning about corrupt networks. Moreover,

the thread of the narration often leads the reader to refer to (and interrogate about) experiences and contexts of his/her everyday (working, family, community) life. Finally, “pop” or “popular” also refers to anti-corruption “popular action spread in the territories” (ibid.: 15) and based on communities, which Com.mon envisages.

According to my observation, when Ferrante speaks about this publication, he underlines the challenge of combining the contributions from the two authors. On the one side, he – as an activist and referent of Com.mon – has placed a strong focus on the need to make the book a useful, practical and easily understandable tool for practitioners – clearly related to the implementation of the project under discussion in this study. On the other side, the involvement of Vannucci – professor of Political Science at the University of Pisa and affirmed scholar in this research field⁴² – has provided a rigorous, academic account on the topic, as a solid starting point for action. The very structure of the content in the book seems to reflect this idea: chapters 1, 2 and 3 (if we look at the number of pages, approximately the first half of the book) aim at providing the reader with *knowledge* and reflections on the topic, whereas chapter 4 (if we look at the number of pages, approximately the second half of the book) is structured in ten (plus one) very practical steps of how to *engage* in anti-corruption CBM.

That is, both in the intent of the authors and in the practice of its content, “Anticorruzione pop” is meant to be a publication for practitioners, a working tool in the hand of ordinary people (individuals or communities) who want to engage in civic anti-corruption, in particular with the instrument of CBM. This tool, within the context of Com.mon, seems to be specifically intended to face the challenge recognised by scholars (see for instance: Marín 2016) of building citizen’s capacity to tackle corruption, providing conceptual understanding and methodological tools for action, uniformly for all communities.

⁴² Alberto Vannucci is Associate Professor of Political Science at the Department of Political Sciences of the University of Pisa (Italy). His main research interests are political and administrative corruption, illegal markets and organised crime, neo-institutional theory. Since 2010 he is director of the Master Programme in “Analysis, prevention and fight against organized crime and corruption”. For more information: <https://unimap.unipi.it/cercapersone/dettaglio.php?ri=4028&template=dettaglio3.tpl>

In addition to this, it is worth to take a closer look at the narrative of the book, since it closely reflects the conceptual understandings and narrative of the whole project. With regards to this, in the book (as well as in the project), corruption is understood as *public corruption*, and framed in three different ways:

1. Corruption as individual or collective *behaviour* (Ferrante & Vannucci 2017: 30-31), that is the abuse of entrusted (or delegated) power for private gains, irreconcilable with the public interest and good.
2. Corruption as widespread *phenomenon* (ibid.: 31-33), with the consequent undermining of reciprocal and institutional trust, i.e. erosion of the *social pact* every society is based on.
3. Corruption as a *system* (ibid.: 33-35) of hidden and unaccountable exchanges.

In a specular manner, anti-corruption is understood as *civic anti-corruption* and defined as (ibid.: 37-39):

1. Good governance of entrusted power, i.e. oriented towards the public interest and good.
2. Re-founding of a new social pact, “interrupting all forms of cooperation with corruptors and corrupt people and beginning to ‘repair’ those bonds of social trust” (ibid.: 38).
3. Most comprehensively, a system of “integral transparency aimed at the care of collective interests and the prevention of malpractice, which translates into positive cooperation between those who represent public power and those who, from below, can supervise in a decentralised and widespread way (starting from the own behaviour), that is, jointly monitoring that no betrayal of the fiduciary mandate or abuse of power delegated by the society to its representatives occurs, participating in strengthening the social pact that binds a community to its administrators” (ibid.: 39).

According to its narrative, through civic action it is possible to defeat corruption “which, clearly, does not mean eliminating it completely and forever, but more realistically reducing it to a minimum” (ibid.: 35). Civic actors are thus called in the book to delegitimise corruptive behaviour and rather engage in whistleblowing if confronted with it (ibid.: 88-95); to non-collaborate *economically* with corruptors, which means paying attention to “gifts”, making critical consumption choices, rewarding transparent

conduct and sanctioning opaque conduct of both private and public entities, e.g. service providers (ibid.: 95-97); to non-collaborate *politically* with corruptors, which means demanding transparency of the candidates, rewarding the integrity with electoral support and sanctioning the misconduct with formal and informal sanctions (ibid.: 97-104). But, most importantly, they are called to organise for combating an equally organised system of corruption. In this sense, the authors refer in the book to a quote from the famous “War and Peace” of Lev Tolstoy (Epilogue, I, XVI): “My whole idea is that if vicious people are united and constitute a power, then honest folk must do the same”. By the means of this quote, the idea is stressed – again – that individual action alone is not enough, and that individuals should organise in communities to achieve the maximum benefit out of their action.

b) Trainings and coordination from the central office of Com.mon.

The territorial training activities provided by the staff of Com.mon are to be understood as community-building and empowerment activities. The trainers combine frontal presentations with experiential workshops, drawing from practices related to the tradition of non-violent action and the *Theatre of the Oppressed*. The trainings entail always a specific focus on the topic of interest of the monitoring community. According to my observation in Aosta, the training was organised as follows: the participants were gathered in a rather small room of a structure dedicated by the city to the citizens’ use; the speakers were standing frontal to the audience (but not sitting at the desk), in order to use slides and projecting videos or websites for supporting the presentation. The speakers were the main referent of Com.mon and one referent from Confiscati bene 2.0., since the specific topic of the training was the monitoring of confiscated assets. Questions were welcomed all the time and the participants were guided through a practical simulation of monitoring (where to find the relevant information, how to access the data, how to request FOIA access, etc.). Informal social activities were included in the two-day training. To make it accessible to people who were not able to participate but were (or could successively be) interested in joining the CBM initiative, the two-day training was streamed live on the Facebook page of Libera Aosta⁴³.

⁴³ The four videos are online available at [accessed 05 April 2019]:

- <https://www.facebook.com/liberavda/videos/2495155403842767/>

Since the participation in the communities occurs on voluntary basis, according to my observation, the support provided by the central office of Com.mon seems to be fundamental to “capitalise” on the human, social and time resources available to the communities. The facilitation of the staff of Com.mon can help to solve eventual conflict dynamics internal to the communities, as well. In addition to this, the central coordination has allowed for networking between the communities, which are in touch and support each other. This comes certainly to benefit the communities in the very present, but it also suggests that, in the event of a future ending of the project as based in the central office in Turin, the network can continue to exist, grow and support itself.

c) Annual “Scuola Com.mon” (Com.mon School).

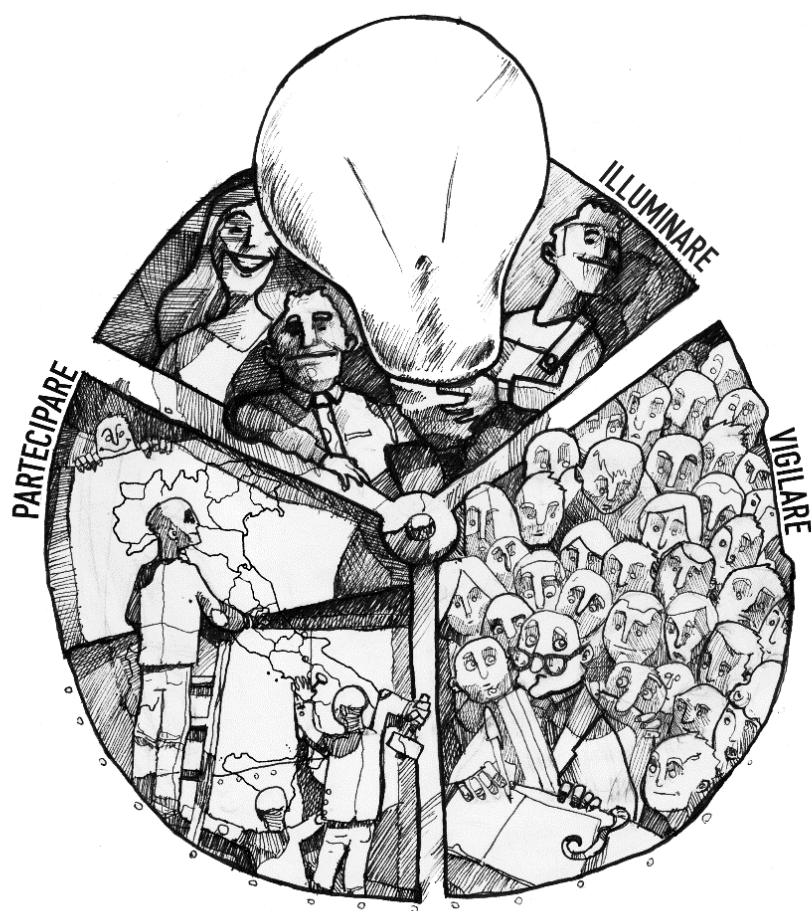
Scuola Common takes place every year in summer and gathers together all communities of the project for about one week, for a moment of evaluation of the work done up to that moment, sharing of the specific experiences of the communities and further learning. To date, there has been three Com.mon schools, specifically dedicated to:

- Scuola Com.mon 2016: reasoning about the subjects, i.e. who wants to take part in the Com.mon project and put the CBM instrument into practice.
- Scuola Com.mon 2017: further developing and defining the shared Com.mon method for CBM (see below).
- Scuola Com.mon 2018: analysing the practices of the monitoring communities, along five focuses: how to use the CBM instrument; how to do context analysis; how to evaluate the own impact and plan coherent actions; how to generate and maintain communities; how to tell oneself and have oneself told (public communication).

- <https://www.facebook.com/liberavda/videos/249401609266125/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/liberavda/videos/315904602331147/>
- <https://www.facebook.com/liberavda/videos/317532469073621/>

With regards to the monitoring action, all communities make reference to a shared CBM method, conceptualised by the staff of Com.mon and called Bussola Com.mon (Com.mon Compass). As the name suggest, the aim is to provide “orientation” and guidance to all communities willing to implement a CBM action. The Com.mon CBM method is divided in three phases (as illustrated in Figure 8) and ten – plus one – steps.

Figure 8. The three phases of Com.mon CBM method as illustrated in Anticorruzione pop: Illuminare (illuminating), vigilare (monitoring), partecipare (participating). (Source: Ferrante & Vannucci 2017: 110).



According to the review of Anticorruzione pop and my observation, I present the Com.mon Compass in the following table (Table 2).

Table 2. Com.mon CBM method. (Source: own depiction; drawn from: Ferrante & Vannucci 2017: 133-189).

Com.mon CBM method (Bussola Com.mon)		
Phase	Step	Description of the step
1. Illuminating (figurative)	0. Why illuminating	Need to know, willingness to know, right to know
	1. What to illuminate	Participatory context analysis of the territory or specific sector of public activity
	2. How to illuminate	Using the legal tools for access to governmental information
	3. How to mirror the light	Sharing and organising data in a transparency portal
2. Monitoring	4. Creating useful information out of the data	Civic monitoring report
	5. Reaching out to the general public	Public communication through simplification, storytelling and creativity
	6. Reaching out to the institutions	Demanding change through a monitoring strategy (i.e. based on an agreement whose implementation can be easily monitored)
	7. Monitoring the response of the institutions	Monitoring the implementation of the agreement
	8. Ensuring systematic change in the rules	Organising "civic networks for integrity" (e.g. advocacy groups to address national legislators)
3. Participating	9. Involving citizens in anti-corruption public policies	Formulating new participatory instruments for anti-corruption: e.g. public consultations, participatory anti-corruption plans, participatory codes of conduct, etc.
	10. Improving collective life and solving community problems	Original use of public data and community network

4.1.5 Public interaction

Public interaction of the monitoring communities is targeted mainly at the general public, on one side, and public officials, on the other side. Depending on the object of monitoring, public official can mean elected (e.g. local administration, such in the case of Pavia) or non-elected (e.g. public health system, such in the case of Siena) officials.

Methods of communication with the general public are prevalently based on the use of social media and, in some cases, traditional media such as local newspapers or independent press (online or printed). The use of social media is creative and involves the publication of infographics, short videos, interviews, the use of *ad hoc* hashtags, etc. Overall, the strategy so far, as suggested by the staff of Com.mon, has been to avoid too much media exposure in the initial phase, to give the possibility to the communities to further grow and consolidate their action. Public meetings may be organised, for instance, to communicate the results of the monitoring action to the interested public. By large, communication to the general public is aimed at mobilising other civic actors to demand accountability from the institutions and create a system of widespread informal sanctions or rewards towards the institutional actors, responsible for answering to such demands. The response of the general public to such initiatives has been very supportive so far, due to the topic of evident cross interest.

Interaction with public officials can be conducted by the means of formal communication, in written form or organising a (public) meeting. In the case of lacking answer from the institutions or unwillingness to respond, social media campaigns can be organised to (indirectly and publicly) address the institutions. In the cases of Pisa and Palagiano, written agreements have been signed by the candidates in local elections during the election campaign, as means for the communities to monitor their adherence to the endorsed anti-corruption action, following their coming into office. In fact, in these very cases, the “promises” from the candidates have been unfulfilled.

In response to that, the two communities have launched a social media campaign with hashtags respectively #equindi⁴⁴ and #estamn⁴⁵. #equindi literally stands for “And so what? [Do we come to a conclusion?]”, whereas #estamn literally means “And so we stay here. [We do not move from our standpoints]”. Both hashtags, in the respective local dialects, express the same concept: you (institutions) have made commitments with us (citizens, in general, and monitoring communities, in particular), so we expect you to fulfil such commitments, otherwise we will keep asking you for an account – why have you not done it? When are you going to do it? How are you going to do it?

Linked to this, it is worth to further discuss how the communities relate to the institutions. According to the approach of the whole project, it is fundamental to draw clear distinction lines between the role and the action of civic and institutional actors. As already outlined, the CBM initiatives takes always place autonomously from the institutions, but at the same time they aim at “correlating” with them. According to my analysis of the collected data, within the framework of Com.mon, “correlation” is understood as a mechanism of social accountability, in which civic actors create autonomous spaces of participation where to formulate demands of change or raising questions about misbehaviour, and whose main goal is subsequently to relate to the competent institutions for obtaining an answer to their demands. This approach is seen as alternative to the idea of collaboration, as it is conceptualised within the OG framework, i.e. often resulting in only apparent or non-inclusive participation, co-optation. In addition to that, in the OG framework, as long as the initiative is often unidirectional (i.e. top-down), misbehaving officials are not expected to initiate any kind of collaboration, at all. In the system of correlation between communities and institutions, other than in OG, there is space for conflict: within this social accountability mechanism, in the first place, the communities can point out to problems and misbehaviours in the institutional system; in the second place, they can point out to public officials who decide not to be transparent with the public, to leave such demands unheard, or not to respect endorsed commitment. Correlation to institutions also means calling for sanctions from the competent authorities (e.g. ANAC). However, this could be not enough in cases of behaviours which are “legal” according to the law but

⁴⁴ You can find the campaign with hashtag #equindi online on the Facebook page of Libera Pisa: <https://www.facebook.com/PresidioLiberaPisaGiancarloSiani/>

⁴⁵ You can find the campaign with hashtag #estamn online on the Facebook page of Libera Palagiano: <https://www.facebook.com/Presidio-Libera-Palagiano-Giovanbattista-Tedesco-696693623733453/>

may hide, for instance, conflict of interests. This is where the system of CBM plays a fundamental role for change, both in the particular case and (in the long term) in the legislative system. Also, rising a question about a corruptive risk or unclear behaviour may prevent the corrupt exchange from happening. Furthermore, although sometimes the communities meet apparent favourable institutional conditions for action, they can still face some challenges. In this regard, exemplary is the case of Siena, where the monitoring community was part of official participation committees promoted by the local health company. After the monitoring community had highlighted the presence of illegal behaviours (i.e. patients' associations were actually headed by doctors who pressed for certain drugs to be prescribed, for the personal economic benefit of doctors and at the expense of patients' health), a conflict had arisen within the participation committee, so that the rules defining who could participate in the committee have been changed and the monitoring community was consequently excluded from participating in it. Within the Italian national scenario, such kind of challenge from the institutional side was rather unexpected in the regional context of Tuscany, supposedly "high-ranking on *civiness*".

4.2 Data analysis

According to the theoretical framework and based on the analysis of the empirical data about the case study, I can now proceed to assess the CBM initiative of Com.mon, along its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. I present the preliminary findings in a schematic way in Table 3 and then discuss some issues in greater detail within this section.

Table 3. Com.mon SWOT card. (Source: own depiction).

Com.mon SWOT card		
	Helpful (or enabling) factors	Harmful (or limiting) factors
Internal factors	Strengths • Community-based approach and network among communities; • Autonomous action outside formal or invited spaces (clear division); • Subsequent use, transformation and completion of the accessed data • Partnership with the network of Libera local associations: civic skills and resources for activism; • Support, coordination and expertise provided from the central office.	Weaknesses • Relatively limited resources in terms of the central office (see: one single referent); • The objects of monitoring present a certain level of complexity (see: how the public health system work, how public procurements work, etc); • The use of digital tools for monitoring could represent a challenge for some groups of participants.
	Opportunities • Existence of oversight institutions to seek accountability from and able to apply sanctions (e.g. ANAC); • More effective functioning of electoral accountability when going down to the local level of administration; • Political will; • Access to information provided by law (l. 190/2012 and FOIA); • Free and supportive media; • Supportive and sensitive (on the topic) public; • Plural civil society: network and collaboration with various entities for specific initiatives.	Threats • Challenges for the oversight institutions to effectively monitor all public institutions (bureaucratic, political and public-service); • Total absence of electoral accountability for non-elected public officials; challenge to provide adequate informal sanctions; • Lack of political will, even in cases of “formal” promises; • Missing or low-quality open data; still poor administrative culture of transparency; • Certain level of risk for the personal security, in case of disclosure of or interference with the misbehaviour of powerful actors.
External factors		

Within the existing participation infrastructure and discourse, framed by the conceptual and operational framework of the OG (as discussed in this thesis), CBM appears to be a necessary approach for anti-corruption action. In cases of public corruption, monitory forms of civic action are essential for guaranteeing participation outside of the “invited spaces”, put into discussion the discourse of citizens as partners (and the shortcomings related to this) and open up new channels of participation which are consistent with the resources of monitorial citizenship.

The participation discourse of Com.mon generates expectations about public officials to be transparent, accountable and responsive to the public; civic engagement is envisaged to occur on a collective basis (i.e. monitoring communities); the unequal power relationship between the state and the citizens is balanced by the civic use of information and by creating new forms of civic power outside the formal or invited spaces of participation, where powerful institutional actors, i.e. public officials, are continuously called to account by citizens for how they organise, make decisions, spend public resources.

Furthermore, the instrument of CBM seems to have the potential to discuss and innovate the participation infrastructure. Specifically, Com.mon is sustained by a favourable legal infrastructure, with regards to the Right to Know, thanks to the participation opportunities and instruments provided by the Italian law 190/2012 and FOIA, employed in an innovative way by the monitoring communities. Challenges remain linked to the quality of the provided data and degree of “openness” of the institutions. In addition to this, the CBM initiatives are sustained by an equally good civic infrastructure, provided by Gruppo Abele, Libera and the network of supporting entities. At the same time, Com.mon substantially contributes to further improving the legal and civic infrastructures respectively by advocating for better or additional anti-corruption regulation (especially at the local level) and building communities as solid organisational basis for civic action. The central office of Com.mon and its activities contribute to positively impact the educational infrastructure, equipping the members of the communities with civic competences and skills related to the instrument of CBM. The pilot educational activities in schools address this issue, as well. In the light of the experience of some communities (we referred to the cases of Pisa and Palagiano), the project partially impacts on the electoral infrastructure by asking candidates to include in their electoral programme well-defined and concrete commitments to transparency

and anti-corruption. The governmental infrastructure is varyingly supporting or hampering the monitory action of the communities, from cases of functioning correlation, to cases of political unwill and unresponsiveness of the institutions. The action of the communities can, however, force the governmental infrastructure to change, due to a system of societal informal rewards and sanctions.

Differently from other forms of civic monitoring, the instrument of CBM, as conceptualised and realised in Com.mon, has the potential to overcome many challenges related to this kind of action. In an abstract ideal case, monitoring could be even conducted automatically by the mean of technological tools. Recent studies, for instance, point to evolving strategies in anti-corruption offered by new technologies, like developing online monitoring systems (Matheus et al. 2011) or machine learning models (Gallego et al. 2018). This, of course, assumes the existence of complete and fully-open data, which can be automatically processed. However – we have already discussed – this is often not the case. With regards to Com.mon, making sure that the monitory action comes to be embedded in the communities allow civic actors who access the data to demand for better or additional information, produce and transform the data, thus enhancing greater transparency through public communication and advocacy. Subsequent to this, communities come to be the basis for further participatory action, making use of such information for building a system of social accountability and achieving substantial goals such as integrity, social justice, qualitative and participatory democratic processes.

Coherently with the theoretical findings of this study, Com.mon CBM initiatives are supported by the strength of the community to act collectively, which is in turn reinforced by a preceding history of grassroots participation.

An initial level of widespread perception of corruption and institutional distrust related to the Italian scenario represent one of the mobilising factors for the communities to build a system of checks and balances, and initiate monitoring mechanisms. Nevertheless, the analysis of the empirical data seems to support the idea that CBM initiatives, as monitory forms of civic action, can finally have a positive impact on institutional trust both restoring traditional channels of institutional trust (through more transparency and accountability) and building new channels of participation where to

establish a renewed trust between institutional and civic actors, e.g. participatory three-year anti-corruption plans.

Overall, as presented in Table 3, the instrument of CBM has the potential to overcome many challenges related to grassroots participation, especially in cases of public corruption. In the case of Com.mon we can overall recognise predominantly favourable internal and external opportunity structures. At the same time, however, there remain some limiting factors. On the one side, internal limiting factors (as listed in Table 3) seem to be already addressed by the organisational and operative framework of Com.mon, even though they may still have (partial) negative impact on the efficacy of CBM processes. On the other side, external i.e. structural limits could more strongly hinder the action of monitoring communities, especially if they do not change in the long run.

4.3 Discussion of the results

First of all, given the analysis of the empirical data about the genesis, organisation, participants and CBM process of Com.mon, we can come to the general conclusion that community-based monitoring initiatives represent a citizen-driven participatory instrument. In line with the theoretical findings, CBM initiatives take the shape of monitory form of civic action, i.e. monitoring public officials through the informal civic space of the communities, enabling the emergence of conflict if necessary. Com.mon CBM fosters transparency and accountability of institutional actors and generates new forms of informal political power within the communities, which are able to raise questions about misbehaviour, advance demands of change, mobilise societal informal resources for sanction and reward. That is, we can accept the first hypothesis (H1) we formulated at the beginning of this thesis.

In the light of the empirical analysis, we can also confirm the second hypothesis (H2). In cases of public corruption community-based monitoring, as conceptualised and realised in Com.mon, seems to represent a necessary approach to create autonomous spaces for participation and put into place mechanisms of social accountability, vis-à-vis unfavourable or lacking conditions for participation. These are determined by

corrupt institutional actors who are not keen to “invite society into the state” (Ackerman 2014: 310), respond to citizens’ demands, fulfil transparency as provided by the law, meet eventual (instrumentalised) endorsement of anti-corruption measures.

Finally, we can still recognise the existence of internal and external factors which may hinder the functioning and efficacy of community-based monitoring initiatives. However, as in Com.mon, such processes have proved to have the potential to make anti-corruption efforts participatory and citizen-driven, giving full effect to existing institutional instruments and empowering grassroots anti-corruption participation. Therefore, we can accept the third formulated hypothesis (H3) as well. In the end, this should contribute to effectively and sustainably tackle public corruption in the short and long run.

The major contribution of this thesis is to draw conclusions about the instrument of community-based monitoring and its added-value in preventing and fighting corruption. In conclusion of this study, we can thus affirm that community-based monitoring represents a citizen-driven instrument of political participation, which has proved to be necessary in cases of public corruption, as it allows civic society initiatives to take place outside formal or “invited” spaces and consider the possibility of conflict with the misbehaving institutional actors. At the same time, it helps restoring old and new channels of trust between institutions and citizens, enhancing integrity, achieving social justice and renovating the democratic process. In turn, the approach of community-based monitoring seems to have the potential to substantially improve anti-corruption civic efforts, as it makes them more participatory and citizen-driven, thus achieving positive impact in the short and long run with regards to both vertical and horizontal mechanisms of accountability.

5. Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the Italian case study “Com.mon”, this thesis has drawn conclusions about the participatory instrument of community-based monitoring, in an attempt to highlight its strengths and weaknesses for the interests of both scholars and practitioners. In the light of the results, this thesis thus aims at contributing to the State of the Art in this relatively unexplored area of study, in particular with focus on the application of community-based monitoring in anti-corruption. Moreover, such results could be taken into consideration by practitioners for future improvements of CBM processes, in Italy as well as in other countries.

In sum, the instrument of community-based monitoring has proved to have the potential to overcome many challenges related to grassroots participation, especially in cases of public corruption, where citizens are confronted with unfavourable or lacking conditions for meaningfully participating in democratic life. Community-based monitoring initiatives help restoring old and new channels of trust between institutions and citizens, enhancing integrity, achieving social justice and renovating the democratic process. In turn, the approach of community-based monitoring seems to have the potential to substantially improve anti-corruption civic efforts, as it makes them more participatory and citizen-driven, thus achieving positive impact in the short and long run with regards to both vertical and horizontal mechanisms of accountability. Further improvement commitment and attention should be dedicated to address the limiting internal and external factors recognised in this study, in order to ensure that these are not coming to hinder the functioning and efficacy of community-based monitoring initiatives in the long run.

Finally, some limitations of this research have to be recognised. Given that the research design only provided for the analysis of one case study, there are some constraints in the generalisability of the research findings. During my fieldwork, due to lacking resources of money and time and except for one field trip, I had no opportunity to visit the monitoring communities in person. It could be interesting for future research to closely observe the participants and activity of the single communities, to get more in-depth understanding about them. Furthermore, outside the context of this thesis, I conducted an exploratory mapping of about 100 CSOs and other civic actors in Europe, which engage in anti-corruption with a comparable bottom-up, citizen-centred

approach. After contacting 70 of such organisations or groups, I conducted, together with a colleague, some exploratory interviews with 22 of them (either via Skype or in written form) about their organisation, mission and activity. These included cases from countries like: Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, France, Kosovo, Portugal, Romania, Serbia, Spain, Ukraine and two regional organisations focused on South-Eastern Europe. Even though this effort could provide only a fragmentary preliminary evidence on the topic, my suggestion is that it would be well worthwhile for future research to systematically examine the topic at the European level as well, further investigating, for instance, how varying opportunity structures impact on the use and efficacy of CBM participatory instrument in prevention of and fight against corruption. Interesting outlooks for future research could thus both take into consideration to more closely investigate the work of active monitoring communities, related to Com.mon or other civic initiatives, or scale up the analysis to the European context, to further contribute to the State of the Art about this instrument of political participation as applied to anti-corruption.

References

Ackerman, J. M. (2014). Rethinking the International Anti-Corruption Agenda: Civil Society, Human Rights and Democracy. *American University International Law Review* 29 (2). 293-333.

Administration of B. H. Obama (2009). Memorandum on Transparency and Open Government. 21 January 2009. Online available at: <https://www.archives.gov/files/cui/documents/2009-WH-memo-on-transparency-and-open-government.pdf> [Accessed 14 February 2019].

Barnes, M., Sullivan, H. & Newman, J. (2007). *Power, Participation and Political Renewal: Case Studies in Public Participation*. Bristol: Policy Press.

Buttiglione, P. & Reggi, L. (2015). Il monitoraggio civico delle politiche di coesione e lo sviluppo di comunità civiche. *PRISMA Economia - Società - Lavoro*. 81-97.

Checkoway, B & Aldana, A. (2013). Four forms of youth civic engagement for diverse democracy. *Children and Youth Services Review*. Vol. 35 (11). 1894-1899.

Coelho, V. S. P., Von Lieres, B. (2010). *Mobilizing for Democracy: Citizen Action and the Politics of Public Participation*. Zed Books.

Constantino, P. A. L., Carlos, H. S. A., Ramalho, E. E., Rostant, L., Marinelli, C., Teles, D., Fonseca-Junior, S. F., Fernandes, R. B. & Valsecchi, J. (2012). Empowering local people through community-based resource monitoring: a comparison between Brazil and Namibia. *Ecology and Society* 17(4): 22.

della Porta, D. & Vannucci, A. (1997). The resources of corruption: Some reflections from the Italian Case. *Crime Law and Social Change*. Vol. 27. 231-254.

della Porta, D. (2000). Social Capital, Beliefs in Government, and Political Corruption. In: Pharr, S. J. & Putnam, R. D. (eds.). *Disaffected Democracies: What's Troubling the Trilateral Countries?*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

della Porta, D. (2017). Anti-corruption from below: Social movements against corruption in late neoliberalism. *Partecipazione e Conflitto*. Vol. 10. 661-692.

Ekman, J. & Amnå, E. (2009). Political participation and civic engagement: Towards a new typology. *Human Affairs*. 22.

European Commission (2010). The European egovernment action plan 2011–2015. COM (2010) 743, December 15, 2010. Brussels: European Commission.

European Commission (2018). Digital Single Market. Policy: Open Government. Last update 13 July 2018. Online available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/open-government> [Accessed 23 February 2019].

Ferrante, L. & Vannucci, A. (2017). *Anticorruzione pop. È semplice combattere il malaffare se sai come farlo*. Turin: Edizioni Gruppo Abele.

Fox, S. (2013). Is it time to update the definition of political participation?. *Parliamentary Affairs* 67(2): 495–505.

Gallego, J., Rivero, G. & Martínez, J. D. (2018). Preventing rather than Punishing: An Early Warning Model of Malfeasance in Public Procurement. *Universidad del Rosario. Serie Documentos de Trabajo*. No. 222.

Gaventa, J., & Barrett, G. (2012). Mapping the Outcomes of Citizen Engagement. *World Development*, 40(12), 2399-2410.

Geißel, B., Roth, R., Collet, S. & Tillmann, C. (2014). Partizipation und Demokratie im Wandel: Wie unsere Demokratie durch neue Verfahren und Kombinationen repräsentativer, deliberativer und direkter Beteiligung gestärkt wird. 489-504. In: Bertelsmann Stiftung, Staatsministerium Baden-Württemberg (ed.). *Partizipation im Wandel. Unsere Demokratie zwischen Wählen, Mitmachen und Entscheiden*. Gütersloh: Verlag Bertelsmann Stiftung.

Grimes, M. (2012). The Contingencies of Societal Accountability: Examining the Link between Civil Society and Good Government. *Studies in comparative international development*, 48(4), 380-402.

Hansson, K., Belkacem, K., & Ekenberg, L. (2015). Open Government and Democracy: A Research Review. *Social Science Computer Review*, 33(5), 540–555.

Heller, N. (2012). A Working Definition of “Open Government”. *Global Integrity, Blog*. 23 May 2012. Online available at: <https://www.globalintegrity.org/2012/05/23/working-definition-opengov/> [Accessed 23 February 2019].

Heywood, P. M. (ed.) (2015). *Routledge Handbook of Political Corruption*. New York: Routledge.

Hooghe, M. & Dejaeghere, Y. (2007). Does the ‘Monitorial Citizen’ Exist? An Empirical Investigation into the Occurrence of Postmodern Forms of Citizenship in the Nordic Countries. *Scandinavian Political Studies*. 30. 249 - 271.

Janssen, M., Charalabidis, Y. & Zuiderwijk, A. (2012) Benefits, Adoption Barriers and Myths of Open Data and Open Government, *Information Systems Management*, 29:4, 258-268.

Katsios, S. (2016). Corruption as a Governance Challenge and the Role of Civil Society. Conference Paper: 13th International Conference „Present Issues of Global Economy”, Ovidius University, Constanta, Romania. Vol. XVI (1).

Keane, J. (2009a). *Life and death of democracy*. London: Simon & Schuster.

Keane, J. (2009b). Monitorial Democracy and Media-saturated Societies. *Griffith Review*. 24. Online: <https://griffithreview.com/articles/monitorial-democracy-and-media-saturated-societies/> [Accessed: 15/02/2019].

Kurer, O. (2015). Definitions of corruption. In: Heywood, P. M. (ed.). Routledge Handbook of Political Corruption. New York: Routledge

Lamprianou, I. (2013). Contemporary Political Participation Research: A Critical Assessment. 21-42. In: Demetriou, K.N. (ed) (2013). Democracy in transition: Political participation in the European Union. Berlin, Heidelberg: Springer.

Lathrop, D. & Ruma, L. (eds) (2010). Open Government: Collaboration, Transparency, and Participation in Practice First. O'Reilly Media, Incorporated.

Marín, J. M. (2016). Evidence of citizen engagement impact in promoting good governance and anti-corruption efforts. Transparency International. Online available at: <https://www.u4.no/publications/evidence-of-citizen-engagement-impact-in-promoting-good-governance-and-anti-corruption-efforts> [Accessed 15 March 2019].

Martinez B. Kukutschka, R. (2015). Topic guide on building political will to fight corruption. Transparency International. Online available at: https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/answer/topic_guide_on_building_political_will_to_fight_corruption [Accessed 15 March 2019].

Martinez B. Kukutschka, R. (2016). Civil society budget monitoring. Transparency International. Online available at: https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/answer/civil_society_budget_monitoring [Accessed 15 March 2019].

Martini, M. (2015). Anti-corruption coalitions: examples of success and capacity building. Transparency International. Online available at: https://www.transparency.org/files/content/corruptionqas/Anti-corruption_coalitions_examples_of_success_and_capacity_building_2015.pdf [Accessed 15 March 2019].

Matheus, R., Vaz, J. C. & Ribeiro, M. M. (2011). Anti-Corruption Online Tools: Online Monitoring systems against corruption in Latin America. First Global Conference on Transparency Research. Rutgers University. Newark, May 19-20.

Mattoni, A. (2017). From Data Extraction to Data Leaking. Data-activism in Italian and Spanish anti-corruption campaigns. Partecipazione e Conflitto. Vol. 10 (3).

McCusker, R. (2006). Review of anti-corruption strategies. Technical and background paper series No. 23. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.

Meijer, A. J., Curtin, D., & Hillebrandt, M. (2012). Open government: connecting vision and voice. International Review of Administrative Sciences, 78(1), 10–29.

Molina, E., Carella L., Pacheco, A., Cruces, G. & Gasparini, L. (2017). Community monitoring interventions to curb corruption and increase access and quality in service delivery: a systematic review. Journal of Development Effectiveness. Vol. 9 (4). 462-499.

Moroff, H. & Schmidt-Pfister, D. (2010). Anti-corruption movements, mechanisms, and machines – an introduction. *Global Crime*. Vol. 11 (2). 89-98.

Nabatchi, T. & Leighninger, M. (eds) (2015). *Public Participation for 21st Century Democracy*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley.

Norris, P. (2001). *Digital divide: Civic engagement, information poverty, and the Internet worldwide*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press.

Norris, P. (2002). *Democratic Phoenix: Reinventing Political Activism*, New York: Cambridge University Press.

Ohme, J., de Vreese, C. & Albæk, E. (2017). From theory to practice: how to apply van Deth's conceptual map in empirical political participation research. *Acta Politica*. 53:367–390.

Oldfield, J. (2017). Overview of national approaches to anti-corruption packages. Transparency International. Online available at: https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/answer/overview_of_national_approaches_to_anti_corruption_packages [Accessed 15 March 2019].

Open Government Partnership – OGP (2015). *The Open Government Guide*. 29 June 2015. Online available at: <https://www.opengovpartnership.org/resources/open-government-guide> [Accessed 23 February 2019].

Orszag, P. R. (2009). *Open Government Directive*. Executive Office of the President: Memorandum No. M-10-06. 8 December 2009. Online available at: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/open/documents/open-government-directive> [Accessed 14 February 2019].

Pollock, R. M. & Whitelaw, G. S. (2005). Community-Based Monitoring in Support of Local Sustainability. *Local Environment*. 10:3, 211-228.

Pope, J. (2000). *The TI source book*. 2nd ed. Berlin: Transparency International.

Putnam, R.D., Leonardi, R. & Nanetti, R. Y. (1993). *Making Democracy Work: Civic Traditions in Modern Italy*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Rogers, D. (2016). *Monitory Democracy as Citizen-driven Participatory Planning: The Urban Politics of Redwatch in Sydney*. *Urban Policy and Research*.

Rothstein, B (ed.) (2014). State-of-the-art report on theories and harmonised concepts of corruption. Anticorrp project, European Commission, D1.1. Online available at: http://anticorrp.eu/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/D1.1_Part6_Centripedal-versus-centrifugal-corruption.pdf [Accessed 15 March 2019].

Schudson, M. (1998). *The Good Citizen: A History of American Public Life*. New York: Free Press.

Schudson, M. (2000). Good citizens and bad history: Today's political ideals in historical perspective, *The Communication Review*, 4:1, 1-19.

Shkabatur, J. (2013). Transparency With(out) Accountability: Open Government in the United States. *Yale Law & Policy Review*. Vol. 31. Nr. 01, 2013.

Sunlight Foundation (2010). Ten Principles for Opening Up Government Information. Posted: 11 August 2010. Updated: 14 November 2017. Online available at: <https://sunlightfoundation.com/policy/documents/ten-open-data-principles/> [Accessed 26 February 2019].

van Deth, J. W. (2001). Studying Political Participation: Towards a Theory of Everything?. Introductory paper prepared for delivery at the Joint Sessions of Workshops of the European Consortium for Political Research: "Electronic Democracy: Mobilisation, Organisation and Participation via new ICTs". Grenoble, 6-11 April 2001.

van Deth, Jan W. (2014). A conceptual map of political participation. *Acta Politica*. 49 (3):349–367.

Vannucci, A. (2015). Three paradigms for the analysis of corruption. *Labour & Law Issues*. Vol. 1 (2).

Vannucci, A. (2017). Challenges in the study of corruption: approaches and policy implications. *Revista Brasileira de Direito. Passo Fundo*. Vol. 13 (1). 251-281.

Verba, S. & Nie, N. (1972). *Participation in America: Political Democracy and Social Equality*. New York: Harper & Row.

Walker, D. W. (2009). Citizen-driven reform of local-level basic services: Community-Based Performance Monitoring. *Development in Practice*. Vol. 19 (8). 1035-1051.

Warren, M. E. (2004). What Does Corruption Mean in a Democracy?. *American Journal of Political Science*. Vol. 48 (2). 328-343.

Warren, M. E. (2015). The meaning of corruption in democracies. In: Heywood, P. M. (ed.). *Routledge Handbook of Political Corruption*. New York: Routledge

Wheatland, B. (2016). The UN Convention against Corruption and the role of civil society. Transparency International. Online available at: <https://www.u4.no/publications/the-un-convention-against-corruption-and-the-role-of-civil-society> [Accessed 15 March 2019]

Yu, H. & Robinson, D. G. (2012). The New Ambiguity of 'Open Government'. 59 *UCLA L. Rev. Disc.* 178.

Appendix I

Data availability statement

The data that support the findings of this study are available upon request from the corresponding author ([elisa.orlando001\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:elisa.orlando001[at]gmail.com)). Restrictions apply to the documents that were used under license for the current study.

Appendix II

Guidelines in preparation of field research

1) Preliminary information

- Name of the organisation
- Type of organisation (e.g.: NGO, research agency, etc.)
- Year of foundation
- How long has the organisation been operating on anti-corruption?
- Size of the organisation
 - if any, how many people employed
 - if any, how many people involved in voluntary work
 - how many beneficiaries of the activities?
- On which scale does the organisation operate? (local, national, regional, global)
- Where is the organisation based?
- Where does the organisation produce impact?
- Target group(s); if more than one, number according to target priority, from 1-primary target to X-minor target:
 - Civic society or general public
 - Government or other institutions (national)
 - Institutions (regional or international), e.g.: EU, UN, etc.
 - Other CSOs (e.g. empowerment)
 - Other (specify)
- Have they been working with any partners? If yes, which one(s)?
- Has their work been supported by any project funders? If yes, which one(s)?

2) Work, impact, methodology

- Brief presentation of the organisation; What is the main motivation behind their work?
- What impact are they trying to achieve with their activity? Which are priority areas of existing and new work?
- Types of activity
 - Advocacy with policy makers
 - Education
 - Research and knowledge generation
 - Victims support/whistleblowers support
 - Developing information/communication materials
 - Using media for advocacy

- Technical support to government agencies or local administration
 - Monitoring institutional commitments on anti-corruption (or other field - specify)
 - Community-based monitoring
 - Sensitisation of media
 - Capacity building of NGOs
 - Running information networks/newsletters
 - Evaluating anti-corruption interventions
 - Litigation
 - Other(s) (specify)
- In particular, do they have any activities or projects regarding anti-corruption community-based monitoring? What are they aimed at?
 - Activity
Brief description
Is this their main activity? (Y/N)
Is it temporary or indefinitely?
Does it include civic society actors? (Y/N)
Does it include institutional actors? (Y/N) - If yes, which one(s)?
Does it include any partners or funders/donors? (Y/N) - If yes, which one(s)?
 - Are these activities interconnected with other goals/activities of their work? (E.g. social justice, human rights, good governance, ecc.)

How do they position themselves vis-à-vis the following sentences about the involvement of civil society in anti-corruption efforts in the region of interest?

- Civil society plays an important role in shaping and monitoring anti-corruption efforts nationally (or in your region of interest). (strongly agree; agree; neutral; disagree; strongly disagree)
- Civil society efforts are well established and recognised by government. (strongly agree; agree; neutral; disagree; strongly disagree)
- Empowering the civil society to contribute in anti-corruption prevention is one of their primary goals. (strongly agree; agree; neutral; disagree; strongly disagree)

3) Sentiment about social trends

- What are the most important sources of support or incentives for their work? Has it changed over time? How has this helped the organisation?
- Which challenges or obstacles have they been facing in different projects or times? Why? What have you learned from it?

- Do they expect any particular challenges in the future? Which one(s)?

Sentiment about...

- Problematic areas:
 - Perception of corruption (stable, diminishing, growing)
 - Lack of transparency and accountability of the PA towards citizens (stable, diminishing, growing)
- Your impact (stable, diminishing, growing)
- Impact goals: over the past year they...
 - Developed new projects/services/collaborations
 - Improved your projects/services/collaborations. If yes - what have they done differently?
 - Identified new categories of beneficiaries
 - Identified new geographical areas in which to operate
 - Improved internal processes and organisation

Appendix III

Criteria useful for the assessment of participatory initiatives

Drawn from: *Participedia* (<https://participedia.net/en>).

Overview	General issue(s)
	Specific topic(s)
Location	Country
	Geographical scope
Purpose	Intended purpose(s)
History	Starting time
	Ongoing (as by May 2019)
Participants	Targeted participants (demographics)
	Targeted participants (public roles)
	Method(s) of recruitment
Process	Method(s)
	Facilitation
	Face-to-face, online or both
	Type(s) of interaction among participants
	Targeted audience(s)
	Method(s) of communication with audience
Organisers	Type of funding entity
	Type of organising entity
	Type of supporting entity

Abstract

Political participation is a concept whose understanding has enormously evolved over the last century, along meaningful societal and technological transformations. In the light of the problematisation of the currently mainstream participatory framework of the Open Government and according to the concept of “monitory democracy” (Keane 2009), this study investigates the participatory instrument of community-based monitoring (CBM) as monitory form of civic action. In particular, this master thesis aims to analyse participatory processes of CBM as applied to anti-corruption civic action, investigating the added-value of a citizen-driven approach in preventing and fighting corruption. Corruption has, indeed, been recognised as one of the most pressing contemporary issues given its undeniable relevance for all societies for the enhancement of democracy, rule of law, social justice and a prosperous economy. Accordingly, anti-corruption has come to be a prominent issue on the civic and institutional agenda worldwide. Even though a vital role has been yet largely recognised to the civil society in the enhancement of the democratic process and in preventing and fighting corruption, this study of CBM as applied to anti-corruption is attempting to contribute to the State of the Art in this rather unexplored research field, for the interests of both scholars and practitioners. Based on the analysis of the project “Com.mon”, an initiative of anti-corruption CBM in Italy, this thesis thus argues that the instrument of CBM has the potential to overcome many challenges related to grassroots participation, especially in cases of public corruption. In turn, the approach of CBM seems to have the potential to substantially improve anti-corruption civic efforts, as it makes them more participatory and citizen-driven, thus achieving positive impact in the short and long run with regards to both vertical and horizontal mechanisms of accountability.

Zusammenfassung

Politische Partizipation ist ein Konzept, dessen Verständnis sich im Laufe des letzten Jahrhunderts entlang bedeutender gesellschaftlicher und technologischer Veränderungen enorm entwickelt hat. Im Hinblick auf die Problematisierung des derzeitigen *mainstream* partizipativen Frameworks der Open Government und nach dem Konzept der "monitory democracy" (Keane 2009) untersucht diese Studie das partizipative Instrument des *community-based monitoring* (CBM) als *monitory form of civic action*. Diese Masterarbeit zielt insbesondere darauf ab, partizipative Prozesse von CBM zu analysieren, wie sie auf Anti-Korruptionsmaßnahmen angewandt werden, und den Mehrwert eines bürgerorientierten Ansatzes bei der Prävention und Bekämpfung von Korruption zu untersuchen. Korruption wird als eines der dringlichsten aktuellen Themen anerkannt, da sie für alle Gesellschaften von unbestreitbarer Bedeutung für die Stärkung von Demokratie, Rechtsstaatlichkeit, sozialer Gerechtigkeit und einer prosperierenden Wirtschaft ist. Dementsprechend hat sich die Korruptionsbekämpfung weltweit zu einem wichtigen Thema auf der zivilen und institutionellen Agenda entwickelt. Auch wenn der Zivilgesellschaft bei der Stärkung des demokratischen Prozesses und bei der Korruptionsbekämpfung schon eine wichtige Rolle zugestanden wird, versucht diese Studie über CBM in Bezug auf die Anti-Korruption, zu diesem noch weitgehend unerforschten Forschungsgebiet beizutragen. Basierend auf der Analyse des Projekts "Com.mon", einer CBM Initiative zur Korruptionsbekämpfung in Italien, wird in dieser Arbeit argumentiert, dass das Instrument der CBM das Potenzial hat, viele Herausforderungen im Zusammenhang mit politischer Partizipation zu überwinden, insbesondere in Fällen von öffentlicher Korruption. Der Ansatz von CBM wiederum scheint das Potenzial zu haben, die zivilen Bemühungen zur Korruptionsbekämpfung erheblich zu verbessern, da er sie partizipativer und bürgerorientierter macht und so kurz- und langfristig positive Auswirkungen sowohl auf vertikale als auch auf horizontale Accountability-Mechanismen erzielt.