Lund University
Department of Political Science

STVA21
Tutor: Milka Ivanovska Hadjievska

Corruption as an obstacle for development

A case study of environmental CSOs working in South Africa

Malte Killander

Abstract

The topic for this thesis is corruption as an obstacle for development. More specifically the research looks at how corruption affects one of our most important agents of change; the Civil Society Organizations (CSOs). The specific research question guiding the study is *"How do civil society professionals perceive that corruption in their operational environment affects their ability to achieve their objectives?"*. To address the research question, an analytical framework has been formulated based upon the Theory of Change and its different stages in the results-chain. The scope of research has been narrowed down to looking at environmental CSOs operating in South Africa. To collect data, the method of semi-structured interviews has been implemented and the data was then analyzed using a thematic analysis. The findings of the research concludes that corruption in the organizations' operational environment is a central obstacle for them to be able to achieve their short-, medium-, and long-term goals. Furthermore, the impact that corruption has on organizational activities appears to vary depending on the type of activity. Lastly, corruption can also pose a hindrance for environmental CSOs to procure their necessary resources. These findings illustrate the significance of researching corruption's specific effects on civil society actors and that more research on the topic is necessary.

Key words: corruption, environmental CSOs, South Africa, organizational objectives
Words: 9969

Table of contents

1. Introduction

Civil society organizations (CSOs)[1] play a crucial part in development cooperation, and have done so for as long as such cooperation has existed (OECD, 2020). They are agents of change who represent the wants and needs of society. The importance of their role cannot be understated as they serve as a complement where governments fail to deliver. Their direct work at the frontiers of vulnerability, poverty, and inequality illustrates their significance in contributing to equal development which aims to leave no one behind. In a world controlled and steered by those in power this role is critical in enabling, upholding, and restoring democratic societies (ibid.). However, CSOs' ability to engage requires certain enabling conditions. A civic space must exist in which the agents of civil society are able to organize and assemble. During the last two decades, we have seen civic spaces shrinking on a global level (OHCHR, n.d. & Buyse, 2018). This is not only occurring in authoritarian and semi-authoritarian regimes, but also in several established democracies (Buyse, 2018).

The issues arising due to climate change and environmental degradation are often described as the largest challenges of our time. There is little doubt when listening to the science that much has to happen and in a very short time. Despite this we can see that the spaces in which environmental CSOs are operating are also shrinking. Between 2012 and 2021, 1733 land and environmental defenders were killed (Global Witness, 2022). In other words, over a span of ten years there has been one killing every second day. What needs to be emphasized here is that this is only the tip of the iceberg, as killings go unreported and they are only the extreme cases of this repression. Outside of these atrocities there are attempts in silencing environmental activists, that is, those whose objective it is to protect the land and environment. Some examples of strategies used are surveillance, sexual violence, death threats, and criminalization (ibid).

Based on the data, there is a correlation between a country's level of corruption and the amount of killings. Using Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index (CPI), Global Witness (2022) concludes that the countries with the most

---

[1] Definition of CSOs: "Non-State, not-for-profit, voluntary entities formed by people in the social sphere that are separate from the State and the market". (UNGP, n.d.)

killings hold an CPI below average, in other words - are more corrupt. Corruption has been described as one of the greatest global policy challenges of our time (Nicolás-Carlock & Luna-Pla, 2021). This stems from the fact of how persistent it is, how difficult it is to mitigate and what enormous consequences it poses for our societies and environment. Corruption puts democracy at risk, undermines the rule of law, and paves the way for human rights violations (Budhram & Geldenhuys, 2018). Furthermore, it fuels poverty by limiting access to social services as well as distribution of resources, it aggravates conflicts, reduces state capacity, and disproportionately affects vulnerable groups of people (UNDESA, 2019: p. 40-42). Corruption exists everywhere and tends to emerge where profits can be made. During the last decade there has been an increase in land grabs by corporations, national and local state officials, foreign investment funds and the governments of rich countries that seek to acquire resource-rich lands (Global Witness, 2022). This is often done for the sake of industries working with logging, infrastructure projects, agribusiness, or mining. This is rarely achieved with local communities being consulted or compensated (ibid). It is here that CSOs play an important role, as watchdogs they check governmental actions and they can combat the interests of harmful commercial entities. What the government chooses to ignore, CSOs can step in and shed light upon (OECD, 2020).

Yet, when reviewing previous research this study has found that while we have extensive studies on CSOs' role in corruption mitigation (eg. Belloni, 2011 & Asuelime & Ndimande-Hlongwa, 2022), and studies trying to understand how changes in the civic space (limiting core political rights and civil liberties) affect CSOs (eg. Greene, 2003), we know little on how the workings of CSOs are affected by external corruption. If CSOs are crucial for development and corruption is detrimental for it, where do these two forces meet? This thesis aims to shed light on how corruption actually affects one of our most crucial agents of change: the civil society organizations. The research question guiding the study is:

How do civil society professionals perceive that corruption in their operational environment affects their ability to achieve their objectives?

For the sake of clarification, elaborations on the key terms used in the research question will be presented here. '*Civil society professionals*' refer to individuals working within a CSO. The wording '*perceive*' perhaps speaks for itself, but the research looks at the perceptions of the CSO-professionals as it is one of the most prominent methods of researching corruption (U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Center, n.d.). '*Corruption in their operational environment*' refers to corruption that exists in the organization's surroundings. It is here emphasized that the study does not aim to understand how the CSOs work with corruption as an internal risk but how they are affected by corruption in society. This thesis uses Transparency International's definition of corruption, "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain" (Transparency International, n.d.). The phrasing '*ability to achieve their objectives*' has been theorized using the Theory of Change (Barbrook-Johnson & Penn, 2021) where the effects of corruption have been explored based on the different stages of the results-chain.

To address the research question, this thesis conducts a qualitative case study analysis on environmental CSOs operating in South Africa. The method of interviewing has been implemented in order to collect data on CSO-professionals perceptions of corruption. The data has been analyzed thematically and based upon an analytical framework which has been formulated using the Theory of Change.

1.1 Significance & Purpose

The significance of this study has already been touched upon in the introduction where it was presented how academia is lacking in paying attention to the effects that corruption specifically has on CSO's work. The importance of producing more knowledge in this area has to do with the important role that CSOs play in development cooperation. The OECD (2020) states that for the SDGs to be achieved there has to be an approach that includes all of society and that can only be successfully done with the incorporation of civil society and its CSOs. Additionally, environmental organizations are viewed as central because governmental stances on the issue are today not adequate in implementing sufficient measures to bring a positive change in climate mitigation (Kiyala, 2022: p. 83). More than this, it is

found that corruption is rarely studied in individual cases (De Graaf et al, 2010a). One main principle of this research is context specificity and that has to do with the understanding that corruption is contextually significant (De Graaf et al, 2010b: 98-100). This is why the research design takes its form as a case study. A qualitative approach has been chosen considering that much research on corruption today tends to be seduced by the attraction of quantification (Hart, 2019: p. 3-4). In summary, the significance of this research emerges with its focus of study (corruption's effects on environmental CSOs) and its research design (a qualitative case study). The purpose of the study is to explore the effects that corruption has on CSOs. This also goes in line with the notion of potentially identifying an area where we see corruption posing problems. Hart (2019: p. 15) sees this as an important part in understanding corruption. In all work that corruption mitigation devotes itself to, problem identification is the first step that needs to be made.

1.2 Scope of study

The scope of study has been narrowed down in two ways. One, it looks at a specific geographical area: South Africa, and second, it looks at environmental CSOs. The choice of looking at the specific case of South Africa has to do with the current high instances of corruption reported, which is openly recognized by its own government (Budhram & Geldenhuys, 2018). Moreover, the country is also interesting considering its large extractive industries (Britannica, 2023). Natural resource management is, generally speaking, an area of concern when talking about corruption. It is found that the sectors of fuels, agriculture, minerals, and forestry are of special concern (Tacconi & Williams, 2020). Additionally, it is known that there exists strong external business and state interests within the country. Western governments and foreign businesses are pushing for further liberalization of the country's economy and this poses questions concerning the issue of corruption (Britannica, 2023).

The choice of focusing on environmental CSOs specifically has to do with the fact that the nature of environmental movements are conflictual, as they are questioning the current capitalistic system which in its essence is unsustainable.

Because of this, environmental conflicts are becoming increasingly common and that poses threats towards environmental defenders (Scheidel, et al, 2020 & Global Witness, 2022). This negative development of attitudes towards environmental defenders and activists in combination with their 'anti-engagement' in corruption prone sectors (extractive industries), results in the assumption that they might be more likely to suffer at the hands of corruption.

2. Background: The South African context

South Africa is a country rich in natural resources such as diamonds, gold, natural gas, and coal. The mining sector is by the national government viewed as the core of the national economy even though manufacturing still provides more jobs and stands for a larger part of the country's GDP (Britannica, 2023). The country's economy faces great challenges in providing better living conditions for its citizens while also addressing the interests for further market liberalization from Western governments and private businesses. Furthermore, the country is facing environmental and climate challenges as South Africa's temperature is increasing twice the global average (World Bank Group, 2021). Since the end of Apartheid in 1994, the political party African National Congress (ANC) has been in power (Britannica, 2023).

2.1 Corruption in South Africa

Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) is the most internationally used assessment of corruption today. If it is viewed as an approximate estimation it can serve as a useful tool to see where a country's institutional integrity is at (U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Center, n.d.). In 2022, South Africa was ranked as number 72 out of the total 180 countries assessed. Furthermore, they were given the score of 43 out of 100 (Transparency International, 2022). South Africa is experiencing corruption on a high level and this is both reported by the media and recognized by its own government (Budhram & Geldenhuys, 2018). The effects of corruption in the country is argued to be many, but also so severe that it could lead to

what is referred to as state capture. State capture is a situation "where powerful individuals, institutions, companies or groups within or outside a country use corruption to influence a government's policies, legal environment and/or economy to benefit their own private interests" (ibid: p. 28).

Corruption or corrupt behavior is apparent in the private sector as well, where instances of price fixing, market allocation, inter alia, and collusive tendering have become common occurrences (Budhram & Geldenhuys, 2018). The situation of corruption in the country has not sufficiently been dealt with and the institutions supposed to be investigating and convicting corruption have been criticized for its inability to achieve results. For instance, in 2016, the Anti-Corruption Task Team received criticism from the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Public Accounts for its disproportionate focus on fraud instead of more severe cases of corruption and its low conviction rate in general (ibid). Additionally, in 2017, they received further critique when it became apparent that all their convicted cases had in fact been 'plea bargain deals', meaning that not a single case had gone to trial (ibid). This has been described as a situation where corrupt individuals are able to avoid proper conviction through negotiations.

To name a more concrete example of corruption in South Africa, consider the current electricity crisis. Each day there are power blackouts lasting for hours which affect the life of ordinary citizens, it affects the economy by forcing businesses to shut down, and the infrastructure in general is paralyzed. Eskom is a state-owned public entity and it is the primary electricity supplier in South Africa. They generate 90% of the whole country's electricity (National Government of South Africa, n.d). In February 2023, the CEO of Eskom at the time, Andre de Ruyter, went out in an interview and said that there is ongoing corruption taking place within the company. He continued by stating that there is a lack of will from the government's part to solve the country's long-going electricity crisis. Furthermore, he accused the ANC of attempting to cover up corruption at Eskom to secure their interests in the re-elections taking place in 2024 (Magome, 2023). Ruyter was immediately fired after the interview aired.

2.3 South Africa's civil society

Civil society has played an important role in the recent history of South Africa. The pressure that civil society actors exerted was significant for the fall of the apartheid regime (Kariuki, 2022: p. 339-340). At the time, these movements and organizations were, by the government, considered more as radical groups than legitimate actors of South Africa's civil society. In the post-apartheid era CSOs have continued to play a large role in the country. However, the challenges they face have been many. The political establishment have undemocratic elements in their rule (ibid). Kariuki (2022: p. 340) goes so far to describe it as the government having "launched a war against pressure groups that they consider to be challenging their reckless and undemocratic practices". Additionally, South Africa has also seen extreme cases where civil society actors are murdered for their role in standing up against influential interests (Kariuki, 2022 & CIVICUS, 2023). Nevertheless, CSOs operating in South Africa have had success in their work. Perhaps the most notorious example that can be provided were their ability to engage the general citizenry against the government which in the end led to forcing Jacob Zuma and Thabo Mbeki (former presidents of South Africa) out of office (Kariuki, 2022: p. 340).

3. Conceptual framework

3.1 A post-positivist approach to corruption

Post-positivism devotes itself to beliefs regarding knowledge and reality. It holds that social reality is out there, however, it is the social construction of groups and individuals that brings meaning to that reality (Bisel & Adame, 2017). This means that concepts are created and upheld by individuals and they are nothing without those who do it (De Graaf, et al, 2010b: p. 98).

A post-positivists approach to the study of corruption therefore holds that the concept of corruption is socially constructed (de Graaf et al, 2010a: p. 19). The emphasis is put on the social setting in which corruption occurs. It concerns itself with what corruption is in a specific context and at a certain point of time. Just as

social norms differ across cultures and change over time, so do what is considered as corrupt (De Graaf et al, 2010b: 98-100). This has to do with the notion that it is within the social context that conflicts arise. The meaning of these clashes, which can take its form as corruption, must therefore be studied in reference to the social setting. By incorporating the post-positivist approach, the study does not aim to find one objective truth, nor does it attempt to find the 'right' definition of corruption. Instead, it cares to understand how it is understood and perceived by the respondents within their setting. Additionally, what suits this study well, is that the approach puts more emphasis on what the concept of corruption 'does' rather than what it 'is' (ibid).

3.2 Defining corruption

Corruption is a global phenomenon that is both an issue of scale and form. It takes place at the lowest level of localities as well as in national governments, multinational corporations, and in the international fora (Transparency International, n.d.). In most cases, the phenomenon occurs in the 'shadows' and it is constantly adapting to different contexts and altering circumstances which makes it very difficult to define what corruption actually is.

The definition of corruption that is used for this study is that of Transparency International's (n.d.): "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain". There is much that has been said in regards to this definition. One reason for this is its vague and simplistic wordings (Nicolás-Carlock & Luna-Pla, 2021: p. 154-155). Pellegrini (2011: p. 14-18) contributes to this debate where he describes the definition as a 'useful reference point', but further also states that where the gains of simplicity emerges we lose in vagueness. The choice of using this definition has to do with that its greatest weakness also is its greatest strength. As Pellegrini (2011: p. 17) continues in his search for a suitable definition of corruption he writes: "The objective of endorsing this (his) definition is not to identify the right definition, but of choosing a useful one for the purpose at hand.". Similarly, this notion applies for this study as well. This research does not aim to ask what corruption is, nor will it attempt to understand its causes or to measure it. Instead it will devote itself to its respondents' perceptions of the phenomena. To use a more theoretically specified or

pre-determined definition would then be wrong as it risks neglecting or excluding alternative understandings of the phenomenon under study. Neither does it limit itself to certain forms of corruption, what actors are involved, or specific areas in which it occurs.

3.3 Civil society, civic space and CSOs

First of all, the distinction between civil society and civic space needs to be established. Civic space refers to the environment in which civil society is able to play a role. It entails both the political, social, and economic life of societies (OHCHR, n.d.). Its functions are in particular contributing to individuals and groups of people to be allowed to get their voices heard and to have the possibility to affect policies. If a society has an open civic space it means that people can access information, express disagreement or dissent, engage in dialogue, and organize themselves to express their views (ibid). In other words, civic space allows a vibrant and active civil society.

Civil society is one of the three sectors, accompanied by the public sector and the private sector. This is also why civil society sometimes is referred to as 'the third sector'. CSOs are the formal manifestation of civil society, and the exact definition used for this research are "Non-State, not-for-profit, voluntary entities formed by people in the social sphere that are separate from the state and the market" (UNGP, n.d.). The type of CSOs that are specifically looked at for this thesis are environmental CSOs. Such organizations are categorized based on the notion that they work with questions and issues directly related to the environment and/or climate.

4 Theoretical framework

4.1 Theory of Change

Theory of Change (ToC) can be described as a method, model and/or approach for how to formulate projects. For the sake of clarity, it will in this paper be referred to as an approach. The fundamental idea underlying the approach is that one should let the sought out objectives of a project determine how it will be executed (Barbrook-Johnson & Penn, 2021: p. 33-35). ToC has become very popular and is adopted in multiple fields and by many different sorts of organizations. Ranging from the very top in the United Nations, to governmental departments, to both large and small corporations, and within CSOs.

The purpose of using ToC as a theory for this thesis is that it presents a rather clear and linear concept for how a project is implemented. It serves its purpose by presenting five stages of an intervention (Barbrook-Johnson & Penn, 2021: p. 37). These five stages are inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts. Each and every stage plays its role in a so-called results-chain that in theory will lead to the desired impact. As briefly mentioned above, when formulating a ToC the idea is to start with the desired impact and from there work your way backwards, also called backwards mapping, to see what you must do in order to actually achieve the final goal. Here follows a brief description of each stage:

Inputs:	The necessary resources a project must have in order to be implemented.
Activities:	The events, actions, and undertakings of a project.
Outputs:	The immediate products of activities. It is the outputs that usually are monitored and evaluated to see if a project is going the way it is planned. In other words, to see if the activities lead to the desired outcomes.

Outcomes:	The short or medium-term effects of the implemented project. These are also potential indicators that could indicate if the project is going the way it is planned. However, the outcomes are usually more difficult to measure as they are more abstract than outputs.
Impacts:	The long-term goals that the project set out to achieve.

When adopting an approach of ToC to one's project, a common practice is to create a ToC diagram, which can be described as a map that outlines what is planned for each stage and how the result-chain goes together. These can look very differently depending on the project but in general it is drawn from left to right; from input to impact.

4.2 Analytical framework

Based upon the ToC presented above, an analytical framework has been formulated. This can be seen illustrated in Figure 1. The aim is to collect data that can tell if and how corruption is affecting the CSOs' ability to achieve their objectives. In other words, how does corruption in their operational environment affect their inputs, activities, outcomes and impact? ToC is usually implemented on a project level, but in this research it is used as a theoretical tool for analysis and does therefore refer to the organization as a whole.
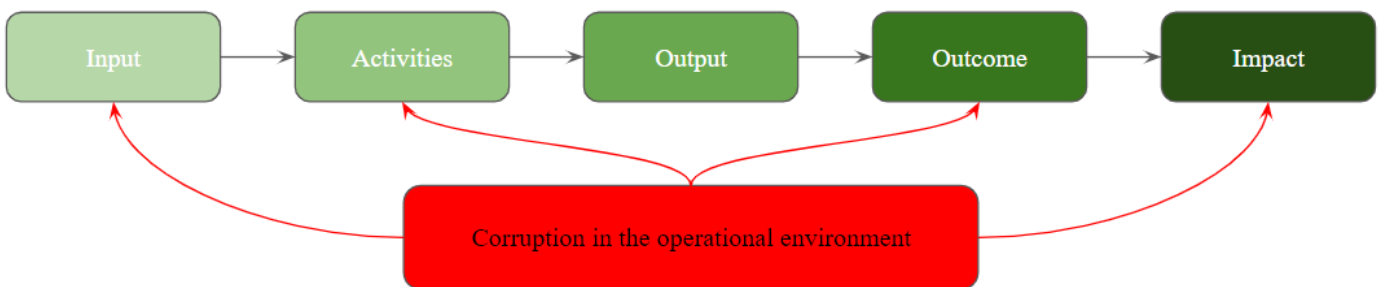

Figure 1: The analytical framework

One of the five stages in the result-chain does not have an arrow pointing at it from *corruption in the operational environment*. This is because outputs are the immediate result of the implemented activities, meaning that it is not the output per se that is being affected, but rather it is the activities that could be affected which leads to the resulting output. To clarify, if an activity is implemented with no external disturbance (such as corruption) the output would probably be what the implementers wanted it to be. However, if the activity was affected by external forces (such as corruption) the output would be another. Based on this assumption, the research chooses to not focus on outputs. When it comes to the remaining stages, it is assessed that all of them potentially could be affected by corruption. Even though outcomes and impacts, similarly to outputs, are some form of results they are the short, medium and long term goals of the organization. To assess the potential impact of corruption on those stages is therefore assessed as feasible.

5. Methodology

5.1 Research design

This thesis research holds an exploratory purpose as it cares to understand how CSO-professionals perceive that they are affected by external corruption. It takes the form of a qualitative case study as it gathers empirical in-depth data on perceptions from a set of specific actors in a certain context (Robson & McCartan, 2016: p. 150-155). In order to answer the research question the method of interviews was implemented where the respondents are professionals working within environmental CSOs. The choice of focusing on perceptions comes from the fact that it is one of the most prominent methods used when researching corruption (Hart, 2019). Corruption is a very difficult phenomenon to study as it is 'hidden' and this is also a main reason why academia and practitioners are never able to accurately measure it. By collecting data on how corruption is perceived, the researcher can obtain a more holistic and general idea of what the situation looks like (ibid).

When performing qualitative research, it is crucial to make sure to collect high-quality data. This means that the study must collect a sufficient amount of data and that the sampling is appropriate. When using the method of interviews, the appropriateness is determined by who the respondents are. They must be 'good informants' meaning that they have experienced the phenomenon of study (Robson & McCartan, 2016: p. 168). Furthermore, the sampling must be done based on the study's scope and it must present variation. In this study, the sample size contains four respondents from four different environmental CSOs operating in South Africa. Variation within the scope of research was achieved as the organizations are of different sizes, working in different geographical areas, and they work with somewhat different focuses. In this way, the research obtained rich and extensive data while simultaneously making sure to not rely on one respondent's perception, and thus ensuring triangulation (Hammersley, 2011).

Nevertheless, the sampling process has not been free of obstacles. Firstly, it has been restricted in regards to its practical limitations; the sample size was partly decided in the terms of the ability to deal with the quantity of data, to not risk data overload (Robson & McCartan: p. 462). Secondly, obtaining appropriate respondents proved to be a challenge which is believed to have much to do with the sensitivity of the topic (see *5.6 Limitations*).

5.2 Data collection

The data collection was done using the method of semi-structured interviews which provided flexibility. This was important as it allowed unexpected elements to be brought up while also providing structure as it followed an interview guide, see appendix 9.1 (Robson & McCartan, 2016: p. 289-293). This flexible while yet structured method was deemed as the most appropriate as the researcher prior to the interview was unaware what the respondents might want to express. At the same time, the structure provided a framework which made it easier to handle the data afterwards. Considering that each interview was approximately one hour long where extensive data was collected, this was necessary. The interview questions were formulated based on the analytical framework, where each respondent was asked

what their desired impacts and outcomes are, what type of activities they implement, and what input they need in order to do it all. All different stages were followed up with questions on whether they perceive corruption to be an obstacle. Each part of the interview was devoted a substantial amount of time as the researcher was unaware during what question the respondents might want to go into depth. A majority of the questions was formulated in an open-ended way, which means that they do not pose any type of restrictions on the content other than the question's topic (ibid.). The advantages of using open-ended questions are their flexibility, their in-depth character, and that it allows unanticipated answers to emerge.

The interviews were done using the digital meeting service Zoom which proved to be both useful and unreliable. The positive aspect was that the interviewer and respondent could see each other which allowed a more personal feeling. It also gave the opportunity to perform the recording directly via the application. When performing qualitative open-ended interview questions it is preferred to record the interviews as much data can be lost if the researcher has to rely on her abilities to take notes (Punch, 1998: p. 181). All four respondents consented to being recorded (for further details see *5.4 Ethical considerations*). The unreliable part of doing the interviews through zoom became apparent during the third interview, where due to the daily power shortages occurring in South Africa, the connection was lost. The interview could be completed as the respondent kept the conversation going using mobile connection. However, this can possibly have affected the data as the interview became less focused.

5.3 Data analysis

The data has been analyzed using the method of thematic analysis (Robson & McCartan, 2016: p. 461-468 & Braun & Clarke, 2006). The method concerns itself with identifying, analyzing and reporting themes (patterns) based on the data. This study has chosen to do this in an inductive manner which means that the themes identified are done so from the 'bottom-up' (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In other words, the themes emerge directly from the data. The choice of doing it this way is considered crucial as the research is exploratory and concerns itself with the

perceptions of the CSO-professionals which entails that a more flexible method of analysis is appropriate (Robson & McCartan, 2016: p. 461-468). If the analysis was done in a deductive (top-down) manner, relying on a certain theory or meaning the analysis would not remain as open towards the respondents' perception as it has with this approach.

The process of analysis was mainly based upon Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-step guide for performing thematic analysis. The following section will provide a description on how these six steps have been implemented.

1) Becoming acquainted with the data

This stage of analysis began already in the interviews where certain elements brought up that appeared to be of special importance to the respondents were noted down. The process of transcribing the audio-recordings also gave additional opportunities for this. Prior to the second step of analysis began, the researcher repeatedly read through the transcripts to ensure that no aspects would be missed.

2) Initial coding

At this step, different passages (quotes) of the transcripts were given codes. This was done independently for each transcript, and without any concern for the analytical framework. The idea was to perform the initial coding as openly as possible, ensuring 'data-driven' themes. (ibid: p. 88).

3) Identifying themes

At this stage, the analytical framework was used as the different codes were collated into potential themes at the various stages of the Theory of Change.

4) Reviewing themes

The themes were looked at multiple times to see if the coding really spoke to each theme and to the data-set in general. This was combined with creating thematic maps that explains the connection between the codes and the themes (see appendix *9.3 Coding excerpt & thematic maps*).

5) Defining and naming the themes

At this stage, the themes were analyzed further as into how they are telling something in regards to the research question. Each theme and the codes were labeled appropriately. It was also here that the 'illustrations of the mechanisms of corruption and its effects' was formulated (see Figure 2-5 in the analysis).

6) Producing the report

The last step was writing the analysis. Here, several extracts from the different interviews have been used to exemplify the statements and figures presented throughout the analysis.

5.4 Ethical considerations

LUMID's *Ethical Guidelines for Fieldwork* (2013) and its four requirements will be used as a framework when discussing the ethical considerations of this study. The first requirement, informing the study participants what the task and aim of study is, was done both in the interview invitation via email (see appendix 9.2), and in the beginning of the interview. This is viewed as a crucial consideration as the research topic is highly sensitive. The respondents could possibly face repercussions by participating in the study if their identity or organization were to be revealed. Therefore, it was of the highest importance that they were aware of all conditions of their participation so that they felt comfortable. This is directly related to the question of consent which is the second requirement. The respondents' consent to participate in the interview was collected before the interview started where they also were asked if they consent to the interview being recorded. Additionally, the respondents were informed that their participation was completely voluntary and that if they wanted to, they could choose to withdraw their given consent at any time until the thesis was submitted. The third requirement has to do with confidentiality which the respondents have been ensured completely. Additionally, the respondents were also promised complete anonymity. However, this can only be ensured to a certain extent as they must be presented as employees of an environmental CSO working in South Africa. This information was provided to the respondents in writing in the interview

invitation. Furthermore, the selection of respondents was done as discreetly as possible, by only contacting the specific individuals invited to participate in the interview. The fourth and final ethical consideration regards the collected data and how it will be used. The data collected will only be used for academic purposes and the respondents were also ensured this in writing in the invitation. Additionally, both the recordings and transcriptions are deleted after the completion of the thesis research. During the research process they have been stored on an external disk without the identity of the respondent or organization attached. In the analysis, the respondents will be referred to as 'Respondent 1', 'Respondent 2', and so on.

5.5 Positionality

During one of the interviews, the respondent stated that they felt hesitant to speak on the subject and also that the notion of western researchers studying corruption in the global south is found offensive. This example speaks for the importance of providing a section for reflections on me as a researcher. The first reflection regards the risks that arise with researcher bias because how one views corruption as a problem will ultimately determine how it is studied (Rodrik & Rauch, 1996 & De Graaf, et. al., 2010a). In this thesis, this notion has stood as ground for much of how the research has been formulated. It is considered crucial to attempt to be as transparent as possible and to acknowledge my own positionality both in the research and in the interviews.

I am a caucasian male born and raised in Sweden and this has implications for how I view the concept of corruption, even if it is unknowingly. Western perspectives of corruption are often precisely that, Western, and therefore not easily adopted to non-Western settings (De Graaf, et al, 2010b: p. 100). I have also assumed that the respondents and I will have different views on the concept of corruption. This is why one question in the interview was solely devoted to discussing the definition of corruption. This provided an opportunity to understand the respondent's view of the concept which also proved to be a good choice as it provided me with some insights that prior to the interviews had not been taken into account. An emphasis has also

been put on the notion that I have limited knowledge on the context of South Africa as I am neither from there, nor have I lived there.

5.6 Limitations and risks

In qualitative research, one common limitation discussed involves the question of generalizability. As the approach often looks at context-specific phenomena and uses fewer sources of data, it is more difficult to generalize the findings and compare them to other contexts (Stewart-Withers, et al, 2014: p. 76-79). Bearing this in mind, the findings and methods can still prove to be useful in providing important insights that could be used to study other similar cases. However, for this study, it is more important to consider the validity, reliability and credibility of the chosen methods and their results.

To collect and present data in a valid manner one must be able to describe what is researched in an accurate and complete way (Robson & McCartan, 2016: p. 170-173). To do this, it is suggested that recording, either through audio or video tools, is the most appropriate as no data can be missed. This has, as previously mentioned, been done in all four interviews. Hall (2019) states that when researching corruption it is very difficult to capture the whole picture of the phenomenon. This poses restrictions on the research and it is difficult to avoid as the research must put its faith in its respondents' knowledge. The study believes that this threat has been countered with the active selection of respondents with long experience in the field, but it can of course not be stated as a fact. However, if a researcher is able to ensure triangulation it will help to counter all threats to validity by opening up the research to more perspectives of the phenomena under study (Robson & McCartan, 2016: p. 170-173). This is what the research has sought to achieve.

When interpreting data, especially when using inductive methods, the researcher must make sure that certain frameworks or meanings are not imposed, otherwise this could have implications on the validity of the analysis (Robson & McCartan, 2016: p. 170-173). As the post-positivist approach suggests that corruption is socially constructed in its context, it is crucial that the researcher (who is not part of the research-setting) has no predetermined ideas about the respondents' answers when

collecting and analyzing the data. This is the reason for choosing Transparency International's broad definition and that there is no specific theory on corruption other than a general post-positivist approach. By doing this, the researcher has attempted to minimize the potential damages to validity and reliability that can occur due to personal biases.

Another limitation has to do with that perceptions are not the most stable sort of data as it can easily be affected by external factors (Hall, 2019). These are limitations that possibly could put the reliability of the respondents at risk, as well as the credibility of the research as a whole. This is also very difficult to avoid when using this method. However, by using in-depth questioning followed by qualitative discussions, the researcher has retrieved data on the reasoning for why the respondents perceive something to be a certain way. As partly discussed here, another risk that needs to be taken into consideration is potential biases of the respondents (Robson & McCartan, 2016: p. 286-287). Corruption is an extremely sensitive topic and there are a lot of negative connotations to the concept which could very well be affecting the respondents as they might feel hesitant to share the whole picture. This is not something that has been apparent during the interviews, but it does not mean that it might still be the case.

This hesitation was seen in the process of obtaining respondents. The researcher reached out to 14 individuals at 10 different organizations. In the end, there were only four individuals that agreed to participate in an interview. This is why this research has such strong emphasis on the notion of anonymity and confidentiality. As mentioned previously, this means that the identity of the respondents and their organizations can not be revealed, but also, that the results must be presented in a manner that does not give away who they are. For instance, there will be no mentions of specific areas in which they operate, activities and events that they have performed, what specific companies that they work against, and so on. The limitation that this presents is less clarity in the analysis.

6. Analysis

As mentioned, the analysis is structured around the Theory of Change and more specifically the analytical framework formulated based upon it. The findings will be presented and discussed for each stage, going from impact to input. For more details and additional quotes, see *9.3 Coding excerpt & thematic maps*. Before going into the analysis, the researcher wants to emphasize that the analytical framework is precisely that, a framework. Reality is much more complex and so corruption crosses and overlaps the different stages.

6.1 Impact

At the impact level, all four CSO-professionals were asked what their organizations' long-term goals are; what desired impact are they striving to achieve? All organizations have something in common, they are all trying to bring change to the current system which in different ways harms the environment and the people dependent on it. This is perhaps best explained with a quote from one of the interviews:

> *"Business as usual is an exploitative, extractive system. So business as usual means that the vested interests want to continue to exploit fossil fuels, want to continue to put profit over planet, want to continue to exploit labor and resources to their own gain, to their own financial gain." (Respondent 3)*

When asked whether they perceive corruption to be an obstacle to achieve their desired impact, they all answered positively. Considering them being four independent organizations with different goals the corruption they face in their area of work takes different shapes and forms. However, the process of thematic coding analysis has boiled all their answers down to one theme; 'Corruption maintains the status quo'. Considering all the respondents describing their organizations' long-term goals as attempting to change the current system, this is a central obstacle in

achieving their long-term organizational goals. Figure 2 illustrates the relationship between corruption in the operational environment and the effects it has on the organizations' ability to achieve their desired impacts. The mid-section are the codes that have been inductively retrieved from the data which also presents the mechanisms of corruption. Similar illustrations have been made for each stage with the hope of bringing clarity to the reader.
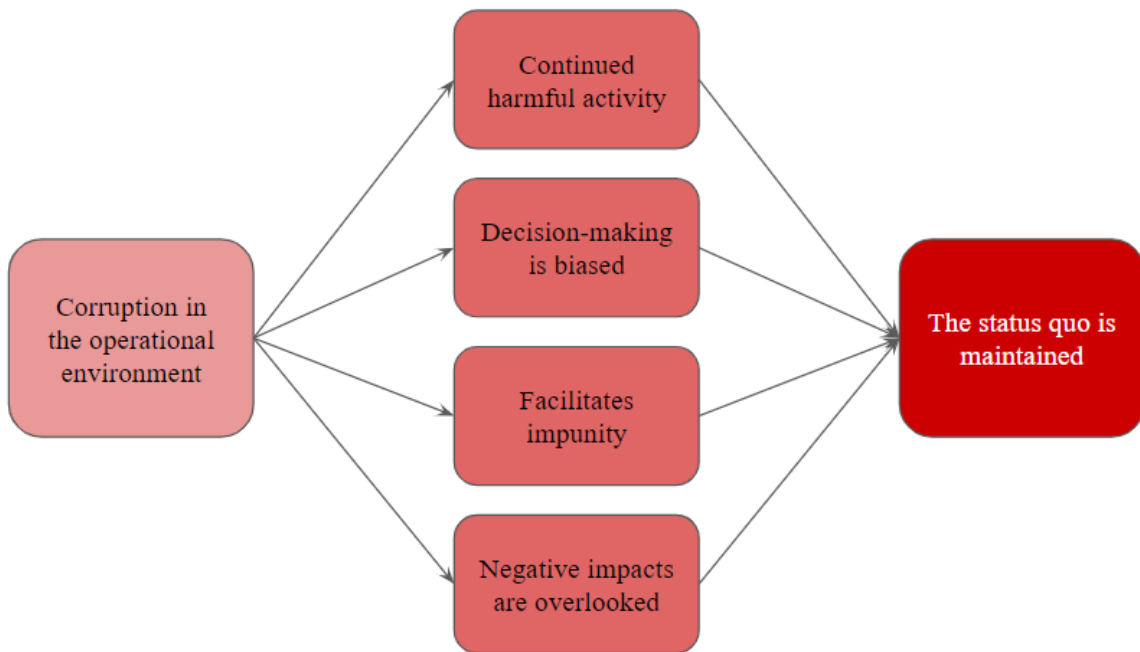

Figure 2: An illustration of the mechanisms of corruption and its effects at the impact-stage.

Respondents suggested that close and personalized relationships between business and decision makers enables continued extractive activity. This means that companies, through provision of benefits (financial) to political elites, have direct access and influence over key decision makers. In the words of one of the respondents:

> *"The government officials, the politicians, are enabling or trying to enable the mining to take place. (...) and we know that one of the companies in bed with [company X] has also made significant donations*

of money to the ANC. So it's very clear that there are state governments or basic political interests in the mining." (Respondent 1)

Another respondent illustrates the access that business interests have to government officials, which hinders application of the law:

"A lot of mines, they operate without water use licenses and there isn't any compliance enforcement action taken and one of the reasons that this does not happen is because there are these relationships, because the CEO of the mine has a direct relationship with the Minister of Water and Sanitation. So if a directive is issued, the CEO would be able to quickly just text the Minister. What's happening here? Can you please assist?" (Respondent 4)

The corruptive practices bias decision making towards business interests. This means that citizens' interests represented by environmental groups are not taken into consideration but also expert opinion based on facts (Respondent 2, 3, and 4). One of the respondents describes how lack of democratic process inclusive of different interests leads to decision making biases:

"I mean, we also see corruption brings about poor decision making biases. That's a very key term that comes up for us a lot. Also, we see lack of transparency, secretive, dishonest. You know, they don't report the full cost or the full impact, that sort of partial view of something. Yeah, not consulting and not following democratic process. So, you know, that lack of participation that is required in democratic process. (…) It doesn't matter how much you, how many people object to something or if there's a kickback going towards the decision maker" (Respondent 3)

In addition to biasing decisions, the business interests are protected through impunity, that is they can advance the narrow interest at the cost of the public without fearing sanctions, as described by one of the respondents:

"Impunity is a word that often comes up when you think about corruption. Without any fear of consequence, we see politicians touting energy systems that will not benefit, or address, the energy crisis. But actually suit vested interests, and the vested interests (…) you know, it's often external, powerful external entities who want to do something" *(Respondent 3)*

Finally, corruptive practices in different industries generate negative impacts on the environment and climate change. Yet, these effects are overlooked by decision makers in favor of short-term economic gains and vested interests:

"So the corruption starts at some of the industries, like I spoke about the energy, the coal and all that, and it ends up affecting people because climate change is rapid, that's happening right now. And if you continue with the expansion of the coal industry and the emission of CO_2. It means at the end of the day, people are going to be affected when the temperature starts rising." *(Respondent 2)*

6.2 Outcome

In the interviews, each respondent was asked what their organization's desired outcomes are; what they need to achieve in order to reach their impact. At this stage the differences in strategies start to become clearer and their outcomes are therefore also more diverse. The organizations are working in different areas with different objectives, which ultimately demand different strategies. To reach their outcomes, their different strategies can be summarized as advocating for certain changes in policy or legislation, and empowering and mobilizing people for an environmentally aware and active citizenry. Once again, when the respondents were asked if they perceive corruption to hinder their abilities to achieve their outcomes, they all answered positively. The theme inductively retrieved from the data is 'Corruption actively contributes to limiting civil society' The consequence of this is that the

organizations are limited in their abilities to both perform advocacy (affect decision makers) and to engage the citizenry (empowerment and mobilization).
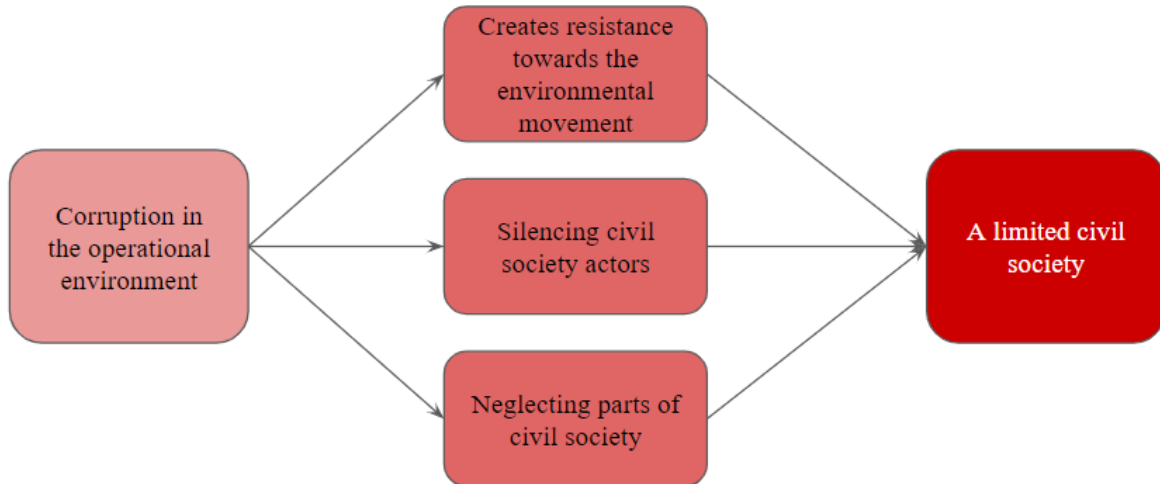

Figure 3: An illustration of the mechanisms of corruption and its effects at the outcome-stage.

The respondents describe that the achievement of their outcomes are hindered by companies that through practices such as bribing and appointment of community leadership creates support for themselves, and then also resistance towards the environmental movement.

"(...) with the mining company coming and giving some of the local people motor vehicles, pay for their children's education, and that has drawn people to support the mining company." (Respondent 1)

"They (mining companies) would enroll this traditional leader to be able to take over the community so that they can support their project. So even there at that level you can see that now this leader will have an allegiance to this mining company and then they will be able to do as they please, and they will actually also become the leader that is set to represent the entire community." (Respondent 4)

Additionally, respondents also described how civil society actors are silenced by powerful entities using various methods. There are even occurrences of killings taking place:

"Some of the big businesses that are involved like your mines and all that, the corruption is rampant. They even got hit squads that kill people. I'm working in the area where people that stand up and don't want their land taken away. The mines hire the traditional leader to kill people, and so we've lost a lot of environmental activists on account of that. So corruption is also linked to murder, to the stifling of of people talking about it." (Respondent 2)

The respondents describe that for their organizations to achieve their outcomes they are all in some way working towards citizens, to raise their voices, to ensure inclusion and participation. One respondent describes how that is made difficult as rural areas are neglected by the government with the example of lack of electricity. This makes engagement in those areas more difficult:

"(...) partly because it's remote, but partly because we believe it's been resistant to government plans. It's had to wait a very long time to get resources like electricity. ▉▉▉▉▉▉▉ where we work have only received electricity in the last year or two. You know. Was that deliberate? We don't know. But if the government was doing a better job. And using all the resources it has for the benefit of the under-resourced areas then, then we would see more resources and more infrastructure." (Respondent 1)

Additionally, another respondent describes how commercial interests, through the workings of corruption, are able to 'run down' local communities for the sake of exploiting the land on which they live.

"(...) suddenly the mine comes. They destroy your home, destroy your water commons, destroy your cattle, destroy your culture, which is your

graveyards and all that, they move people away and they got to start life new in informal settlements in inhumane conditions. (...) That is what we are doing here in South Africa, working together with local communities, to make sure the interests of the local communities come first. Because that's all linked to buying of government officials, all the huge corruption where money is changing hands to the Minister of Minerals and Energy, to the Minister of Environment." (Respondent 2)

6.3 Activity

Respondent 1 does not perceive that corruption hinders their implementation of activities. The conclusion drawn from this is that it has much to do with what type of activities an organization performs. Respondent 1's organization works mostly with community-based activities while the other three organizations are all engaged in a specific type of activity which they see is hindered by corruption: holding private companies accountable. The theme identified in the discussions regarding this sort of activity is 'Companies are not held accountable'. This is the very opposite of what such activities strive to achieve which then clearly shows how corruption hinders its success.
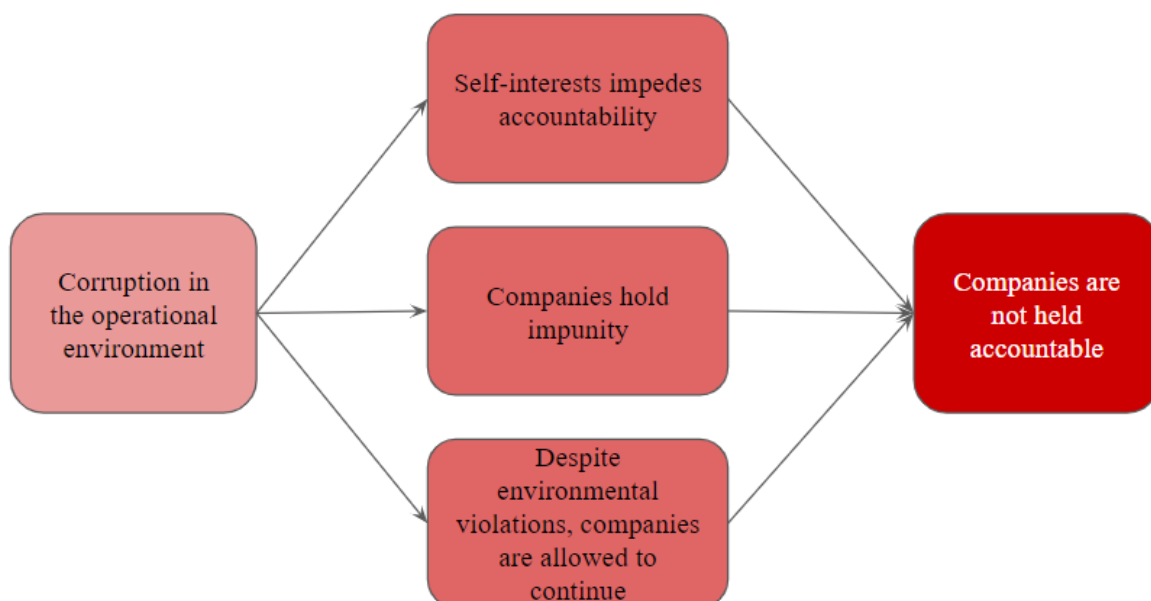
Figure 4: An illustration of the mechanisms of corruption and its effects at the activity-stage.

Respondent 2 describes how self-interests impedes the notion of holding companies accountable for different sorts of violations that they commit. It is described how collected evidence of environmental and health hazards, through the emission of toxic substances due to company-activities, are overlooked by the institutions that are supposed to hold the companies accountable:

"Yes, corruption is big because our politicians are shareholders of these big corporations, or their families are shareholders. (...) the politicians that are responsible for them have no political will for the officials to do their work and prosecute the companies that are responsible. So there's no political vote to go and hold the companies accountable for their actions. If they blow up, they explode, they emit so much of chemical, no political will to hold all those people accountable." (Respondent 2)

Additionally, the term impunity is used to describe certain companies' position in South Africa. It is a situation where companies do not have to follow the procurement processes that are in place, and therefore they manage to get away with it.

"They (a company) haven't followed any of the proper procurement processes, which should be in place, and that was absolutely key for us. If you don't follow procurement processes you see a lot of corruption. And so they've been taken to court again and again and again and they keep coming back with it. So it doesn't matter if you say to them 'this is corrupt and hasn't been done properly'. It's like a, well, someone called it a zombie, you know this sort of zombie, they keep coming up because there is a kind of impunity and a lack of due process." (Respondent 3)

Additionally, companies that have pending issues of environmental violations against them are through established relationships with politicians able to not only continue

their work, but also expand:

"If you are reporting against like a company that has a like established relationships or certain established relationships, those things are often, like, they're let go easily. And also again this element, this this idea of these companies are the backbone of our economy, so you would have a company operating in this area with a string of reported environmental violations still being able to apply for a new mining license, and to be able to receive it still while having all these pending issues." (Respondent 4)

The corruption that is described to be hindering organization 2, 3 and 4 is also an issue of lessened impact. The expected outputs of the activities are not achieved as the activity of holding companies accountable does either not work or they have to be repeated. In consequence, this means that time and resources are taken away from other activities. This was clearly expressed by two respondents who said:

"And you see, what that means is that we spend a lot of time and resources fighting battles that we shouldn't really be fighting instead of what? Like all the time and resources that we have put together for these two cases, we could spend all that time and resources building like proper climate mitigation considerations" (Respondent 4)

"You know, when you should see something be resolved. It's a fight. It becomes a fight." (Respondent 3)

6.4 Input

Each respondent was asked if they see corruption to be an obstacle when procuring the resources that their organizations need. The organization in which Respondent 2 is working has experiences of corruption directly hindering them to retrieve resources. The other respondents had no concrete examples on this stage. However,

Respondent 3 and 4 did add some valuable insights in how they perceive corruption affecting the stage of input for CSOs in general. The theme(s) identified for this stage are 'Posing restrictions on civil society'.
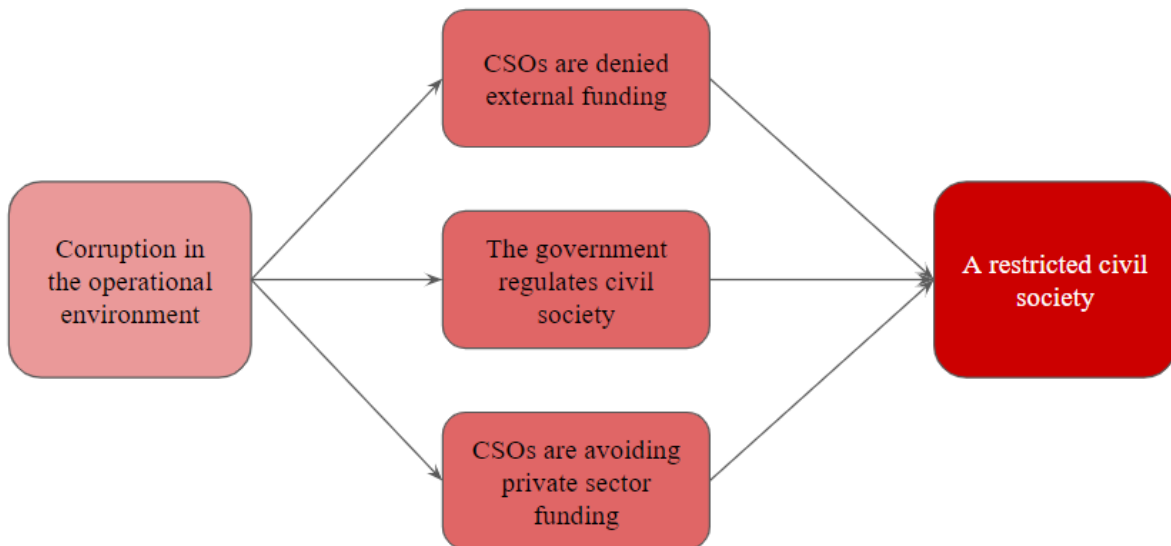

Figure 5: An illustration of the mechanisms of corruption and its effects at the input level

Corruption can be an obstacle for CSOs to procure funding as exemplified with Respondent 2's experience. Because of the organization speaking up against the actions of the government and private companies, the government chose to stop their funding from a donor located abroad:

> *"Look, we were getting money from [donor X], and because we're speaking out about the pollution and impact it had on people, they (the government) went to [donor X], they went to the ambassador and said if you're going to give them money and we're going to start (inaudible) withdraw. Don't give the organization any money. We suffered for quite a number of years." (Respondent 2)*

Even if Respondents 3 and 4 have not experienced similar treatment to their organizations, they do inform the research that they see such patterns in South Africa in general. That is, the government attempting to regulate civil society:

"I think that historically there isn't necessarily that much interest in really seriously dealing with the problem and I think that's, again, a global challenge of wanting to capacitate civil society"(Respondent 3)

"(...) what the government was trying to do is it was trying to suppress, or trying to have a say, on like the kind of funding that civil society that operating in South Africa can accept, and they were trying to exclude like things like political elements because that would have been a way to ensure that government can be able to escape accountability because civil society has that big role in exposing corruption and ensuring transparency and ensuring that government is accountable." (Respondent 4)

Additionally, the corruption present in the organizations' operational environment also presents limitations for what sources of funding the organizations are willing to consider. It was shown that both public sources and private sources are avoided due to ethical considerations, but also for the reason of not getting involved in corruption themselves. One of the respondents talks about the risks of accepting funding from private actors:

"But there is something that we are trying to stay away from is accepting donations from companies operating here or private businesses operating here. Once you start accepting these donations and once you start getting money from them: one, perception, the way that you're perceived as an organization changes (...) And two, you might actually change. You might actually be more sympathetic to [company X] because you're accepting their money, and that's you also being unwittingly involved in corruption." (Respondent 4)

7. Conclusion

We begin the conclusion by going back to the research question. This thesis asked how CSO-professionals perceive that corruption affects their ability to achieve their set-out objectives. By using the Theory of Change and performing a thematic analysis, the researcher has been able to identify different themes of how corruption in the organizations' operational environment affects them throughout the different stages of their work. From procuring the necessary resources, to implementation of activities, to reaching the desired short-, medium, and long-term goals (outcomes and impact). CSOs are agents of change that represent the wants and needs of civil society (OECD, 2020) and the organizations under study in this research are no exception. On the impact-level, they are all in one way or another attempting to bring change to how the current system is operating. This study determines that corruption is contributing to maintaining the status quo. Ultimately, this means that corruption is hindering the organization's from achieving their desired impacts. For the four organizations to achieve their outcomes, their strategies hold that they (in different ways) attempt to engage the citizenry and produce efficient advocacy. Corruption in their surroundings are contributing to a limited civil society both in terms of space to organize and how certain areas are neglected. In consequence, this hinders the CSOs' ability to implement their strategies that could lead to achieving their outcomes. Three out of the four CSO-professionals perceived that corruption is an obstacle when implementing activities. The difference here is directly linked to the type of activity that an organization is performing. In the case of the first organization, the activities that they are working with are more community-based which turned out to be less prone to be affected by external corruption. In comparison, the other three organizations that work as a watchdog attempting to hold entities accountable for the dangers and risks they pose for communities and the environment. Such activities are directly affected by corruption as certain companies hold impunity and self-interests impedes justice. One out of the four organizations have experienced corruption as a direct obstacle to procuring resources (input). However, two of the remaining respondents contributed with insights on how the CSOs in South Africa in general are exposed to regulating measures by its government. One could argue that perhaps the

government's choice of shutting down funding to a certain organization has to do with the level of resistance it is posing and the 'noise' it makes.

Based on the accounts of the respondents, this thesis concludes that corruption in South Africa stands as a central obstacle for its environmental CSOs. The exact consequences vary slightly depending on how the organizational strategy is formulated, in what areas they are working, and what type of activities they are implementing. Nevertheless, the final objectives of each organization are hindered from being achieved due to the corruption that exists in their operational environment.

This thesis research has contributed empirically by providing nuanced mapping of perceived corruption mechanisms at the different stages of each organization's Theory of Change. The researcher holds that this could contribute to future research in a number of ways. One, research could help theorize further the different ways in which perceived corruption constrains the agency of civil society professionals since perceptions about the external environment potentially affect motivations and actions. If actors perceive the structures as unchangeable, how does that potentially affect their strategies? If activists perceive corruption as a systemic and hardly changeable trait of their external environment, how does that affect their motivation to keep on fighting? Two, research could dive deeper into the case of South Africa and how corruption affects the civil society actors operating there. To collect more extensive and broader data by increasing the sample size and having a series of interviews with each respondent. With more time and resources it is believed that this would be really beneficial for the field. Three, research could perform the same type of research but in other contexts. Not necessarily for comparative purposes as corruption is so contextually significant, but instead to broaden the knowledge on this specific type of research on corruption. The importance of understanding the effects of corruption, and more specifically, the effects it has on civil society actors are crucial for future development cooperation which depends on the proper inclusion of civil society organizations.

8. References

Asuelime, R. A. & Ndimande-Hlongwa, R. (2022) Civil Society, COVID-19 Pandemic and State Corruption implications for Nation Building in South Africa, *Journal of Nation-building & Policy studies.* Available at: https://journals.co.za/doi/full/10.31920/2516-3132/2022/s1s1a9 (Accessed: 24 April 2023)

Barbrook-Johnson, P. & Penn, A. S. (2021) *Systems Mapping: How to build and use causal models of systems.* Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AG.

Belloni, R. (2011) Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution? Civil Society and Corruption in Post-Conflict State, *International Studies Association - Conference Papers,* Available at: https://eds.s.ebscohost.com/eds/detail/detail?vid=7&sid=48ac6b47-9b02-49ef-b792-98c41f5744af%40redis&bdata=JkF1dGhUeXBlPWlwLHVpZCZzaXRlPWVkcy1saXZlJnNjb3BlPXNpdGU%3d#AN=119955496&db=poh

Bisel, R.S. & Adame, E.A. (2017). Post-Positivist/Functionalist Approaches. In Scott, C. R. Barker, J. R., Kuhn, T. Keyton, J. Turner, P. K. & Lewis, L. K, *The International Encyclopedia of Organizational Communication*, Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons Inc. p. 1-22.

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006) Using thematic analysis in psychology, *Qualitative Research in Psychology,* 3, p. 77-101.

Britannica (2023) South Africa. Available at: https://www.britannica.com/place/South-Africa/Art (Accessed: 8 May 2023)

Budhram, T., & Geldenhuys, N. (2018). Corruption in South Africa: The demise of a nation? New and improved strategies to combat corruption. *South African Journal of Criminal Justice*, 31(1), p. 26-57.

Buyse, A. (2018) Squeezing civic space: restrictions on civil society organizations and the linkages with human rights, *The International Journal of Human Rights,* 22(8), p. 966-988.

CIVICUS (2023) Plight of activists continues to raise concerns as more are killed, attacked. Available at: https://monitor.civicus.org/explore/plight-of-activists-continues-to-raise-concerns-as-more-are-killed-attacked/ (Accessed: 14 May 2023)

De Graaf, G., Von Maravić, P. & Wagenaar, P. (2010a) Introduction: Causes of Corruption – The Right Question or the Right Perspective? In De Graaf, G. Von Maravić, P. & Wagenaar, P. *The Good Cause: Theoretical Perspectives on Corruption.* Stuttgart: Verlag Barbara Budrich, p. 13-20.

De Graaf, G Wagenaar, P, & Hoenderboom, M (2010b) Constructing Corruption. In De Graaf, G. Von Maravić, P. & Wagenaar, P. *The Good Cause: Theoretical Perspectives on Corruption.* Stuttgart: Verlag Barbara Budrich, p. 98-114.

Global Witness (2022) Decade of defiance: Ten years of reporting land and environmental activism worldwide. Available at: https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/environmental-activists/decade-defiance/ (Accessed: 9 May 2023)

Greene, N. (2003) Corruption and the Challenge for Civil Society, *EuroMeSCo Paper,* Available at: https://www.euromesco.net/publication/corruption-and-the-challenge-for-civil-society/ Accessed: 23 March 2023

Hammersley, M. (2008) Troubles with Triangulation. In Bergman, M. M. *Advances in Mixed Methods Research*. London: Sage. p. 22-36

Hart, E. (2019) Guide to using corruption measurements and analysis tools for development programming. Available at: https://www.u4.no/publications/guide-to-using-corruption-measurements-and-analysis-tools-for-development-programming.pdf (Accessed: 17 April 2023)

Kariuki, P (2022) The Role of Civil Society Participation in Social Cohesion Processes in KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, in Kiyala, J. C. K. & Harris, G. T., *Civil Society and Peacebuilding in Sub-Saharan Africa in the Anthropocene: An Overview*. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AB. p. 337-354.

Kiyala, J. C. K. (2022) Civil Society, Climate Change, Security Risks Management and Peacebuilding in the Anthropocene, in Kiyala, J. C. K. & Harris, G. T., *Civil Society and Peacebuilding in Sub-Saharan Africa in the Anthropocene: An Overview*. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AB. p. 3-17.

Kiyala, J. C. K. & Harris, G. T. (2022) General Introduction, in Kiyala, J. C. K. &
Harris, G. T., *Civil Society and Peacebuilding in Sub-Saharan Africa in the
Anthropocene: An Overview*. Cham: Springer Nature Switzerland AB. p. 3-17.

LUMID (2013) Ethical Guidelines for Fieldwork, Lund: Lund University

Magome, M. (2023) South Africa: Fallout over power utility CEO's graft claims, AP, 24
February. Available at:
https://apnews.com/article/africa-south-business-corruption-b31d6e6629dc2844e5f4
bc68e073f02b (Accessed: 9 May 2023)

National Government of South Africa (n.d.) Eskom Holdings SOC Ltd. Available at:
https://nationalgovernment.co.za/units/view/94/eskom-holdings-soc-ltd (Accessed:
16 May 2023)

Nicolás-Carlock, J. R. & Luna-Pla, I. (2021) Corruptomics. In Granados, O. M. &
Nicolás-Carlock, J. R. *Corruption Networks: Concepts and Applications.* Cham:
Springer Nature Switzerland AG. p. 153-157.

OECD, 2020: Development assistance committee members and civil society.
Available at:
https://www.oecd.org/dac/development-assistance-committee-members-and-civil-s
ociety-51eb6df1-en.htm (Accessed: 2 May 2023)

OHCHR (n.d) OHCHR and protecting and expanding civic space. Available at:
https://www.ohchr.org/en/civic-space (Accessed: 8 May 2023)

Pellegrini, L. (2011) Corruption, Development and the Environment. London:
Springer.

Punch, K. (1998) Introduction to Social Research: Qualitative & Quantitative
Approaches, London: SAGE publications Ltd

Robson, C. & McCartan, K. (2016) Real world research. 4th ed. Chichester: John
Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Rodrik, D. & Rauch, J. E. (1997) *Comments on Corruption and the Global Economy*,
in Elliott, K. A. Corruption and the Global Economy. Washington: Institute for
International Economics, p. 108-116.

Scheidel, A., Del Bene, D., Liu, J., Navas, G., Mingorria, S., Demaria, F., Avila, S.,
Roy, B., Ertör, I., Temper, L. & Martinez-Alier, J. (2020) Environmental conflicts
and defenders: A global overview. *Global Environment Change,* 63, p. 1-12.

Stewart-Withers, R., Banks, G., McGregor, A. & Meo-Sewabu, L. (2014) 'Qualitative Research', in Scheyvens, R. (2nd ed) Development Fieldwork: A practical guide. London: SAGE Publications Ltd, p. 59-80.

Tacconi, L. & Williams, D. A. (2020) Corruption and Anti-Corruption in Environmental and Resource Management. *Annual Review of Environment and Resources ,*45, p. 305-329.

Transparency International (2022) Corruption Perceptions Index: Short Methodology Note. Available at: https://www.transparency.org/en/cpi/2022 (Accessed: 18 March 2023)

Transparency International (n.d.) What is corruption? Available at: https://www.transparency.org/en/what-is-corruption (Accessed: 18 March 2023)

UNDESA (2019) World Public Sector Report 2019. Available at: https://desapublications.un.org/publications/world-public-sector-report-2019 (Accessed: 18 March 2023)

UNGP (n.d.) Civil Society Organizations. Available at: https://www.ungpreporting.org/glossary/civil-society-organizations-csos/ (Accessed: 14 April 2023)

U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Center (n.d.) Essentials of anti-corruption I: The basics. Available at: https://www.u4.no/courses/essentials-of-anti-corruption-i-the-basics (Accessed: 18 March 2023)

World Bank Group (2021) Climate risk country profile: South Africa. Available at: https://climateknowledgeportal.worldbank.org/sites/default/files/country-profiles/15932-WB_South%20Africa%20Country%20Profile-WEB.pdf (Accessed: 16 May 2023)

9. Appendices

9.1 Interview guide

Introduction:

1. Introduce myself and explain the purpose of the interview.
2. Explain how the collected data will be used in the research.
3. Ask for permission to record.

Background:

4. For me to gain some better understanding, could you explain a bit what your organization does?
5. Could you elaborate on what your role in the organization is?

Perception of corruption:

6. Part 2 starts with the interviewer and respondent having a brief discussion on corruption as a concept.
    a. How do you define corruption?
    b. Present Transparency International's definition. What does the respondent think about it?

Theory of Change:

7. What is the desired impact (the long-term goals) that your organization strives to achieve?
    a. Do you perceive that corruption is an obstacle to achieve this?
    b. If yes, could you elaborate?
8. In order to reach that desired impact, what are the short-term and medium-term outcomes that you need to achieve?
    a. Do you see that there is any sort of corruption affecting the outcomes that you strive to achieve?
    b. If yes, could you elaborate?

9. What are some activities that your organization is implementing in order to reach the outcomes?
    a. Do you see that there is any sort of corruption affecting this stage of your work?
    b. If yes, could you elaborate?
10. In order to implement the activities and work that you do, you need certain resources. Do you see that corruption in your environment in any way affects your ability to procure those resources?
    a. If yes, could you elaborate?

Conclusion:
11. Thank the interviewee for their time and insights.
12. Is there anything that you would like to add or mention before we end the interview?
13. Explain the next steps in the research process.

9.2 Interview invitation

Dear (name),

My name is Malte Killander and I am currently finishing my bachelor's degree at Lund University. I would like to invite you to participate as an interviewee in my bachelor thesis research.

The research aims to understand how civil society professionals working at an environmental CSO perceive that corruption affects their organization's work. Considering your position as the (position at the organization) at (name of organization), I believe that you would be an ideal candidate for the interview.

This is a purely academic paper and your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. What I want to emphasize here is that the research does not look at corruption as an internal risk at your organization, but instead how you perceive that corruption in society might affect your organization's implemented projects and your ability to achieve set-out objectives.

The interview will be held online and will last approximately one hour. Your answers will remain confidential and will not be linked back to you as an individual or to (name of organization). In other words, you are promised complete and full anonymity to the degree that you will only be referred to as a civil society professional working at an environmental organization in South Africa.

If you would like to discuss your role as interviewee in the context of this research, please contact either me or my thesis supervisor Dr. Milka Ivanovska Hadjievska, Senior Lecturer at the Political Science Department at Lund University: (email address)

If you have any questions or need additional information, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Best regards,

Malte Killander

Bachelor's in Development Studies at Lund University

9.3 Coding excerpt & thematic maps

How corruption affects organizational impact (long-term goals)		
Quotes:	**Coded labels:**	**Themes:**
Respondent 1: *"The government officials, the politicians, are enabling or trying to enable the mining to take place. (...) and we know that one of the companies in bed with [company X] has also made significant donations of money to the ANC. So it's very clear that there are state governments or basic political interests in the mining."*	Corruption enables continued harmful activities.	Corruption maintains the status quo.
Respondent 4: *"A lot of mines, they operate without water use licenses and there isn't any compliance enforcement action taken and one of the reasons that does not happen is because there are these relationships because the CEO of the mine has a direct relationship with the Minister of Water and Sanitation. So if a directive is issued, the CEO would be able to quickly just text the Minister. What's happening here? Can you please assist?*		
Respondent 1: *"The negative impacts are not taken into account and the losses are not taken into account. So the government will only look at the job creation, but it won't look at what is lost in terms of land based livelihoods."*	Negative impacts are overlooked.	
Respondent 2: *"So the corruption starts at some of the industries, like I spoke about the energy, the coal and all that, and it ends up affecting people because climate change is rapid, that's happening right now. And if you continue with the expansion of the coal industry and the emission of CO2. It means at the end of the day, people are going to be affected when the temperature starts rising."*		
Respondent 2: *The resources in South Africa is huge, if they use the resources in the right way, we will get development and we improve people's lives. But because they*	Corruption makes decision-making biased.	

don't do it, so we suffer in South Africa and so a lot of poverty, which is in, which has increased over threefold. Because of the corrupt, the money, instead of the money going to people, the poverty has increased. Jobs have, as I said, 42% unemployment because there's no money to pay people.		
Respondent 3: *"I mean, we also see corruption brings about poor decision making, biases. That's a very key term that comes up for us a lot. Also, we see lack of transparency, secretive, dishonest. You know they don't report the full cost or the full impact, that sort of partial view of something. Yeah, not consulting and not following democratic process. So, you know, that lack of participation that is required in democratic process. (…) It doesn't matter how much you, how many people object to something. Or if there's a kickback going towards the decision maker"*		
Respondent 4: *"So there needs to be like thorough actual applying of the mind to these kinds of decisions. But these decisions now, they're mainly not taken for those reasons, like those relevant factual considerations are not taken into account. What is driving those decisions are these established corrupt relationships."*		
Respondent 2: *"So if you're a rich person, you steal the money, the case doesn't end tomorrow. You don't go to jail tomorrow. If you're a poor man, you're stealing from one of the shopping malls, a loaf of bread or something to go and feed yourself, you go to jail. Rich people are buying all, the stolen money is not seized and they're not held accountable."*	Corruption leads to impunity	

Respondent 3: *"Impunity is a word that often comes up when you think about corruption. Without any fear of consequence, we see politicians touting energy systems that will not benefit, or address, the energy crisis. But actually suit vested interests, and the vested interests (...) you know, it's often external, powerful external entities who want to do something"*		

Thematic Map: Impact
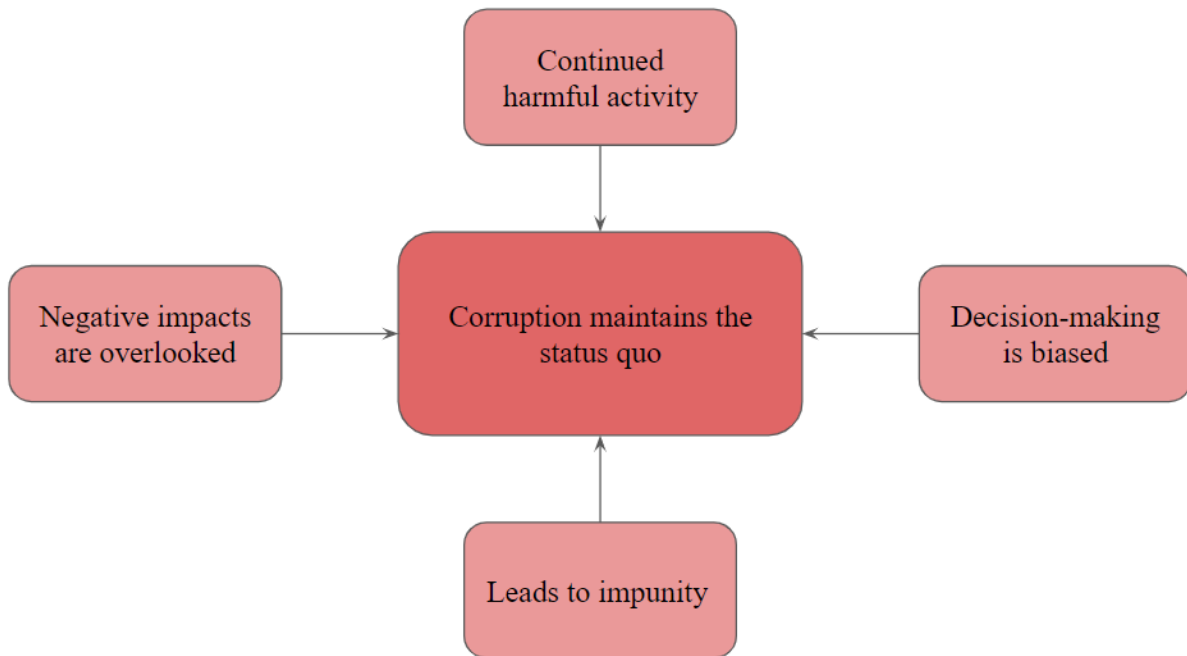
How corruption affects organizational outcome (short & medium-term goals)

Respondent 1: *"...with the mining company coming and giving some of the local people motor vehicles, pay for their children's education, and that has drawn people to support the mining company."*	Creates resistance towards the environmental movement	Corruption actively contributes to limit civil society
Respondent 2: *"And then they don't have a right to go and argue and fight that their*		

homesteads or their land has been taken from them. (...) Because the Chiefs and the people that run those traditional courts are paid, are bought by the corporations, money changes hands, and these people are taking the money for their own personal interest."		
Respondent 4: *"They (mining companies) would enroll this traditional leader to be able to take over the community so that they can support their project. So even there at that level you can see that now this leader will have an allegiance to this mining company and then they will be able to do as they please, and they will actually also become the leader that is set to represent the entire community."*		
Respondent 2: *"Some of the big businesses that are involved like your mines and all that, the corruption is rampant. They even got hit squads that kill people. I'm working in the area where people that stand up and don't want their land taken away. The mines, hire the traditional leader to kill people, and so we've lost a lot of environmental activists on account of that. So corruption is also linked to murder, to the stifling of of people talking about it."*	Silencing civil society actors	
Respondent 2: "*We've lost a lot of people, activists in South Africa, including myself. I'm a victim of* ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇ ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇▇*. From the big corporations I was taking on."*		
Respondent 1: *"(...) partly because it's remote, but partly because we believe it's been resistant to government plans. It's had to wait a very long time to get resources like electricity.* ▇▇▇▇▇▇▇*where we work have only received electricity in the last year or two. You know. Was that deliberate? We don't know. But if the government was doing a better job. And using all the resources it has for the benefit of the under-resourced areas then, then we would see more resources and more infrastructure."*	Corruption neglects parts of civil society	

| Respondent 2: *"(...) suddenly the mine comes. They destroy your home, destroy your water commons, destroy your cattle, destroy your culture, which is your graveyards and all that, they move people away and they got to start life new in informal settlements in inhumane conditions. (...) That is what we are doing here in South Africa, working together with local communities, to make sure the interests of the local communities come first. Because that's all linked to buying of government official, all the huge corruption where money is changing hands to the Minister of Minerals and Energy, to the Minister of Environment."* | | |

Thematic Map: Outcome

How corruption affects organizational activity		
Respondent 2: *"Yes, corruption is big because our politicians are shareholders of these big corporations, or their families are shareholders. (...) the politicians that are responsible for them have no political will for the officials to do their work and prosecute the companies that are responsible. So there's no political vote to go and hold the companies accountable for their actions. If they blow up, they explode, they emit so much of chemical, no*	Self-interest impedes accountability.	Companies are not being held accountable.

political will to hold all those people accountable.”		
Respondent 3: *“They (a company) haven't followed any of the proper procurement processes, which should be in place, and that was absolutely key for us. If you don't follow procurement processes you see a lot of corruption. And so they've been taken to court again and again and again and they keep coming back with it. So it doesn't matter if you say to them 'this is corrupt and hasn't been done properly'. It's like a, well, someone called it a zombie, you know this sort of zombie, they keep coming up because there is a kind of impunity and a lack of due process.”*	Companies hold impunity.	
Respondent 4: *“If you are reporting against like a company that has a like established relationships or certain established relationships, those things are often, like, they're let go easily. And also again this element, this this idea of these companies are the backbone of our economy, so you would have a company operating in this area with a string of reported environmental violations still being able to apply for a new mining license, and to be able to receive it still while having all these pending issues.”*	Despite records of environmental violations, companies are allowed to continue.	

Thematic Map: Activity

How corruption affects organizational input		
Respondent 2: *"Look, we were getting money from [donor X], and because we're speaking out about the pollution and impact it had on people, they (the government) went to [donor X], they went to the ambassador and said if you're going to give them money and we're going to start (inaudible) withdraw. Don't give the organization any money. We suffered for quite a number of years."*	Denying CSOs external funding	Posing restrictions on civil society
Respondent 4: *"In that draft, what the government was trying to do is it was trying to suppress, or trying to have a say, on like the kind of funding that civil society that operating in South Africa can accept, and they were trying to exclude like things like political elements because that would have been a way to ensure that government can be able to escape accountability because civil society has that big role in exposing corruption and ensuring transparency and ensuring that government is accountable."*		
Respondent 2: *"I think that historically there isn't necessarily that much interest in really seriously dealing with the problem and I think that's, again, a global challenge of wanting to capacitate civil society"*	Regulation of civil society	
Respondent 4: *"Government is always talking about 'we need to regulate civil society more', 'we need to create laws to ensure that we don't have foreign governments funding coups in our country' and things like that."*		
Respondent 2: *"(...) we had to go to ordinary foundation because we don't take money from the polluting companies, the big corporation."*	Avoiding certain sources of funding	
Respondent 4: *"But there is something that we are trying to stay away from is accepting donations from companies operating here or private businesses operating here. Once you start accepting these donations and once you start getting money from them: one, perception,*		

the way that you're perceived as an organization changes (...) And two, you might actually change. You might actually be more sympathetic to [company X] because you're accepting their money, and that's you also being unwittingly involved in corruption."		
Respondent 2: *"We don't take money from government, so we have to go to foundations now and start raising money and traveling and going to speak to people all over the world about the work and how important the work is."*		

Thematic Map: Input