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BETWEEN CONDEMNATION AND RESIGNATION:
A STUDY ON ATTITUDES TOWARDS CORRUPTION IN DAR ES SALAAM,
TANZANIA

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1 Statement of the Problem

Tanzania represents one of the well-documented cases of countries in Sub-Saharan Africa where corruption is endemic. This has remained the case in spite of manifold commitments on the part of the regime to fight this problem and of the fact that Tanzania has in place, what is in the opinion of international experts, a state of the art anti-corruption legislation.

Such cases of pervasive and entrenched corrupt practices have begun to receive significant attention in the literature that seeks to shed light on why, after roughly twenty years since anti-corruption came to the forefront in the international agenda, we still seem to only be achieving modest improvements. For example, some scholars have tried to address this topic by arguing that in some countries corruption should be understood as a collective action problem of the second order, and that therefore it is not surprising that anti-corruption legislation and policies based on principal-agent assumptions fail to achieve the desired results (Persson, Rothstein, and Teorell 2013). Other authors make the distinction among governance regimes based on universalistic or particularistic criteria for conducting transactions as an analytical lens through which to frame the issue (Mungiu-Pippidi 2014).

While such conceptual definitions are certainly useful, in fact needed, in order to adequately rethink our understandings about corruption, it is equally important to complement our inquiry inductively with evidence about the details that describe the manner in which corrupt exchanges take place, especially in those challenging cases. We need to better understand the informal practices that override the formal legal and regulatory frameworks in practice and to associate those to the incentives that affect individuals' choices at those junctions where corrupt transactions most frequently take place. This goes as deep as inquiring about unwritten social norms and values that shape the manner in which men and women across different geographic and cultural contexts understand, not only corruption, but also their own relationships to each other and to the state.

With the intent to make a contribution in this direction, this article presents evidence collected through ethnographic research about the attitudes towards corruption of citizens in urban low income areas of Dar es Salaam, the largest city in Tanzania, and explores some of the factors underpinning such attitudes. The research focused on experiences with corruption in the health sector, and on some of the coping strategies that citizens resort to in face of the difficulties encountered when seeking medical attention at public health facilities. With regard to the latter, it is well known that mutual help associations are playing an increasingly important role across Africa, which in turn suggests a relevant set of questions regarding the role that horizontal social networks found in these communities play in relation to prevailing corrupt practices but also regarding their potential role to develop more effective anti-corruption approaches. Regardless of the surge in the NGO “industry”, as denounced by some scholars, witnessed in Tanzania, we are interested in the role of these grassroots level associations as they are exactly of the kind that is expected to generate high levels of social capital, which - in the literature- is associated with favourable governance outcomes.

The paper is structured as follows: Section 2 provides information on the Tanzanian case from a political economy perspective and concentrating on macro-level trends. Such information is deemed useful background to the discussion of the ethnographic material to come later. Section 3 presents more detailed information about Dar es Salaam and the specific wards where the research took place as well as a description of the methodology employed. Section 4 is devoted to discussing the perceptions of local residents of Dar es Salaam on the meaning of corruption, its links to other concepts that are of importance in their communities, as well as local understandings about the rule of law. Section 5 presents evidence on the mechanisms that citizens living in low-income neighbourhoods of Dar es Salaam have developed as coping mechanisms to deal with a pervasively corrupt environment and their possible implications for developing anti-corruption strategies that are suitable to the local context. Section 6 is devoted to proposing some concluding remarks.

2 Tanzania Background Information

This section provides background information on the pervasiveness of corruption in Tanzania drawing from a previous body of work that has traced the development and evolution of the Tanzanian political system since independence. This perspective suggests the prevalence of some systemic patterns in the exercise of political authority that provide a useful backdrop for the discussion of the ethnographic evidence in the subsequent sections.

2.1 The political economy of corruption in Tanzania

One of the most salient features that have characterized the Tanzanian political regime since gaining independence from Great Britain in 1963 has been a marked centralization and personalization of power. Whereas its first president, Julius Nyerere embraced a nation-building project centered on a concept of African socialism (known as Ujamaa), the implementation of this vision was instrumentalized through a strong grip from the center, which aimed to maintain control over the political process and the articulation of social groups vis-à-vis the state. In line with those tendencies, the efforts of the post colonial elite to develop a sense of national unity, identity and purpose, culminated with the emergence of a single party state. The undisputed predominance of the Chama Cha Mapinduzi party (CCM; Party of the Revolution) became the primordial mechanism through which the political elite centralized and retained power. Even after the adoption of a multiparty democracy model in the early 1990s, the CCM has, to date, remained in power.

Such centralization of power resulted in very ineffective and limited authority at the local level. Local government has been weak from the beginning as there was fear among the ruling elites that parochial interests may interfere with the pursuit of the goals of national development. Thus, the creation of centrally appointed authorities at the local level (e.g. Regional and Area commissioners) was intended to ensure that local policy making would mean, not the bottom up articulation of local needs, but rather the top-down implementation of centrally determined

policies. This pattern persists until today in spite of decentralization efforts since, as (Kiria 2009) points out, the central government continues to exercise a large degree of control over taxes, financial allocations and expenditures, including civil servant employment.

Another important feature that characterizes the Tanzanian regime is the extent to which informal practices, particularly political clientelism, are widely utilized to exercise political authority and to secure and consolidate support bases. To understand the nature of political power in Tanzania it should be noted that, although the CCM enjoys a monopoly of power, it is not an institutionalized party. Rather, it is held together largely on the basis of personalized networks. CCM's attraction actually resides in its control of public resource allocation, which in turn translates into ample opportunities to develop clientelistic networks of support.¹²⁹ One of the most important implications of this predominance of informal ties is that political stability has come to rely more on informal personal networks than on functional formal institutions. As (Goran Hyden 2008) put it:

“Power in this context does not stem from the authority vested in a particular public office, but rather the myriad of personal dependencies that are created as money or some other tangible resource is exchanged for political support. Such a government is held together and coordinates matters as well as gets its legitimacy not from how it implements policy but what it delivers.[...] political leaders preferred it [the CCM], not for ideological reasons but because it provided entry to material goods and valuable services.”

¹²⁹ As Phillips (Phillips 2010) describes, voters jokingly refer to campaign season as “harvesting season” – the season of exchanging votes for gifts of money, beer, meals, and party apparel referred to colloquially as “food,” “soda,” “sugar,” or “tea.” Gifts of t-shirts, hats, khangas, and scarves circulate widely during the periods preceding elections.

This latter point is of particular importance as it speaks of the strong link between political legitimacy and resource availability that is a key driver of the incentives and behaviours among the political elite. Thus, because material resources are needed in order to maintain the clientelist networks that allow elites to remain in power, it follows that economic crises would be especially critical for the survival of this kind of political regime. Indeed, in the 1980s when Tanzania faced a severe economic crisis, the elites resorted to increasingly corrupt practices as a means to step up to the challenge. As (Lugalla 1997: 433) expressed, “the fundamental political economy problem of Tanzania at this time was that material production was decreasing, but public administration was expanding.” It has indeed been observed that “the beginning of corruption in Tanzania as well as other manifestations of informal practices” date back to the difficult times in the early 1980s (Hyden and Mmuya 2008)(Goran Hyden 2008). Whilst this does not imply that there were no corrupt practices before, the forms and magnitude changed dramatically thereafter. The point is that this was and still is a clear reflection of a scenario where corruption becomes a “key element linking political legitimacy with economic benefit” (Koechlin 2010: 110).

The entrenchment of clientelism as a practice that systematically favours some constituencies at the expense of others has manifestations in how politicians are appraised by different groups, not on the merit of their policy or ideological orientations, but rather in terms of whether they have brought benefits to their home areas, in which case they are cherished as “local sons,” or not, in which case they are regarded as corrupt or *Mafisadi* in a common derogatory Swahili expression. Reflecting on the above and its implication on accountable governance in Tanzania, (G. Hyden 2006) remarks that powerful government officials often have their loyalties at the local level (usually where they come from) and that is where their accountability lies. In other words, they are expected to deliver policy outcomes, not as national leaders but as patrons of specific areas or demographic groups.

It should be noted that such a system has at its center an implicit notion of reciprocity, where constituencies support their leaders based on the expectation that, in turn, they will be favored if their candidate is successful. In other words, reciprocity is inherent in a transaction where “if we

community support you as leader, you have to give back to us when acceding to a position of power.”

2.2 Bribing in a context of unmet needs and resource constraints

In a context of significant resource constraints, this association of personalised links and political legitimacy has translated into a situation for the common citizen where access to state services and public goods is also conditioned to having personal ties to the right people or the ability to pay for that access. This, of course, means that many people end up in fact being excluded from the entitlements which - as citizens - they should be able to accrue from the state.

That corruption is a pervasive reality of everyday life becomes evident very quickly even to the casual visitor in Tanzania. Bribing has become a “normal” form of currency and has been formalized to the extent that everyone knows that most of the time it is necessary to make an informal payment in order to obtain services.¹³⁰ As (Tibandebage and Mackintosh 2005) note, it has become a norm that “shapes the terms of inclusion and exclusion, widening economic and social inequality.” Furthermore, the reliance on corruption that sustains the political regime functioning further produces regressive social outcomes since, as a recent review of the literature (Cooksey 2011, 9) found, the Tanzanian government creates only a fraction of the public goods it theoretically could with the available resources.

This situation is quite evident in public health facilities. In the Tanzanian health sector corruption is rampant and has very pernicious effects on the urban poor who have very limited ability to pay bribes for treatment. A study of access to health services and the quality of treatment obtained (in terms of services available and patient handling) showed that among urban poor, rural poor and “better off” groups, it was in particular the urban poor which were subject to abusive, exclusionary and untrustworthy services (Tibandebage and Mackintosh 2005) These authors also report how the inability to pay bribes can and has actually lead to deaths.

¹³⁰ For instance, according to TI’s 2013 Global Corruption Barometer, 56% of people in Tanzania reported having to pay a fine during the previous 12 months. <http://www.transparency.org/gcb2013/results>

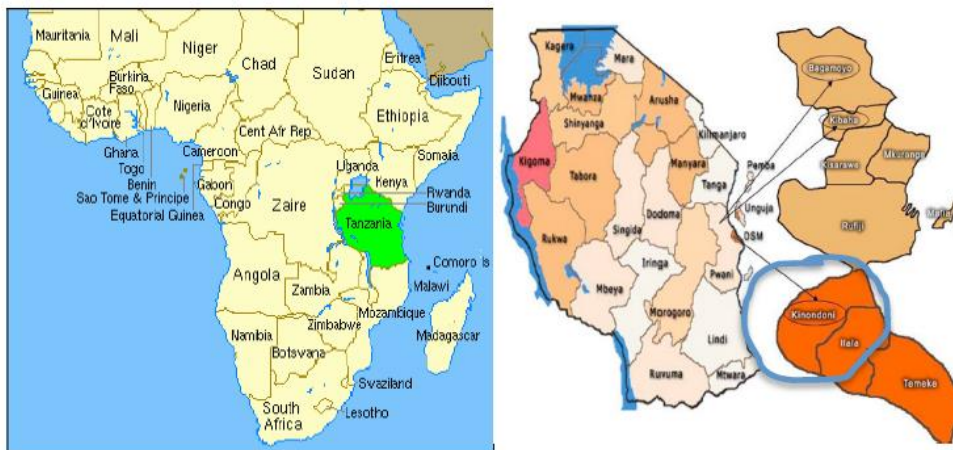
Furthermore, the health sector is subject to considerable resource constraints in Tanzania, visible in that public health facilities often lack adequate equipment and stocks of essential medicines. To this one can add a situation where the sector has experienced a substantial decline in the availability of human resources over the last decade, to the point that Tanzania has one of the lowest per capita medical practitioner ratios in the developing world. According to the Chief Medical Officer, Dr Leo Mutasiwa, while the health sector needs about 144,704 members of staff the actual number is instead 58,297 (wa Songa 2011). Shortages of skilled staff are further complicated by inadequate distribution and lack of flexibility in decentralised human resource management leading to health personnel often being overburdened and demoralized.

In sum, this section has discussed some salient background features characterizing the Tanzanian political regime, which provide preliminary insights into systemic elements at play in perpetuating the observed high levels of corruption prevailing in that country and which will be useful to have in mind when discussing the ethnographic evidence presented below. Such elements include a reliance on personalized power and informal relationships for the exercise of political power and its legitimation, especially through clientelistic networks of exchange. Very pragmatic transactions, thus, seem to underpin the core of the relationship between Tanzanians and their regime, one in which support and legitimacy are conferred on the basis of concrete benefits received. In other words, it could be said that informal and personalized relationships holding the Tanzanian political regime together are essentially based on an underlying principle of transactional reciprocity. To the extent that clientelistic relationships inherently depend on resource availability, since the economic crisis of the 1980s, such reciprocal relationships have increasingly become more exclusive, more corrupt, and therefore more regressive in the selective allocation of available resources at the expense of larger numbers of Tanzanians. In such a context, bribing has become a common currency for allocating scarce resources. Such trends are visible in the health sector and compounded by a situation of chronic underfunding and human resource shortages.

3 Characteristics of the Research Area and Methods

The field research was undertaken in the Kinondoni district of Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, specifically in the three wards Goba, Mwananyamala and Manzese. Kinondoni district is one of the three districts comprising the Dar es Salaam region in Tanzania. It is located in the northern part of Dar es Salaam, which is also the major and largest city in Tanzania (see Map 1).

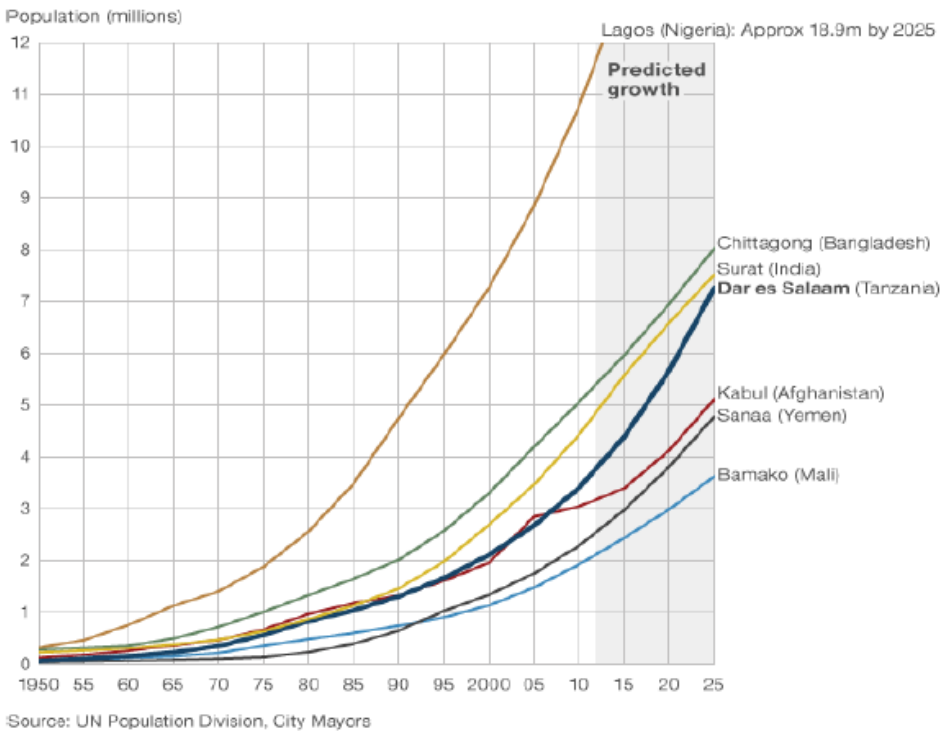
Map 1
Tanzania and Kinondoni district in Dar es Salaam region



From an international perspective, Dar es Salaam is one of the world's fastest growing cities (See Figure 1).

Figure 1.

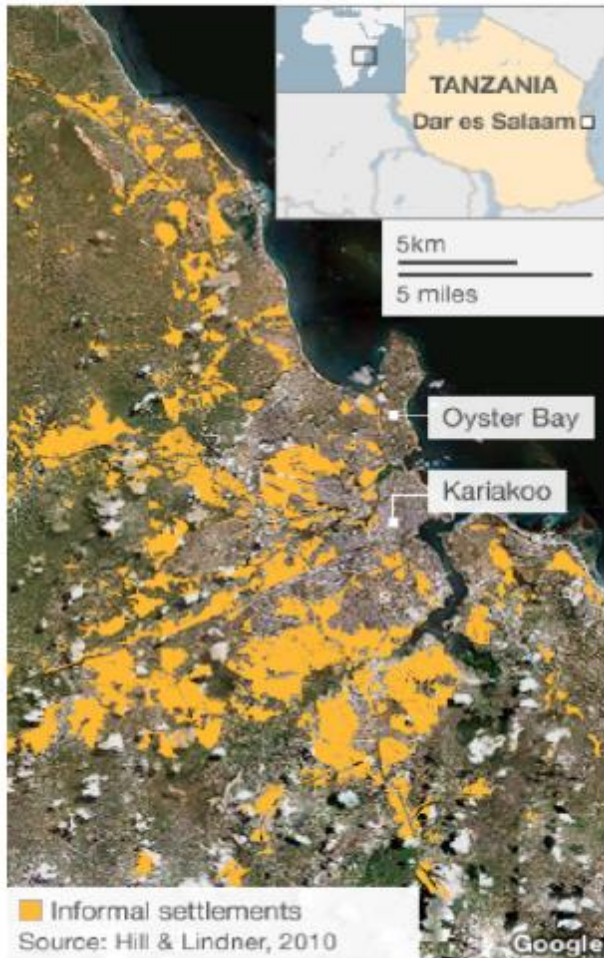
World's fastest-growing major cities



As an urban area and part of Dar es Salaam, Kinondoni attracts migrants from all over Tanzania. Though it hosts a significant segment of the well-off population in the country, the majority of its inhabitants are relatively poor. This is a situation that is generalizable to the entire city. According to a UN study 70% of the population in Dar es Salaam lives in informal settlements (See map 2).

Map 2.

Dar es Salaam slums, 2002



Data was collected during the field study through application of a survey on institutional performance and social values, organization of focus groups discussions, interviews as well as participant observation. This primary data was complemented by a desk review of relevant literature in order to further validate findings and support the analysis of the empirical evidence.

The survey was applied to 113 respondents across the three wards. 24% of the surveys were conducted in Goba ward, 37% in Mwananyamala ward, and 39% in Manzese ward. Two focus group discussions (FGDs) were organized with community members of the three wards. A total of 126 interviews were conducted of which 110 involved average citizens and 16 involved health workers: 3 from Goba dispensary and 10 from Mwananyamala ward-health center and hospital. We also conducted interviews with two medical doctors and a senior nurse who impart courses at the Kam College of Health Sciences in Dar es Salaam.

The research activities took place between January and August 2013.

4 Understandings of Corruption and Associated Concepts

This section presents the findings of our study relating to how community members in Kinondoni district understand corruption and how, in turn, those perceptions are linked to other concepts central to the social fabric such as justice, reciprocity, respect and the distinction between the public and private spheres.

4.1 Local understandings of corruption: between condemnation and resignation

During our focus group discussions, when participants were asked to reflect on what corruption means to them. The majority of them were of the view that corruption refers to those situations where one needs to give something in order to get something. “Something for something, nothing for nothing” was a commonly recurring topic during the focus group discussions.

This is the case, for instance, with pregnancy care and deliveries, which are meant to be services provided free of charge. A young woman from Mwananyamala ward said she learnt that at Mwananyamala people get the registration cards free of charge but after that nothing is free as the policy suggests. She said in the maternity wards expecting mothers have to pay for everything, including gloves, when their time is due. “I noted very poor treatment of the pregnant

women by the mid wives at Mwananyamala and some of them talked to me and said without bribing the nurses then one will be treated like trash.”

A man also provided an account that is indicative of the expectation that nothing, even legal rights and entitlements, can be expected to be honoured without a bribe given beforehand:

“If you want your patient to get proper treatment, especially for the admitted ones, then one needs to pay a little something to the nurse in charge. If you do not give them something you may find your patient in a bad condition the next day when you go to pay them a visit. It has therefore become an imperative in order to receive a minimum standard of treatment. We do not have the money but we try a lot to get any amount to give the nurse.”

A member of the research team even experienced personally a clear example of this “something for something and nothing for nothing” type of attitude during the fieldwork as she went to the health facility management office to seek permission to interview the workers. The permission was easily granted at that point and management suggested the names of some people who would be suitable for the interviews. Thereafter the researcher went off to speak to the senior staff members in order to ask where the aforementioned people could be found. The manager of the nurses proceeded to ask the researcher how much money she would be giving giving the staff after the interview. The researcher explained that there was no pay involved, that she just wanted to ask them a few questions and would not take a lot of their time. The senior nurse then said: “Mnhhh, do you think any one will sit down for free to answer these questions of yours? I am assuring you it will not be easy but any way come back tomorrow, I will let them know.”¹³¹

¹³¹ Since permission from the facility management had been obtained, the researcher at that point left the chief nurse’s office and independently approached nurses and doctors to conduct the interviews.

These examples, as well as other examples encountered during the research, suggest that in the current situation when people seek health services they do not receive treatment as citizens who are entitled to certain services, but rather as clients who must effect a transaction in order to obtain the desired treatment. This transaction, something for something, involves almost exclusively the exchange of a bribe. In our interviews with health facility users, 56 of out 110 respondents said they had been asked in the previous six months to make an informal payment in order to receive treatment.

Strikingly, this is widely believed to be a normal state of affairs. People we interviewed were overwhelmingly of the opinion that corruption has become an inextricable element present in the life of any Tanzanian. One young man said there is no way one can forego corruption because it is everywhere and it always comes in situations where one will definitely comply: “people believe now that if one does not give something then they cannot get anything.” Another participant said it was no use to express one’s dissatisfaction because: ‘whether you say something or keep quiet nothing changes anyway,’ yet another stated that in Tanzania “one simply cannot get good services without corruption.”

Nonetheless, this acknowledgement of the inevitability of bribing does not imply that people condone corrupt acts. Quite the contrary, most discussants said that there is no doubt that corruption is an illegal act. One young woman argued that precisely because it is illegal it is often given different names like ‘takrima’ (which translates as favour or hospitality from Swahili) that would eventually cover up and make it look like it is a normal and legal act. Some said it was “something that those in power have made up so that they can extract money out of service users, it is illegal but people make it seem okay.”

People do understand that corruption has a logic to it, it happens for specific reasons and as such they also understand the difficulties linked to trying to eradicate such corrupt behaviours. One man commented: “.....it has become an ‘institution’ where people make money” and as such it would be very difficult to get rid of because “many people have an interests in it.” Thus,

although widespread corruption is unequivocally understood to be wrong, it is also accepted as an unavoidable fact stemming from concrete realities that people are faced with in their daily lives.

4.2 Justice and the limits of the legal order

Here it is worthwhile to elaborate further on a deeper element that appears to be ingrained in this apparent contradiction between condemnation and resignation. It would appear that these understandings of corruption could be associated with a conceptualization of justice that several of our research participants alluded to and that points to the fact that in Tanzania a dominant understanding of justice is based on the principle of reciprocity.

As mentioned before, the notion of reciprocity applies to clientelistic relationships, but it equally applies to cases where justice is not being served. Then, the individual is somehow allowed to take matters in his/her own hands in order to re-establish a fair balance that is more reciprocal. One example to illustrate this would be the case of the Mtaa leaders, community leaders elected by popular vote to represent the community. A lot is expected from these officials, they have law enforcement responsibilities and are perceived to be real implementers. However, the position is not remunerated and these individuals often get the feeling that, although they have to work hard they are not valued. At the same time, it is known and expected among people that these individuals will “eat” while in office. The popular perception is that being a leader is an opportunity to accumulate and move up the social ladder.

The same logic applies in the case of doctors. During an interview, a doctor explained how most of his colleagues view their situation as unfair because, although they incur significant expenses for their training, there is not a commensurate compensation to be found afterwards when they join the workforce:

“Studying to become a doctor is expensive, but then, once we graduate and are able to start working, the salary is really

insufficient.” He further elaborated: “It is mostly about expectations, about the expectation one has about living a better life as a doctor, after one works hard to get the qualification. But then the expectations don’t come true, but the wife, the family, everyone is expecting to see the fruits of studying a medical degree, all have expectations. So that is when people may start acting....to make expectations come true.”

Related to the preceding discussion is how these understandings of corruption, arising mainly from pragmatic considerations, have a significant impact on the perceptions of the importance and validity of the legal order as a normative framework that effectively shapes behaviours.

As mentioned before, research participants unanimously agreed that corruption is illegal, even though in the view of many research participants it is nevertheless the normal state of affairs. While this apparent contradiction suggests resignation it also shows how little weight the normative assessment of behaviours as stipulated by the written law has for some people. In the discourses of many Kinondoni residents, formal laws come across as a mere technicality: The parameters over which affairs are carried out and the strategies pursued to fulfil one’s needs are not related to the effectiveness of the rule of law at all. Similar to the macro level, at the level of individuals there is a marked reliance on informalities to enable the “system,” in this case citizens’ ability to obtain minimum requirements to their livelihoods, to be functional.

This is further illustrated by the example given by a focus group participant: A young man argued that when one goes to the hospital and is treated according to the law that is a legal act but if they are made to pay an extra that is corruption, which is an illegal act. However, he added, that legal acts are rare nowadays since one cannot get treatment without corruption so eventually all acts are illegal. He also said he himself was an employee of DAWASCO (a public water and sewerage cooperation) and he often accepted bribes in exchange for favours to his customers.

The legal order plays an additional role in the conduct of corrupt transactions. It represents a frame of reference against which the “alternative” (via a bribe) that can be made available is assessed by the payer. Some of the experiences with corruption that community members shared illustrate the manner in which the legal order is used, or even manipulated, by some of the service providers in the process of seeking out for a corrupt transaction.

One man, who is a leader of an association in Manzese, was one day called upon when one of his organization’s members was injured. He took the casualty to Tandale dispensary (which is the nearest dispensary since Manzese had no dispensary). On arrival, he pleaded to the attending staff that this was an emergency so it should be handled that way. He was told to follow the right procedures no matter how serious the injury was. After waiting for a long time he decided to enter the doctor’s room without permission. He talked to the doctor and asked him to kindly look at his patient who was bleeding at that time. Looking at the patient the doctor simply told him ‘You see the situation here: many people are waiting for treatment and they have been here for a long time, we have to follow the rules and keep with the order in which they came [...] besides certain medicine needed for this patient is not available’. After all these explanations (which according to the man narrating the story were meant to show him how difficult his situation was and, hence, to make him think in another direction and consider a bribe), the doctor told him that if he could pay Tsh24000 at that moment, he would treat the patient right away. That is exactly what happened and within no time even the drugs said not to be available became available.

Another example was given by a woman from Mwananyamala as she recounted how she and her relatives took a pregnant woman to Mwananyamala hospital because she was due. Besides having labor pains, their patient was very sick, she was helpless and needed everything done for her including bathing, helping her whenever she wanted to ease herself and so on. When the time came they had to leave her admitted at the hospital, the fact that she needed close attention had them request if one of them could remain overnight and take care of her whenever necessary. The doctor in charge informed them that it is illegal for anyone other than the nurses to spend the night. After some discussion, the doctor directed them to the nurse incharge. They talked to her

and she too refused explaining those were the rules. They decided to give her some money and she immediately changed her attitude and promised to take close care of their patient. When they came back the next morning, they found their patient in a clean condition and she affirmed to having been taken care of very well. The woman recounting the story was certain that had it not been for the bribe, they would have found their patient in the worst condition possible.

In these examples, the reasoning behind the positions adopted by the health staff is that the legal order and the established formal procedures are cumbersome and in a way useless and even outright dangerous. Therefore, by saying “you have to adhere to the legal framework” what is being implied is that by observing the rules, adequate service (or any service at all) will never be obtained. At the same time, the health staff are offering an “alternative way” –one in which they, the practitioners, have in their power to dispense and which is better than the legal one, because it will ultimately get things done the right way.

The fact that laws and formal processes lack significance at this level can partly be considered as a consequence of the excessive centralization of power and influence at the detriment of local level governments. In this sense, it would be expected that weakened local governments would have trouble performing their monitoring and law enforcement functions.

On further reflection, it also seems unequivocally true that this appeal to the “uselessness” of the legal framework is effective and even makes sense because there is indeed an incongruence between the legal framework and the realities of a low income country. As mentioned before, the Tanzanian health sector is terribly resource constrained and, as a consequence there is a systematic mismatch to be experienced between the entitlements which citizens have a right to and the availability of resources. The health staff’s appeals to incite the user to opt for his or her “better” way are therefore effective to a large degree because the user himself can verify that, for example, visibly there is a very long line of people waiting.

The shortage of qualified human resources in the Tanzanian public health system clearly came across in our interviews with health workers in the form of a high degree of reported

dissatisfaction with work conditions. Respondents were almost unanimously of the opinion that their salaries are not adequate for either their technical skills and training or their actual workloads.¹³² As one medical doctor we interviewed simply stated: “the root [of the corruption] problem is that the budget is simply insufficient vis-à-vis the needs for healthcare.”

5 Coping Mechanisms and the Potential for Change

In this section we look into how the situation of endemic corruption described earlier has affected the relationship between the communities we studied and the Tanzanian state as well as the coping mechanisms that people have developed in order to deal with a corrupt environment. The discussion will also shed light on some evidence about the potential that targeted interventions may hold to bring about change.

5.1 Citizens’ attitudes towards the state

As a consequence of the widespread corrupt practices discussed before, a first observation is that there appears to be an estranged relationship between citizens and the state, especially with regards to the manner in which the former view the latter, not as a protector or provider but, rather, as a predatory element in their lives. This was reflected in our findings for example in some of the survey results, which indicate that government institutions are considered to be of little importance for the welfare of the community and are among the least trusted by citizens.

Figure 2 depicts the responses to the survey when respondents were asked to rate institutions in terms of their perceived importance to community well-being. The fact that the ruling party is perceived as having the least impact on community wellbeing is very symptomatic of the

¹³² As an illustration, the following were responses to specific questions on this topic that we posed:

1. High achievement on the job is reflected in our pay. TRUE 1 FALSE 12
2. The income I receive is a fair reflection of my skills, knowledge and training. TRUE 2 FALSE 11
3. This facility provides everything I need to do my job effectively. TRUE 2 FALSE 11

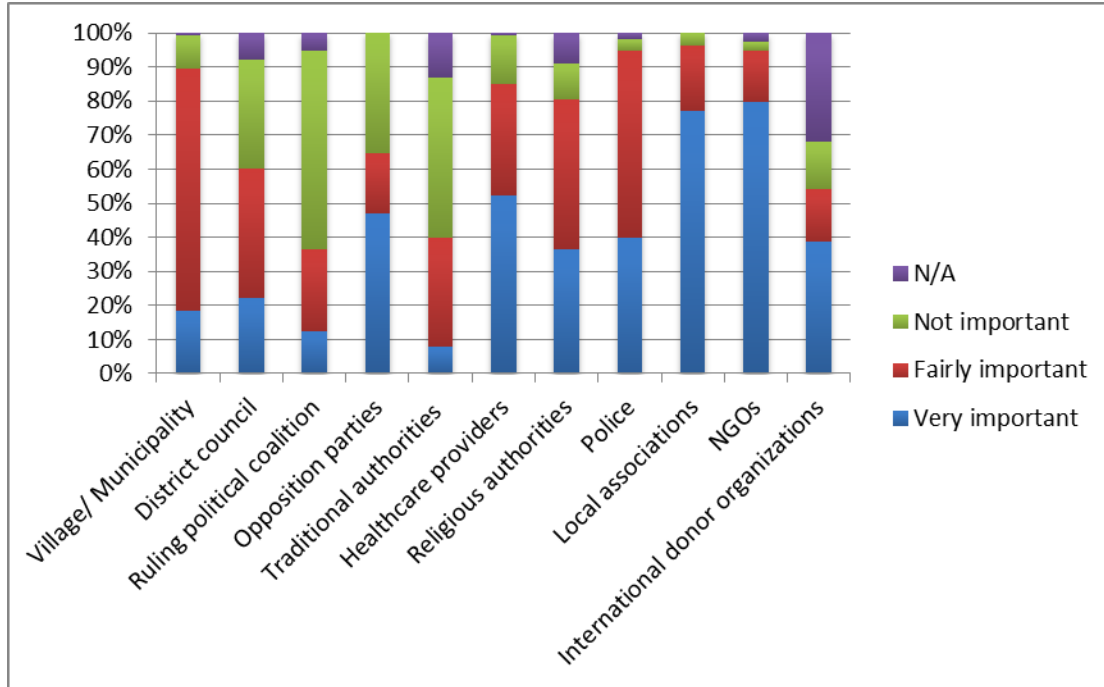
weaknesses of the Tanzanian state. On the one hand, as was described above, since its independence Tanzania has been ruled by the same political party, the CCM. For this reason, in Tanzania we may speak of a situation where the distinction between the ruling party and the state is meaningless, as both concepts are in practice deeply intermeshed. On the other hand, especially since the mid-1980s, the situation regarding corruption in the public sector and the state's ability to provide basic services to the population deteriorated sharply. These two elements taken together provide the context in which to interpret how the low importance attributed by survey respondents to the political ruling coalition in terms of its ability to improve the communities' well-being reflects an underlying alienation of the population from the state.

Furthermore, most people considered local government levels not to be very important in their impact on community welfare. This is consistent with the findings discussed previously, in which the case of public health facilities exemplifies the inability of local level authorities to guarantee a minimum level of access to essential public services.

In contrast, it is notable that survey respondents consider non-state actors, namely local associations and NGOs, to have the greatest impact on community welfare.

Figure 2

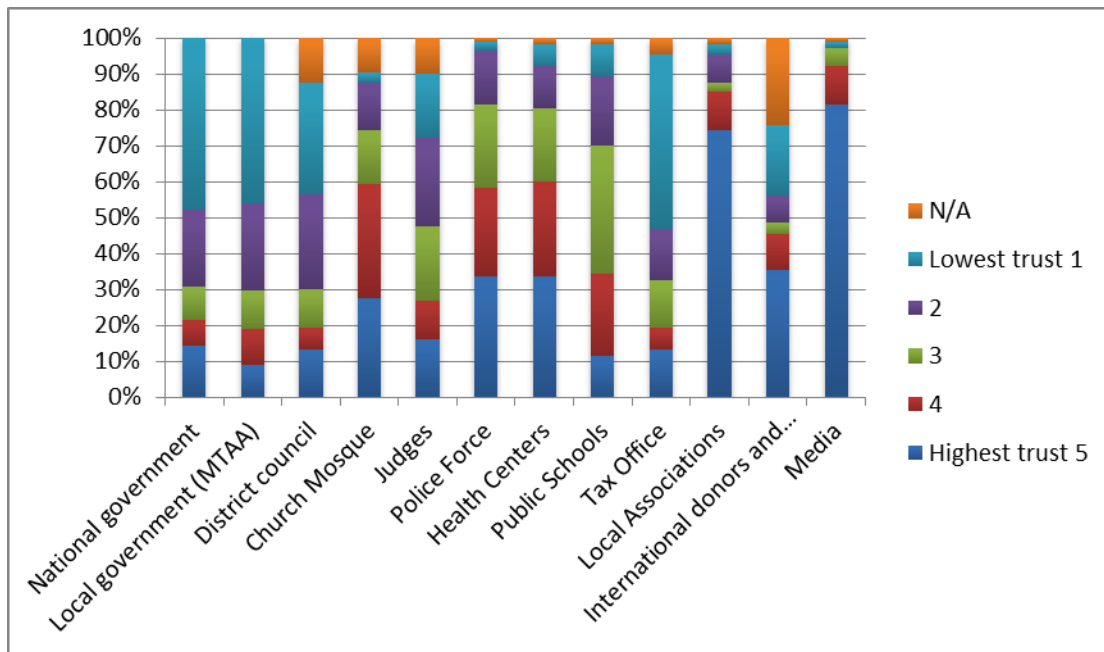
Importance of Institutions for community welfare



In another question, survey respondents were asked to rank institutions from a list according to how much they trusted each of them. Figure 3 summarizes the responses to this question. As is clear, institutional trust is lowest in the cases of national and local government, the tax collection office and the district council. Conversely, highest trust was conferred to non-state actors, namely local associations and media.

Figure 3

Trust in institutions



The responses to these two questions illustrate the extent to which the state is not considered to be an actor from which urban low-income groups can expect any help in meeting their basic needs. Indeed, one of the striking insights obtained through the research is the degree to which respondents in Kinondoni appear to be alienated from the state, not only mistrusting state institutions, but even rejecting interactions with the state. This was indicated in the responses to another survey question where, when asked about the importance of a series of customs in their community, avoiding bureaucracy was chosen as most important by respondents (80%).

Thus, faced with providers of public services who systematically request bribes as a means to supplement their own dwindling incomes, citizens in Kinodoni tend to disregard and if possible

avoid, a state that is not only increasingly incapable of providing appropriate services but also predatory.

5.2 Coping strategies: the success of mutual help associations

In order to deal with or confront the state's ineffectiveness as described above, Tanzanians have developed their own set of informal networks in the form of a multiplicity of spontaneous, mutual help organizations. This type of organization grew markedly in numbers especially after the mid-80s, as a consequence of the economic crisis (Rodima-Taylor 2014). According to (Tripp 1992, 221), since then local voluntary associations have become an important means to provide alternatives to limited state resources, emerging 'where the state's ability to guarantee security, adequate incomes, and various social and public services declined'. They represent "spaces that citizens *do* create; spaces that are not only created in spite of high levels of corruption, but spaces that are created *because* of corruption" (Koechlin 2010, 199). In this sense the local organizations in Tanzania have developed autonomously and at the margins of the state.

Such self-help groups can be understood as grassroots member-based institutions in which people join to take collective actions in addressing different issues pertaining to poverty reduction and improving their socio-economic situations (Aikaruwa, Sumari, and Maleko 2014). In practice these associations can take a variety of forms such as *Ngoma* societies, mutual aid societies, burial societies, football clubs, musical clubs, and home associations.

Tripp (1992: 232) notes that, during the late 1980s, one of the most popular local organizations among urban women were upatu — rotating credit societies formed to pool money and other resources in order to help individual members in situations of need. As (Tripp 2001) has shown, women in Dar es Salaam are keen to form self-help associations and have done so with alacrity and great success. However, it should be noted that these organizations are quite distinct from what is usually understood as the civil society or NGO sector, which is assumed to play a role as

counterbalancing element vis-à-vis the state. Rather, the majority of these associations are parochial and not political in nature; that is, they are simply mutual benefit associations designed to exclusively assist their members through the distribution of micro-loans or the creation of small-scale employment; they are not per se concerned with development at large. In general, these groups are internally regulated by a principle of mutuality or reciprocity “I do something for you if you do something for me” (Rodima-Taylor 2014), which is consistent with the previous findings about the importance assigned to reciprocity as a recognized principle that legitimizes social interactions.

In our research these organizations figured prominently, especially in the focus group discussions, where all participants could describe different types of local associations they belonged to or knew about, mentioning relative-based, work-based, neighbourhood-based, friendship-based, and gender-based associations among others.

A young woman described an association she belongs to which consists of relatives: They meet every week and they have set a certain amount of money to contribute every time they meet. She said the organization has been very helpful to members as a means to procure resources for occasions as diverse as funerals, sickness, and festivals. She added that, because it has been very successful, other people, who are not relatives, have asked to join.

The common denominator of these associations could be summarized as a collective action strategy to pool scarce resources in order to support members of clearly defined groups. That is, they are articulated around a common identity which defines the group, and which can be as simple as family or as broad as gender. For example, one focus group participant was a motor cycle driver who talked about an association he belongs to, whose description was quite similar to the other organizations only that membership was based on being a motor cycle driver. Another participant shared her experience saying she is a member of an association that is made up only of women.

There was consensus among participants that most people join such associations after seeing what they can achieve for the members. They elaborated that it is not because they know someone from the group or because they especially trust anybody in there, membership is sought simply because these associations are seen to be effective. Another interesting aspect that emerged amidst the discussion was the emphasis focus group participants gave to the fact that these associations are tightly governed by internal rules, which are strictly enforced and in practice dutifully followed by members. As they explained, every association defines its boundaries and limitations, meaning not everybody can become member of any organization and anyone can be removed from an association if they do not follow the rules and regulations.

Some authors (Dill 2010, 39) have described these organizations as formalized groupings from the point of view of their members, but nonetheless inherently informal insofar as they are unregulated by the institutions of society. The argument thus is that they exist “off the books” in a legal and social environment in which similar activities are regulated. However, the evidence from our research suggests a different analysis in view of the stark contrast with which individuals appear to assess the relevance and obligatory character of the internal rules of their mutual help associations vis-à-vis the little relevance ascribed to the formal, legal order of the state and its institutions as elaborated in the previous section. This opens the discussion to the issue of how we define the “formal” versus the “informal.” If by formal we were to understand those rules that are accepted and which effectively govern the expectations and behaviours of individuals, then it may actually be the case that in Tanzania what may be overlooked by virtue of escaping the legally regulated environment may precisely be the domain that, due to the value and trust communities give to it, holds the potential of bringing about effective and sustainable improvements in control of corruption performance.

The following section elaborates this idea further and delivers some preliminary evidence in this regard based on the experiences from a targeted social accountability initiative taking place in Kinondoni.

5.3 Social capital, social accountability and the potential for change

We have presented evidence about the coping strategies of individuals faced with a state that is characterized by its inability to deliver adequate services and rather functions, from the perspective of average citizens, as a vehicle for officials in positions of authority to abuse their power and extract rents from users. The resulting strategies, namely the spontaneous organization of mutual help schemes, are the reflection of the practical application of the socially recognized principle of reciprocity to the pragmatic goal of helping individuals meet basic needs or respond to unforeseen circumstances. To the extent that these modes of social articulation are not only effectively “owned” by the people, but also effective in achieving their goals, we can also understand why are rated higher than basically any other institution in the value and trust given to them by citizens, as evidenced in the survey results.

There is a vast body of literature that deals with the macro-level impacts of high participation rates in voluntary associations (Putnam, Leonardi, and Nanetti 1993)(Putnam 1995)(Ostrom 1990)(Fukuyama 2001)Though with different emphasis and nuances, a significant proportion of these studies associate high levels of citizen involvement in all kinds of organizations with the development of social capital, which in turn has been a concept at the centre of a debate on the factors enabling the emergence of governance regimes based on democratic principles (Grootaert et al. 2003)(Ostrander 2013)(Evans et al. 1996)(Fox 1996). While this question is clearly beyond the scope of the present article, some reflections on the concepts of social capital and horizontal networks, and their potential in a context as the Tanzanian, provide relevant insights.

Social capital is understood as resources that individuals may procure as a result of their relationships and involvement with other people through different informal and formal community organizations (Grootaert et al. 2003). The association made between social capital and good governance outcomes is often predicated on the notion that participation in voluntary associations enables the development of coordination and collaboration skills, which in turn can be critical to overcome the collective action dilemma involved in generating a public good. Associated to this, we can argue that precisely because such grassroots interactions are effective,

social capital in Tanzania has great importance and actually may be even a culprit in the observed fact that informal norms and networks play a more definitive role than formal ones. Because the grassroots networks are needed to get things done, even more reason to cultivate and cherish them.

With this in mind, the following remarks seek to reflect on some positive impacts of a social accountability intervention designed to help Kinondoni community members defend themselves from encounters with corruption in the local health facilities. The intervention in question is Integrity Watch's on-going programme "Social Accountability Monitoring-Performance Management and Oversight" (SAM-PMO) in Mwananyamala, Manzese and Goba wards of Kinondoni district. This programme is a participatory initiative through which citizen volunteers are trained to use available information on a) allocated budgets for health service delivery b) responsibilities of service providers, and c) citizens' rights in order to monitor, record and rate performance to improve service provision through better accountability of health care providers.

During the research we collected evidence on the experiences with that project among community members in Kinondoni. One man who participates in the SAM-PMO initiative explained how after acquiring more knowledge about the responsibilities of service providers and about his own rights he has become a local leader of sorts in his community as people now come to him with questions about their rights and this has actually made him better known and trusted in the community. Other individuals that have had experiences with the project explained that as a result of being exposed to new information they have gained motivation and encouragement to confront authorities. A young man related a concrete example of successful citizen action:

"Before the beginning of the SAM-PMO project Manzese did not have a dispensary and we [Manzese residents] either did not know we had a right to one or ignored this fact. With the training we acquired from SAM, we gained the confidence to

face the local government leaders and ask about the dispensary.

As we talk now the dispensary is at the final stages.”

A young man proudly explained that health providers in his ward now “sort of fear” him and other SAM-PMO participants for they believe they know their rights, and as a consequence it has become easier for them to get services as compared to before and they can do so mostly without paying any bribes.

The question that emerges from reflecting on these, admittedly limited, examples of success in citizens’ actions to counter corruption is the extent to which these collective actions have been enabled or facilitated by the pre-existence of a thick web of horizontal networks arising out of the high rates of participation in voluntary associations that we recorded in these neighbourhoods. Although our current data set is insufficient to allow us to jump to that conclusion, other evidence from a social accountability initiative in Ilala municipal council suggests that the abundance of such organizations helped to reach out and incorporate diverse segments of the population into the participatory budgeting process (Kihongo and Lubuva 2010, 59). In view of this, we believe that further exploring this argument remains a promising way forward for future research.

6 Concluding Remarks

This study has sought to make a contribution to our understanding as to why corruption is proving extremely hard to control in contexts such as the one prevailing in Tanzania. Specifically, it has provided insights into why in some places informal practices tend to consistently prevail over formal rules and regulations. Adopting a bottom-up perspective helps to bring into the spotlight how individual perceptions, understandings and motivations surrounding

the concept of corruption come together to shape patterns of social interactions that ultimately define the prevailing relations between citizens and states and among citizens themselves.

In a context of resource scarcity and unmet needs, the notion of “something for something and nothing for nothing” that underpins the concept of corruption in the eyes of Tanzanian citizens provides a rationale that makes sense of actions insofar as it encompasses a pragmatic approach to individual problem solving. While the formal rules and regulations provide a frame of reference that is unrealisable given existing resource constraints, clientelistic exchanges and corrupt behaviours provide alternatives that are effective in delivering tangible results. This addresses the apparent contradiction in the ambiguous position vis-à-vis corruption that brings together both condemnation and resignation: Corruption is bad, but it endures because it is grounded on the realities of life.

However, as the discussion of the coping strategies adopted by individuals to deal with a corrupt state suggests, the same implicit concept of reciprocity that is linked to the corrupt transactions, whether of a political or a purely economic nature, is also to be found underlying the functioning of the mutual help associations that have flourished in the low income areas of Dar es Salaam. It is precisely this reciprocity that ultimately, in providing something for something, makes these schemes effective, trusted and relevant to their members. A legal order that stipulates rights and entitlements that are in practice not attainable is, in contrast, relegated to indifference if not rejection.

These considerations suggest why anti-corruption strategies that are based on the introduction (or superimposition) of agencies charged with ensuring the enforcement of the rule of law have had to date limited impact in effectively controlling corruption. Adopting a bottom-up perspective suggests that perhaps more success could be achieved by harnessing the potential of those modes of social articulation that are recognized and trusted by citizens in innovative ways.

Undoubtedly the fight against corruption in contexts like the Tanzanian faces formidable challenges, not least the very real dilemmas involved in devising mechanisms for allocating very

scarce resources in an equitable manner. However, it is hoped that by improving our understanding of the perceptions and motivations of precisely those who are the direct victims of corruption it will be possible to move forward in developing new approaches to anti-corruption that are best suited to address the needs and expectations of citizens themselves.

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