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# **Measuring the Effectiveness of Anti-Corruption Agencies**

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**TIIVISTELMÄ :**

Korruptio on monimutkainen ongelma, joka vahingoittaa ja luo haasteita kaikissa muodoissaan. Tutkimuksen motivaationa toimi korruption torjunnan tehostaminen ja sitä vastaan työskentelevien organisaatioiden suorituskyvyn kehittämisen tutkiminen. Näiden organisaatioiden tehokkuus vaikuttaa osaltaan siihen, kuinka tehokkaasti korruptiota voidaan ehkäistä, havaita ja mahdollisesti rangaista. Korruptiota vastaan työskentelee useita organisaatioita, kuten tässä tutkielmassa käsiteltävät korruptionvastaiset virastot (anti-corruption agency). Tässä tutkielmassa näistä virastoista käytetään lyhennettä ACA. Kuten muillekin vastaaville organisaatioille, ACA:ille tehokkuus ja hyvä suorituskyky ovat tärkeässä roolissa korruption vastaisessa, haastavassa työssä. Tämän tutkielman tavoitteena oli tarkastella ACA:iden suorituskykyä sekä samalla täyttää tutkimusaukkoa, joka havaittiin ACA:iden suorituskyvyn mittaamisen suhteen. Tutkimusta ohjanneet tutkimuskysymykset keskittyvät niihin tekijöihin, jotka vaikuttavat ACA:iden suorituskykyyn sekä siihen, miten ACA:iden suorituskykyä voitaisiin mitata ja mahdollisesti parantaa.

ACA:iden suorituskyvyn mittaamista tutkittiin kirjallisuuskatsauksen ja asiantuntijahaastatteluiden kautta. Kvalitatiivisen, eli laadullisen tutkimusmenetelmän, katsottiin soveltuvan hyvin tutkimuksen tarkoitukseen, joka oli saada syvällisempi ymmärrys ACA:iden suorituskyvystä ja sen mittaamisesta. Kirjallisuuskatsauksen avulla lukijalle haluttiin luoda perustason ymmärrys korruptiosta sekä sen luomasta ympäristöstä ja haasteista, sillä korruption ymmärtäminen on tärkeää ACA:iden toiminnan ja suorituskyvyn mahdollisuuksien ja haasteiden ymmärtämiselle. Asiantuntijahaastatteluiden tavoitteena oli luoda kattava käsitys ACA:iden suorituskyvystä ja seikoista, jotka vaikuttavat siihen. Haastattelut toteutettiin teemahaastatteluin, joiden tukena käytettiin ennalta laadittua kysymysrunkoa, joka sisälsi kahdeksan kysymystä ACA:iden suorituskyvyn mittaamiseen liittyen.

Asiantuntijahaastatteluita ja jo olemassa olevaa kirjallisuutta pohjana käyttämällä voidaan todeta, että ACA:iden suorituskyvyn mittaaminen ei ole yksinkertainen tai helppo tehtävä. ACA:t kohtaavat usein suuria odotuksia, mutta niiden käytössä olevat resurssit voivat olla riittämättömät täyttämään näitä vaatimuksia. Lisäksi suuret odotukset voivat vaikuttaa siihen, millainen kuva ACA:ista muodostuu, ja resurssien puutteellisuus voi edelleen vaikeuttaa niiden suoriutumista ja suorituskyvyn mittaamista. Resurssipula on julkisissa organisaatioissa yleistä ja tässä tutkimuksessa etenkin resurssihin liittyvät haasteet nousivat esiin. Suorituskyvyn mittaamiselle on olemassa olevassa kirjallisuudessa havaittu useita positiivisia vaikutuksia, mutta haastatelussa nousi esiin kysymys siitä, keskitytäänkö ACA:iden tapauksessa suorituskykyyn liikaa ja annetaanko ACA:ille aitoa mahdollisuutta menestyä. Yleisesti ACA:iden suorituskykyyn vaikuttavina tekijöinä havaittiin mm. luottamus ja vapaus. Vaikka monia ACA:iden suorituskykyyn vaikuttavia yhteisiä tekijöitä löydettiin, hieman yllättäen, toimintatapojen tai ohjeiden luominen ACA:iden suorituskyvyn mittaamiselle osoittautui tutkimuksen aikana haastavaksi. Tämän taustalla vaikuttaa mm. näiden organisaatioiden erilaiset tehtävät, toimintaympäristöt ja yleisesti niiden ainutlaatuisuus.

Koska ACA:ille yhteisten suorituskyvyn mittaamisen ohjeiden luominen nähtiin haastavana, voidaan päätellä, että paras lähestymistapa mittaamiseen on yksilöllistä mittaamista vastaamaan juuri kyseisen ACA:n tarpeita ja mahdollisuuksia. ACA:t kokevat paljon ulkopuolista painetta ja myös tämän vuoksi niiden olisi tärkeää mitata suoriutumistaan itsensä vuoksi. Tämä tutkimus tarjoaa pohjaa tulevaisuuden tutkimukselle korruptionvastaisten virastojen suorituskyvyn mittaamiselle. Tutkimuksen haastatteluiden pienen osallistujamäärän vuoksi olisi tulevaisuudessa mielenkiintoista nähdä, olisiko tutkimus yleistettävissä laajemmalla haastattelumäärällä tai eri tutkimusmenetelmällä. Lisäksi tulevaisuudessa voitaisiin paneutua siihen voisiko ACA:iden suorituskyvyn mittaamiselle kehittää tarkempia raameja, sillä tässä tutkimuksessa ACA:iden uniikki luonne havaittiin rajoittavana tekijänä ohjeiden yleistämiselle. Myös ACA:ille asetetut todella korkeat odotukset tarjoavat pohjaa tulevaisuuden tutkimukselle. Olisi mielenkiintoista tutkia, onko näillä odotuksilla vaikutusta ACA:iden suorituskykyyn.

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**AVAINSANAT:** Corruption, Anti-Corruption Agency, Organizational Performance, Performance Measurement, Performance Measurement of Anti-Corruption Agencies, Corruption Control

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## Abbreviations

ACA	Anti-corruption Agency
ICAC	Independent Commission Against Corruption
KPK	Corruption Eradication Commission of Indonesia
OECD	The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
OP	Organizational Performance
UNCAC	United Nations Convention Against Corruption
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme

# 1 Introduction

This thesis focuses on anti-corruption agencies and the measurement of their performance. It also discusses corruption in general, as understanding corruption is crucial for understanding the unique operational context of these agencies which influences their performance. The primary objective of this thesis is to present how anti-corruption agencies operate, what affects their performance, and how their performance could be measured.

The introduction will briefly outline the background and current state of corruption and anti-corruption agencies, introduce the main terms, establish the research problem, aims and questions, as well as go over the possible limitations of the research.

## 1.1 Background

Although democracy can be seen as a tool to refrain from corruption, some Greek philosophers viewed it as the opposite, perceiving it as a potential source of corruption, Hindess (2013, p. 8) notes. They feared that those who they perceived as less fortunate, uneducated, and thus ignorant would rule the government and corrupt it. Hindess says that this perception of democracy remained potent in the West until the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Nowadays, it is widely believed that democracy mitigates corruption (Billger & Goel, 2009, p. 299). Freedom, in its many forms, is vital for anti-corruption agencies success.

Bautista-Beauchesne (2022, p. 1399) views the establishment of preventive anti-corruption agencies as a trend in public administration over the last two decades. He describes the crimes and problems handled by these agencies as complex and even wicked. The number of anti-corruption agencies keeps growing and some argue that they should perform better than they do. The magnitude of problems they fight against should be considered when assessing their performance since corruption creates a challenging environment for the agencies.

According to the Corruption Perceptions Index of 2022 by Transparency International, the least corrupted countries in the world are Denmark, Finland, and New Zealand. The countries that have the most corruption are South Sudan, Syria, and Somalia. According to Myllyoja (2019), 180 countries are included in the comparison, and it is based on surveys and expert assessments. The index has been calculated since 1995. Dimant and Tosato (2017) found that corruption occurs for multiple reasons, such as greed, high levels of monopolization, low freedom of press and economy, poverty, low levels of education, and of course, lack of proper policies against corruption. According to Schütte (2023), the International Association of Anti-Corruption Authorities had 159 members in June of 2023, although the overall count depends on definitions.

According to Myllyoja (2019), Transparency International reports that corruption remains pervasive, with many countries failing to take effective measures against it despite citizen demands. Patricia Moreira, the managing director of the organization, says this is due to the crisis of democracy across the globe. She says that democratic institutions are threatened and points out that the USA is no longer among the top 20 countries in the corruption comparison because of ethical dilemmas on “the highest level of power”. According to Huttunen (2023), a case illustrating this involves the former president of the United States, Donald Trump, who was accused of bribery to suppress a potential scandal. Reportedly, Trump’s attorney Michael Cohen paid a \$130,000 bribe to silence claims against Trump. Although Cohen was convicted, this incident gained renewed attention amidst other charges against Trump. Huttunen notes that while this marks the first criminal indictment of a U.S. president, similar prosecutions of former heads of state are not uncommon globally.

Fighting corruption is part of good governance, Pope and Vogl (2000) state. To build strong anti-corruption agencies, other proponents of good governance need to share their experience and knowledge and work together with the agencies. In contrast, Doig



et al. (2007) say that corruption is a part of weak governance. In environments of weak governance ACAs can be misused for political purposes, Schütte, (2012, p. 1) says.

## **1.2 Terms and definitions**

### **Corruption**

Corruption can be defined in many ways, it is contextual, and the definition of it is culture relevant, Simelane (2012, p. 423) says. According to Simelane, Tambulasi describes corruption as the “illegal transfer of public resources from public to private”, Jamieson describes it as “misuse of public power for private profit”, and Cremer views it as “a wide spectrum of behaviours in an individual’s economic and political environment from illicit to illegitimate behaviour to behaviour that is simply considered undesirable by the person using the word”. Simelane says that these definitions, among many others, highlight the acts of individuals to use public resources for their own gain.

Hindess (2013, p. 4-5) provides multiple examples of corrupted acts, including a government exerting pressure on law enforcement to favour its allies or target its opponents, a government using its authority to systematically discriminate in favour of specific demographic groups while disadvantaging others, or a ruling party appointing well-paid judges and leveraging the judicial system to undermine political opposition. He points out that if corruption is only viewed in terms of economy, these things would not be regarded as corruption. Simelane (2012, p. 424) adds that corruption can range from petty corruption, such as small bribes, to grand corruption, which includes influencing laws and large bribes to secure government contracts. Alesina and Angeletos (2005, p. 1228) suggest that corruption may be, for instance, handing out favourable regulations, higher salaries for public officials, or some localities being favoured. Corrupted individuals, committing corrupted acts, face the risk of apprehension and punishment (Billger & Goel, 2009, p. 300).

Billger and Goel (2009, p. 300) posit that economic prosperity and freedom, political freedom, free press, and political competition can reduce corruption. Anti-corruption agencies actively work towards preventing corruption and punishing corrupt practices.

### **Anti-corruption agency (ACA)**

According to Schütte et al. (2023, p. 4), the UN Convention against Corruption requires signatories to establish one or more bodies to manage the implementation of corruption prevention policies and law enforcement. There are different ways of filling this requirement and establishing an anti-corruption agency is one option.

De Sousa (2010, p. 5-6) defines anti-corruption agencies as “public (funded) bodies of a durable nature, with a specific mission to fight corruption and reducing the opportunity structures propitious for its occurrence in society through preventive and/or repressive measures.” According to him, the first anti-corruption agencies that appeared in the postcolonial period aimed to enhance some countries reputations or to build new administrations free from old practices. Before anti-corruption agencies, their functions were held by parliamentary commissions and special police branches.

In this thesis, the term "anti-corruption agency" is referred to by its abbreviation, ACA.

Although there is no standardized model for an ACA, certain criteria define them. For example, ACAs need to be distinctive from other law enforcement agencies, emphasise fighting corruption, develop preventive and/or repressive dimensions of control, and have the ability to centralize information. However, only a few ACAs meet all the requirements (de Sousa, 2010, p. 12).

De Sousa (2010, p. 6) also notes that some ACAs are born as a response to scandals or crisis. These agencies can be set up quite hastily, which explains their somewhat limited capabilities. De Sousa says that the Australian New South Wales Independent Commission Against Corruption and the Maltese Permanent Commission Against Corruption are

examples of agencies established amid scandals. Passas (2010, p. 1) says that the creation of such bodies is also related to governments desire to demonstrate political will against corruption. Additionally, Passas says that anti-corruption bodies are diverse, and just like corruption itself, culture affects them and how they work.

The success of an ACA lies in the public trust and respect by businesses. This is hard to maintain but very crucial. De Sousa (2009, p. 2) says the support of the public is essential for the success of ACAs. Without it, the agencies might become feared which complicates their work. Performance measurements can help to keep up the legitimacy of the agencies. The Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) of Hong Kong is often seen as an exemplary ACA. Despite some seemingly unrealistic goals for ACAs, such as creating an environment for large public projects to proceed without corruption, ICAC has demonstrated their achievability (Pope & Vogl, 2000). Bolongaita (2010, p. 4) says the Corruption Eradication Commission of Indonesia (KPK) also stands out as an exemplary ACA, succeeding especially in prosecutions.

### **Performance**

Rao (2015, p. 2) says that performance links to one's role, the expectations of others, and the dynamics within the organization. Additionally, he states that "performance is what is expected to be delivered by an individual or a set of individuals within a timeframe" (Rao, 2015, p. 19).

The concept of performance is dependent of the organizations field and on the stakeholder's or constituency group's interests - and therefore organizations measure it differently. That said, there are some common directions in understanding what performance is. Lusthaus et al. (2002, p. 107-109) say that the definition of performance has evolved over the years to a more resource-oriented view. Broadly, performance can be discussed on four levels: individual, team or small group, program, and organization levels. On the organizational level, ideas of what is considered "good" performance emerge from citizens, funders, politicians, and investors.

Richard et al. (2009, p. 719-722) point out that organizational performance has a somewhat open definition, lacking clarity in theoretical definition and methodological consistency. They assert that organizational performance and organizational effectiveness are closely related structures. According to Richard et al., effectiveness is comprehensive, encompassing organizational performance, with performance being one indicator of effectiveness. While the field of organizational performance is narrower, it cannot be measured with a single measure, and it is not one-dimensional. Singh et al. (2016, p. 214) distinguish the two by suggesting that organizational effectiveness refers to broader indicators than performance, such as social responsibility.

### **Performance measurement**

Poister et al. (2014, p. 5-7) define performance measurement as “the systematic, orderly collection of quantitative data along a set of key indicators of organizational (or program) performance”. Essentially, this involves collecting data on key performance indicators to evaluate organization’s performance. Performance measurement is distinguished from performance management, with this thesis specifically focusing on the measurement. De Sousa (2009, p. 9) recommends using both quantitative and qualitative measures.

Jenkins (2012, p. 5) offers three guidelines for performance measurement: measuring the right things, using the right measures, and applying the measures correctly. Following these guidelines is often easier said than done, as is explored later in this thesis. Pidd (2012, p. 18) says performance measurement, done with the right measures, helps to understand how much has been done, how well it has been done and if people are better off as the result. Additionally, measuring performance is important, because it allows researchers and managers to see how well an organization is doing currently and over time, Richard et al. (2009, p. 719) explain.

Performance indicators are, in their simplest form, signals of performance. As simplified representations of performance, they can show where performance is good, average, or

poor, thereby directing attention where needed. Indicators can summarise and allow comparisons through time and between units, Pidd (2012, p. 43-44) says. Pidd adds that the accuracy of indicators is chosen based upon what is intended to be achieved with them.

### **Performance management**

Rao (2015, p. 1) defines performance management as trying to improve individuals, teams, and the whole organization's performance by setting goals. According to Poister et al. (2014, p. 5-7), performance management involves using performance information to fix problems and working towards achieving the set goals. Defining performance, understanding what is required to perform tasks, developing competencies and motivation are things that performance management involves (Rao, 2015, p. 77).

## **1.3 Research problem, aims and objectives**

Although corruption has always been present in one way or another, it has not always been studied extensively. The elusive nature of corruption makes it a challenging concept to pinpoint and analyse due to its illicit processes. However, in the last half-century, corruption studies have increased and in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century corruption has become somewhat mainstream in social science (Hough, 2022, p. 1-2). ACAs present an intriguing subject for research due to their relatively recent emergence and continual increase in number. Notably, they focus on a single issue, which can be rare for public agencies (de Sousa, 2010, p. 7). Given the limited research on corruption and the novelty of ACAs, literature on measuring the performance of these agencies is notably scarce - a gap this thesis aims to address.

Bajpai and Myers (2020, p. 291) note that while the work of ACAs can be conspicuous, its impact may appear inconspicuous. The number of ACAs has increased over the years; yet opinions on their success and performance vary, causing debate. This thesis aims to look into this theme, exploring the debatable nature of ACAs' performance. By shedding

light on this issue and understanding the potential reasons for perceived poor performance, the thesis seeks to avoid labelling ACAs as ineffective without considering factors beyond their control.

To explore the topic of ACAs performance measurement, semi-structured interviews were conducted with professionals specializing in ACAs. The objective of these interviews was to gain a comprehensive understanding of ACAs, their performance, and the measurement of their performance. It is important to note that the aim is not to draw definitive conclusions from the interviews but rather to acquire a deeper insight into ACAs performance.

The research questions guiding this thesis are as follows:

What effects ACA's performance?

How can ACA's performance be measured?

How can the performance measurement of ACAs be improved?

This thesis purposely leaves out exploring ways and theories on measurement in detail due to the abundance of possible ways to measure performance, recognizing that not all are suitable for ACAs. Corruption will be explored on a general level to provide readers with a foundational understanding of its relevance to ACAs. Additionally, individual performance is also not explored as the aim is to get a better understanding of ACAs performance on an organizational level. Another limitation made is that this thesis mostly focuses on corruption in the public sector.

#### **1.4 Motivation for the study and limitations**

Pope and Vogl (2000) say that Transparency International regards knowledge of ACAs successes and failures as valuable, providing lessons for improvement. When ACAs develop, they can help leaders across the world to withstand corruption. Performance measurement can serve as a tool for learning about organizational performance and

improving it. This is why it is beneficial to learn more about ACAs performance measurement and how it can be done to ensure their success.

According to the European Unions (2023) Eurobarometer on Citizens' attitudes towards corruption in the EU, 64% of Europeans find corruption unacceptable, 7 out of 10 respondents think corruption is common in their country, and vast majority believe there is corruption in the national public institutions or regional public institutions in their country. Corruption is a substantial problem in our societies and research on how to curb it and support the organizations fighting it are valuable. According to the Eurobarometer, 54% say they do not know where to report corruption if they were to experience or observe it. ACAs play a pivotal role in addressing this issue, as one of their primary objectives is to educate the public on corruption.

This study has potential limitations. The limitations of this research mainly link to the methodology. Due to the highly specialized nature of ACAs, the number of potential participants for interviews was limited. Another limitation this thesis faces is the limited amount of previous research on this specific topic. Literature on corruption, ACAs, and performance measurement in general were readily available but the research on the performance measurement of ACAs specifically was notably scarce. Constraint on time created another limitation for this research as the available timeframe proved to be insufficient for exhaustive exploration and analysis. Limitations will be further discussed in subsequent sections of the thesis.

## **1.5 Thesis structure**

The introduction covered the background of the topic, introduced the main terms used in the thesis, presented the research problem, aims, objectives and question this thesis aims to cover. Additionally, it described the motivations behind the study and acknowledged the possible limitations of the thesis.

The thesis structure goes as follows: chapter two explores the existing literature on corruption, ACAs, performance measurement in general, and the performance measurement of ACAs. In the third chapter, data and methodology will be presented. The fourth chapter will review, analyse and discuss the results obtained in this research. After the results, the fifth chapter will conclude the thesis.



## **2 Theoretical background**

In this chapter, the theoretical background is introduced for understanding the context of ACAs. First, corruption is explored, including the different forms of it, issues caused by it, and its secret nature. The aim is to equip the reader with a fundamental understanding of corruption, to better understand the circumstances of ACAs. Next, attention shifts towards ACAs themselves. This section examines the reasons for their establishment, the diverse types of agencies, methods for measuring their performance and the challenges they face. Following this, the concept of performance measurement is introduced. Navigating through the dimensions of performance, indicators and measures, data, how to measure and why measure and the difficulties of performance measurement. Lastly, the focus is on performance measurement of ACAs specifically. Here, we examine the reasons for performance measurement as well as possible difficulties with it.

By examining corruption, ACAs, and performance measurement, this chapter aims to provide a theoretical foundation essential for comprehending the dynamics surrounding the performance measurement of ACAs.

### **2.1 About corruption**

David-Barret and Hough (2022, p. 209) describe corruption as “the abuse of entrusted power for private gain”. There is a lot of variation within corruption, which can make unambiguous definition challenging. As Gorta (2013, p. 14) states, corruption is not a single phenomenon but rather a range of power misuse. This is why the fight against corruption needs accurate targets rather than targeting corruption as a whole. Since corruption happens both in public and private sector, entrusted power can refer to power granted by constitution, power gained in private sector and much more. Regardless of what the form of power is, it can be abused in many ways, which we will look into later.

When thinking of corruption, it is common to think that it is always illegal and done on purpose. However, Hough (2022, p. 23) says corrupted acts can be both illegal or legal and can happen by deliberate action or inaction. This perception of corruption increases its ambiguity. So-called “legal corruption” might result from those in power changing the laws to serve their personal needs. Changing the laws is a bigger issue in developing countries since in advanced industrial democracies changing the law is very difficult. Yet, in these countries there too are “grey areas” in power and gaining influence (Power, 2002, p. 68-70).

Gorta (2013, p. 13) says that literature distinguishes various definitions for corruption, including formal and social definitions. Formal definitions are provided by legislation, government guidelines, or codes of conduct. Social definitions are what a community or a workplace view as corruption, which might be more focal in governing behaviour than formal definitions. These two definitions do not always correspond.

Although corruption itself is prominent, the types and ways of it change, making it more complex (Hough, 2022, p. 1). Adding to the complexity is the multi-jurisdictional nature of corruption (Hough, 2022, p. 23). The complexity of corruption prevention is also increasing. Pope and Vogl (2000) say that bribery, among other forms of corruption, is a big problem in many countries, especially in developing and transition countries with low public sector salaries, senior public officials, and politicians.

### **2.1.1 Different forms of corruption**

In this thesis, a succinct overview of some different forms of corruption is offered. Given the complexity and abundance of corruption manifestations, a comprehensive examination of each type is beyond the scope of this study. Instead, the focus will be on providing an understanding of the diverse forms of corruption, so the reader has a better understanding of what ACAs face.

According to Barrington (2022, p. 25), corruption happens on a wide scale from small bribery to grand corruption on the highest levels of power. Hough (2022, p. 22) categorizes corruption into four broad categories: bribery, political corruption, kleptocracy and state capture, and corrupt capital. Bribery can be seen as the simplest form of corruption that happens on all levels. It comprises offering money, gifts, or favours to persuade someone in a position of power to misuse their position. Bribing is illegal and it causes harm, even though some do not see the issue with “small bribes” since they can make processes faster. The extent of bribery has made it the prime focus of anti-corruption activity (Hough, 2022, p. 25-31). According to Barrington (2022, p. 162), Transparency International defines grand corruption as the abuse of high-level power. This type of corruption causes great harm to many whilst benefitting few. It often goes unpunished because it is not brought to justice.

According to Power (2022, p. 65-67), classic forms of political corruption are cronyism, patronage, and nepotism. Cronyism involves granting economic favours based on favouritism, friendship, or being a privileged associate. Some of the most notorious corruption scandals represent favouritism resulting in cronyism. Patronage refers to giving politicians personal rewards and gifts, using public funds for service projects and special interest legislation, although some people prefer to specifically emphasize political appointments. Patronage can be viewed as the subset of cronyism. Nepotism revolves around family ties that result in conflicts of interest. At its simplest, it can be offering jobs, positions, or contracts to relatives.

Because political corruption occurs on every level, the damage it causes also varies. The most obvious being its effects on the economy, Power (2022, p. 70) says. According to Benjamin and Jamil (2018, p. 384-385), political corruption occurs at the highest levels of power, involving politicians, ministers, or senior civil servants. They too explain that political corruption includes law modification and bribery, granting public contracts to certain companies, or embezzling funds.

According to David-Barrett (2022, p. 111-112), kleptocracy and state capture characterize the systematic abuse of entrusted power by elites. Kleptocracy focuses on an individual leader gaining power and resources through theft. Globalization has made it easier to hide the proceeds of corruption via transnational and secret financial structures. State capture happens when the power to form laws and policies falls into the hands of a small group, allowing them to distort the formation of laws based on their interests. This group is able to influence law- and policymaking through the people willing to abuse their power. State capture changes the rules repetitively and might result in violence to silence opposing voices. Administrative corruption resembles state capture, wherein the implementation of laws is improperly influenced by a group or an individual.

Barrington (2022, p. 160-162) says that corrupt capital refers to funds and assets acquired through corruption or owned by corrupted individuals. One common form of corrupt capital is money laundering. Corrupt capital figures are immense. One estimation of annual illicit financial flow is \$1.26 trillion. Individuals in positions of power involved in corrupt capital have many ways to conceal it. For example, through kleptocracy laws can be altered to benefit those involved in corrupt capital, which makes these cases very difficult. Trying to eradicate money laundering is a difficult, ongoing process. It involves many laws and international systems that identify corrupt capital and try to return the assets to the country they were stolen from (Barrington, 2022, p. 165).

### **2.1.2 Fighting corruption: Problems and options**

Corruption can cause serious issues, yet it has been very difficult to eliminate. Corruption can harm efficiency and take a toll on public services and private sector activity (Olken, 2009, p. 950). The literature recognizes wide-ranging harms that corruption can cause. Corruption negatively affects public trust and confidence, Benjamin and Jamil (2018, p. 385) state. This is affected by both corruption experienced by an individual or their perceptions of corruption that might come from the experiences of others. Bajpai and Myers (2020, p. 292) found that corruption threatens democratization, economic

development, human rights, and the rule of law. Hough (2022, p. 22) states that corruption usually harms the public interest and breaches laws, regulations and integrity standards.

Hindess (2013, p. 1-3) recalls that in the past corruption was understood more generally, but nowadays it is often understood through economic terms. Hindess states that corruption negatively affects countries economy. For example, countries with vast natural resources, that could benefit from them, might do poorly because of corruption. It is important to keep the context of corruption in mind. Sometimes it is about capital or other assets, but that is not always the case and the motives behind corruption vary greatly.

Although, corruption is seen to have several negative effects to individuals and societies, some disagree with this. They support corruption because they consider it to be necessary for development and speeding up processes (Simelane, 2012, p. 423; Billger & Goel, 2009, p. 300). Aidt (2009, p. 271-272) says the evidence of corruption's benefits is weak and it is generally seen as a considerable obstacle, with both micro and macro evidence supporting this. David-Barrett and Hough (2022, p. 211-212) also say that corruption is always harmful and has victims. The harm it causes varies from hospitals not being built to schools being underfunded. People suffer from these kinds of problems in their societies.

There is no "one-size-fits-all" solution to corruption since it comes in a variety of forms in various settings. Thus, the same solution might not work in another case, or it could potentially worsen the situation (Hough, 2022, p. 3). Also, there are no instructions for creating strategies against corruption, and this is why it can be very challenging to create them. Strategies do offer benchmarks and performance indicators, but sometimes they can also waste resources being unsuitable or ineffective (Passas, 2010, p. 2-3).

Usually, corruption is motivated by private gain but, as said, there are various motivations behind it, such as attracting funds for a political party or ideological agenda (David-Barrett & Hough, 2022, p. 210). David-Barrett et al. (2020, p. 75-76) say individuals engage in corrupted activities because they think the benefits exceed the risk or because they are following what others in the same position are doing. The solution to the former, in its simplest, is to make corruption not worthwhile: making the risk bigger than the reward by increasing the chances of getting caught or increasing penalties. Solution to the latter requires changing the norms related to certain groups or positions, or by persuading people of more important norms associated with their roles. These models do not exclude one another and are more beneficial when used simultaneously. Sometimes corruption leads to more corruption since corrupt individuals might get greedy or they might try to cover up past corrupted acts with more corruption (David-Barrett & Hough, 2022, p. 212).

### **2.1.3 The hidden nature of corruption**

Gorta (2013, p. 11-17) says that corruption has a “hidden” nature, making much of it elusive to detection. Consequently, intervention is needed before a corrupted act is reported, or ideally, even before it is committed. Corruption often lacks witnesses and is done in secret – sometimes even the victims fail to recognize it. Because corruption is hidden, exposing it might not prevent it in the future, Gorta says. Olken (2009, p. 950) explains that the hidden nature of corruption is related to it often being illegal. As it is kept hidden, citizens might not observe it leading to a lack of societal pressure to deter corrupt activities.

Knowledge is a key element in monitoring corruption and encouraging anti-corruption. Despite the secretive essence of corruption, investigative journalism, cooperative reporting, and the freedom to investigate and publish about corruption contribute to revealing information about corruption cases. Additionally, individuals known as

whistleblowers play a crucial role in exposing corruption, often at a great personal cost (David-Barrett & Hough, 2022, pp. 211-212).

According to Schütte et al. (2023, p. 3), corruption can be measured in multiple ways. They say that new corruption measures need understanding of indicators, such as their purposes and usefulness, for the measures to be useful and relevant. Olken (2009, p. 951) points out that measuring corruption can be hard, so perceptions of it might be measured instead, however with perceptions lies the risk of bias.

## **2.2 Anti-corruption agencies**

### **2.2.1 Establishing ACAs**

The history of ACAs dates back over 50 years. Democratization of Eastern Europe and the success of Corrupt Practice Investigation Bureau of Singapore and ICAC of Hong Kong inspired other countries to establish their own ACAs, particularly in the 1990s and 2000s (UNDP, 2011, p. 10). According to Schütte (2023), the number of anti-corruption institutions has increased in the last three decades. Another big factor behind this is the United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC) that was established in 2003. The convention mandates that each state establish at least one body responsible for managing the implementation of corruption prevention policies and combating corruption.

According to UNDP (2011, p. 8), articles 5, 6 and 36 recognize the need for states parties to ensure the existence of ACAs that have the mandate, independence, quality staff, and resources to discharge their mandates effectively. Besides these articles, there are no international norms for ACAs. UNDP says that ACAs come with a wide range of structures, institutional positioning, and levels of independence. The one thing they all have in common is they come with prevention functions. Further discussion on this will be provided later in the text.

Schütte (2023) says that having a specialised anti-corruption entity has many objectives, such as the need to focus resources and expertise and the unwillingness of existing law enforcement to handle corruption-related issues. Schütte notes that the inability of existing law enforcement bodies to investigate corruption cases has led to the significant growth of standalone agencies. Other reasons for establishing ACAs include the centralization of anti-corruption activities, which can enhance effectiveness (Choi, 2011, p. 47), pressure from donors and international organizations, but also existing organizations having high levels of corruption (Schütte, 2012, p. 1).

Since there are no universally standardized rules for ACAs, they are not identical. These agencies often differ in their focus areas and use diverse strategies to combat corruption. While some countries boast multiple agencies dedicated to this cause, others may have a single agency or none at all, as the establishment of anti-corruption agencies is not obligatory. The single-agency approach is viewed as the most effective since it eliminates distractions, allowing the ACA to devote all its energy and resources to curbing corruption (Benjamin & Jamil, 2018, p. 382). In countries where multiple bodies fight corruption, the roles and responsibilities can sometimes be unclear (Bajpai & Myers, 2020, p. 293).

Some ACAs have the power to fight corruption through law enforcement, while others solely use preventative functions, and some use both. ACAs that fight corruption through law enforcement may have prosecutorial authority in corruption cases and might also have investigative structures. Although typically prosecution stays as a separate function from an ACA. ACAs investigative and prosecutorial activities can include detection based on reports, investigations, prosecutions, and convictions (Choi, 2011, p. 51). ACAs with dual functions may also develop policies, analyse, and offer technical assistance in prevention, public outreach and information dissemination and investigation (UNDP, 2011, p. 12-13) or detection based on reports, investigations, prosecutions, and convictions (Choi, 2011, p. 51).



OECD also complies with this differentiation between different types of ACAs. According to their report, agencies that have multiple competences do policy analysis, counselling, information dissemination and ethics monitoring on top of preventive and enforcement activities. Institutions that only have preventive competences do research, develop, and give advice on corruption control, among other things (Johnsøn et al., 2011, p. 19-20).

According to Choi (2011, p. 47-48), ACAs main functions are “policy analysis and technical assistance in prevention, public outreach and information, monitoring, investigation, and prosecution”. The prevention of corruption is vital in the long run. Prevention includes increasing awareness, education, conducting campaigns, and changing corruption-prone systems and structures. These things aim to change people’s perspective on corruption. Prevention takes time and can be less noticeable than straightforward action, such as prosecution. Repressive activities draw the attention of the public. Both kinds of activities should be considered when assessing ACAs effectiveness.

### **2.2.2 Assessing anti-corruption agency performance**

While establishing ACAs to address corruption has been somewhat of a trend in the recent years, there is a limited amount of information on their effectiveness. According to the Resolution 8/7 of the UNCAC Conference of States Parties (CoSP), signatories should explore means of improving the effectiveness of anti-corruption measures (Schütte et al., 2023, p. 3-4). Improving the performance of ACAs could be one way of doing this. This calls for the establishment of reliable techniques for measuring their effectiveness.

Existing literature identifies different factors that contribute to the performance of ACAs. Well-functioning agencies have good resources, strong leadership, and work together with other bodies. In contrast, weaker ACAs suffer from lower resources and staff capacity, as well as weak political will (UNDP, 2011, p. 3). To operate effectively, ACAs need autonomy and technical capacity. Without autonomy, they may become inactive, limited in their abilities to detect and target corrupted individuals, or their activities may

become selective. Technical capacity is also important for ACAs effectiveness as they require specialized workers, skills, and knowledge (Benjamin & Jamil, 2018, p. 386).

The success of ACAs requires not only political will but political independence. They need political support but should be free of outside influences. Politicians should not manage ACAs because there is a risk of them using the agencies for their own aspirations. Research by Transparency International also found that an ACA needs political support, political and operational independence, access to documentation, power to question witnesses, and leadership with integrity to succeed. The actions of the agency itself also affect their effectiveness and credibility: they need to act in line with international human rights, operate within the law, and be accountable to the courts. Accountability can be seen as especially important for ACA's success (Pope & Vogl, 2000).

Research has found that ACA's success is affected by the extent of their mandate, degree of independence, resources available, staff's professionalism and skills, and rule of law (David-Barrett et al., 2020, p. 78). ACAs can affect some of these things, while others are beyond their reach. This is one reason why context is so important when evaluating the performance of an ACA. Based on all of this independence, proper resources, political support, and accountability are especially important for performance of ACAs.

According to UNDP (2011, p. 3), the effectiveness of ACAs varies. In addition to Hong Kong, successful ACAs were observed in Australia, Botswana, Malawi, Singapore, and South Africa (Pope & Vogl, 2000). According to Bolongaita (2010, p. 15), the KPK, which is another successful ACA, has performed well due to having enough power and resources. Often functional ACAs are copied without considering the specific contexts they operate in (de Sousa, 2010, p. 7). This rarely leads to the desired results.

### 2.2.3 Difficulties of anti-corruption agencies

Despite their popularity in the recent decades, ACAs have faced criticism for their limited impact, leaving some to doubt them. The UNDP recognizes the work that needs to be done but still emphasizes the importance of ACAs in a country's national accountability framework (UNDP, 2011, p. 8)

Schütte (2023) says that ACAs can face judgement based on input and output reporting. Sometimes ACAs can be declared as “failures” solely based on this reporting, without taking into consideration the specific contexts, different functions, or ever-changing nature of performance. Other efforts by ACAs, such as the country's Corruption Perceptions Index ranking, might go unnoticed when the focus is on input and output reporting.

According to Pope and Vogl (2000), ACAs face challenges with being difficult to setup, not meeting their goals, being bound to not investigate all cases, not having enough prosecutorial power, and being understaffed. They also mention politicization as one element behind the ineffectiveness of ACAs. Schöberlein (2020, p. 4) says that politicization of ACAs might make their effects adverse. De Sousa (2010, p. 6) says that ACAs often face systematic corruption and suffer from poor institutional design, planning, or management. Some might also struggle with the environment in which they function.

Despite these challenges, ACAs are expected to perform perfectly from the beginning, Doig et al. (2007) say. Governments often seek easy solutions for corruption but fail to recognize that ACAs face the same challenges as any other public organization. If an ACA experiences the same issues as the organization it is investigating, credibility problems may arise (Doig et al., 2007).

When ACAs begin their work by investigating, educating, and even prosecuting, people become more aware of corruption. This increased awareness might lead to a rise in perceptions of corruption in surveys. In other words, anti-corruption activities are taking place, but people may think corruption is only increasing. This conflict might influence

how successful ACAs are perceived. This is one reason why evaluating ACAs must consider the context and what is achievable within that context as well as the effect of the ACA on attitudes and behaviour. Additionally, the social environments where policies and programmes are implemented are complex, which can make evaluating the impact of anti-corruption efforts challenging. The complexity makes it difficult to assess their impact on the levels of corruption (David-Barrett et al., 2020, p. 77).

Johnsøn et al. (2011, p. 2) say that the responsibilities of ACAs are not easy or well-defined and ACAs must balance between different demands with specialized skills, prevention, and education. De Sousa (2010, p. 11) also says that ACAs have been showered with different kinds of expectations. They are, for example, expected to combat corruption independently by knowledge-based approaches, implement national anti-corruption strategies, do research, and educate. All while reassuring the public of governments commitment to corruption control.

In addition, due to the complex nature of corruption, fighting it demands more than technical and legal approaches. Instead, it calls for more grounded, contextual ways of performing, that consider the connections between corruption and the prevailing political, social, and systemic issues within a given country. Consequently, it is imperative for society to actively engage as a proactive participant in the prevention and combatting of corruption (UNDP, 2011, p. 14).

## **2.3 Performance measurement**

### **2.3.1 Performance measurement overview**

Performance has different levels, such as dyadic performance, which pertains to the activities of an individual; team performance, which involves activities necessary for a team to achieve its goals; and organizational performance (OP), which refers to activities and behaviour of an organization as a whole, such as adhering to organizational values. All of

these levels require planning (Rao, 2015, p. 3-4). Planning offers many benefits, including better time management and accountability (Rao, 2015, p. 33). Additionally, alongside planning, enhancing performance involves removing obstacles, amplifying facilitators or enhancers, augmenting competences, and intensifying efforts (Rao, 2015, p. 14).

Lusthaus et al. (2002, p. 107), state that “measuring performance is one of the most problematic issues in the field of organizational theory”. In order to know how well an individual or an organisation is doing, performance should be monitored and reviewed, Rao (2015, p. 9) says. It is important to distinguish between performance management and measurement, as they are not synonyms. While measuring performance aids in its management by providing insights into an individual's or organization's performance, they serve different purposes (Pidd, 2012, p. 81). Furthermore, management affects what kind of performance is prioritised, as noted by Richard et al. (2009, p. 724). This, in turn, can affect what is measured. Jarrar and Schiuma (2007, p. 5-6) observe a change in the values of public sector management. Its values have shifted from equity and security oriented towards efficiency and individualism oriented style which focuses on immediate results. From the perspective of ACAs, this might be beneficial since efficient management of resources is one element in fighting corruption.

Performance measurement helps to decide which actions to take based on an organization's overall performance. Although performance measurement is unique for each organization, Pidd (2012, p. 24) says there are some generalisable measures for it. The commonly identified dimensions, as found in literature, include economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. Economy is relatively straightforward to measure since it focuses on costs. Efficiency is based on output per input numbers, at its simplest. Effectiveness, however, can be difficult to define because it describes how well a programme is meeting its goals which can sometimes be very subjective. “Effectiveness is a statement about the degree to which the outcomes of an agency or programme achieve what was expected or hoped for”, Pidd says. On top of the three general measurements, Pidd (2012, p. 24-25) adds

equity, efficacy, ethicality, productivity, process measures and service quality measures as measures relevant to most public programmes.

According to Lusthaus et al. (2002, p. 9-10), many non-profit organizations focus on meeting the mandates of their purpose or goals when assessing their performance. They also note that in the past efficiency has been a key indicator of performance for non-profit organizations. Although it still describes performance at least partly, performance measurement has gained more variables, including morale, innovation, and turnover. Setting goals and targets can help to identify what an organization is aiming to do. Targets should help individuals to achieve the organization's goals; otherwise, they may have adverse effects. It is important to remember that targets and goals are not predictions of future; rather, they are visions of what is desirable in the future (Pidd, 2012, p. 101-105).

Development and continuous growth are essential for organizations. The ability to adapt and change gives an organization resilience in difficult times, Lusthaus et al. (2002, p. 119-120) state. They also say that "in today's context, organizational performance relates to the ability of the organization to keep its mission, goals, programs and activities aligned with the evolving needs of its key stakeholders and constituents". The ability to evolve leads to relevance which can be indicated, for example, by number of new programs or services.

According to Lusthaus et al. (2002, p. 38), outside factors affect organizations performance. These outside factors create the environment where organizations need to achieve their goals as efficiently as possible. Public agencies work in ever changing environments where demands and conditions they work with shift. Therefore, it is crucial to investigate changes in performance, and one should refrain from making assumptions about their underlying reasons. (Pidd, 2012, p. 192).

Multiple dimensions of performance can be distinguished in the literature. Most often discussed are inputs, outputs, and outcomes. This part will introduce some of these dimensions briefly.

As performance is multidimensional, its measurement requires a comprehensive approach; stakeholders (anyone who can affect or is themselves affected by organizations success), landscape and timeframe need to be considered. Stakeholders may have different motivations that call for varied measurements. Meeting the interests of the stakeholders closest to the organization can result in higher performance measured by return to assets and earning per share (Richard et al., 2009, p. 723-724). The stakeholder's expectations of organizations responsibilities can shift over time which adds to the multidimensionality (Hubbard, 2009, p. 178). Currently, environmental responsibilities have emerged as an aspect of stakeholder expectations. "Performance in public sector is always multidimensional", Pidd (2012, p. 195) says. Each dimension cannot be numerically scored, because each element might not be equally important or be measured on the same basis. Pidd suggests addressing this multidimensionality with balanced scorecards and composite indicators, which are tools to measure performance.

Short and Palmer (2003, p. 209-210) reference Venkatraman and Ramanujam's delineation of performance dimensions, which includes financial performance, operational performance, and organizational effectiveness. Financial performance, easily apprehended through assets, such as sales and profitability. In contrast, operational performance centres on non-financial indicators, like quality. Organizational performance refers to more general and conceptual indicators. Organizational performance is seen as especially important issue. Richard et al. (2009, p. 719) agree with this, stating that "organizational performance is the ultimate dependent variable of interest for researchers concerned with just about any area of management".

Rao (2015, p. 19-23) also finds performance multidimensional, mentioning output or result, input, time, focus, quality, and cost as dimensions of it. Rao describes outputs as

the easiest dimension to comprehend. They are the results of inputs, such as customer numbers. Inputs are activities that an individual needs to carry out. Time refers to the period that is set for performance or target for task or project. The goal is to get maximum output under given circumstances. Focuses are set by organizations themselves. Their focus can be, for instance, on quality or cost. Johnsrøn et al. (2011, p. 9) view inputs as the resources that are available for an organization, such as funding or facilities. Activities, such as holding seminars, are what is done with those inputs. Outputs are produced by these activities. Implementing a code of conduct is one example of an output. Jenkins (2012, p. 52) says that processes begin with inputs and end with outputs. Output measures alone are not useful in determining whether an organization is reaching its mission Pidd (2012, p. 62) says.

Beyond outputs, there are outcomes. Pidd (2012, p. 17) says outcomes are more general reflections of what the agency aims to achieve. For an ACA a desired outcome could be a better understanding of corruption. Outcomes may manifest in sequences, with some becoming apparent over time. Johnsrøn et al. (2011, p. 9) describe outcomes as the effects or results of the activities, such as higher level of public trust. Impacts are the long-term effects of a project, like reducing the crime statistics relating to corruption.

Although outputs can represent products, services, or amount of work performed, they do not equal success or achieving desired outcomes. For instance, poor output quality can negatively affect outcomes Poister et al. (2014, p. 57-58) note. Outputs can be measured at different stages, Poister et al. (2014, p. 68) say. For example, prosecuting a corruption case has multiple stages for outputs from crimes reported to investigations and prosecution numbers. In the public sector, the focus on outputs and results is defective Jarrar and Schiuma (2007, p. 5) argue.



### 2.3.2 Indicators, measures, and data

Indicators are essential for measuring success, Johnsen et al. (2011, p. 47) state. They say indicators are meant to give an indication of a construct. When indicators are chosen, they can be used to track organizations success systematically. Using multiple indicators is essential to comprehensively assess an organization's progress towards its goals. Singh et al. (2016, p. 214) describe organizational performance as indicators that assess if an organization is meeting its goals. These indicators can be both financial and non-financial.

Given the multidimensional nature of public agency performance, composite indicators are often used (Pidd, 2012, p. 37). Composite indicators are “scores produced by adding together different performance measures but weighting each measure to reflect its importance”, Pidd (2012, p. 196) says. Some indicators, that are seen as more important than others, get more weight in the composite indicator. Some issues with composite indicators relate to the relative weight of each indicator and if success in one area makes up for failure in another. Operational indicators, also referred to as metrics, can be used to represent performance measures and define the specifications of a measure (Poister et al., 2014, p. 112-113).

It is crucial to acknowledge that performance indicators evolve over time. In general, change and variation are natural parts of performance and therefore some changes in performance are only natural variation over time. Recognizing these natural variations is essential to avoid misinterpreting performance data. Variation includes common cause variation, such as errors or poor operating procedures, which can and should be minimized. Additionally, there is special cause variation caused by a change in the system, indicating a genuine change in performance. Recognizing this type of variation is important for selecting appropriate indicators (Pidd, 2012, p. 167-168).

There are both objective and subjective performance measures. Objective measures can include accounting measures, which are the most common and available way to measure OP or financial market measures. Objective measures can be combined in multiple ways.

Subjective measures inquire key informants about organizational performance, providing them with flexibility to be modified to the context of interest. Subjective measures can be entirely subjective or replicate objective measures. Subjective measures have been critiqued for the possibility of bias and errors, Richard et al. (2009, p. 727-735) state. Singh et al. (2016, p. 214-215) also suggest that OP can be measured by both subjective and objective measures. They draw attention to managers' reluctance to highlight weaknesses, and for reasons like this, objective measures can be seen as more prosperous. Despite their potential for reducing misleading information and lower probability of bias, objective measures also have their challenges as the data can be hard to acquire and there is no consistency in objective performance measures. While using both measures simultaneously is rare, Singh et al. (2016, p. 216-217) emphasize that both measures can be valid and reliable when used correctly. They also point out that subjective and objective measures can be somewhat comparable, there may even be strong correlation between them, and studies have shown that managers perhaps are less biased in their evaluations than thought.

Performance measures can be refined along the way, evolving from initial measures to systematic assessment of these measures based on their strengths and weaknesses (Poister et al., 2014, p. 151). Performance measures require clear definitions and rules for standardization, comparability, and precision, among other factors (Poister et al., 2014, p. 113). Performance measures should always be read with their context in mind or they become meaningless. Questions like "Are we achieving our goals?" or "How have we performed compared to similar agencies?" should be asked (Poister et al. 2014, p. 193). As ACAs often are the only corruption-oriented organization in a country, they might be compared to the idea of not having an ACA (de Sousa, 2009, p. 10).

All performance measures come with some limitations (Richard et al., 2009, p. 738). Short- or medium-term measures are not ideal since performance has temporal nature. Random fluctuations need to be considered, as they might be the reason behind performance differences. Time is an important factor in performance measurement; historical

performance may influence future performance, and managers need to consider these temporal dynamics (Richard et al., 2009, p. 726). Non-financial measurements of performance, such as ethicality or innovation, can be difficult to introduce, but the demand for them is growing (Hubbard, 2009, p. 178).

Performance measurement and a focus on efficiency are generally seen as beneficial. Implementing different measurement systems and procedures has improved the decision-making in the public sector, since productivity and performance can be assessed through them (Jarrar & Schiuma, 2007, p. 5). Bereft of measures might lead to overlooking some issues an organisation might have (Jenkins, 2012, p. 53). Measures of performance should be based on the intended use since different purposes require different measures. It is also important to be clear on why something is measured and how the results are being used.

Data is essential for performance measurement. Sometimes data is already available but usually it needs to be collected. It can be obtained in various places with different tools. The quality and suitability of data for the measurements specific context is crucial. This section will provide an overview of data and its collection.

According to Poister et al. (2014, p. 122) different data can be obtained from existing data compilations, clinical examinations, agency records, tests, administrative records, surveys, follow-up contacts, customer response cards, direct observation, and/or specially designed instruments. Thus, there is a multitude of sources to collect data from. It is important to keep in mind that although already available data makes data collection simpler, it might not always be high quality or suitable data. High validity and reliability are signs of good data. Data needs to be an unbiased indicator with precision, consistency, and statistical reliability, Poister et al. (2014, p. 126-127) say. Other signs of high-quality data are that it is meaningful, understandable, balanced, comprehensive, and cost effective (Poister et al. 2014, p. 144).

Data should always be looked at in its context and collected data should be presented as a time series. Presenting only one or two single values or hiding time variation leads to issues like dysfunction. Tracking performance through time is useful and can explain variation. It can be done using suitable indicators and reliable data, collecting data in intervals of time (Pidd, 2012, p. 168-170). Poister et al. (2014) state:

Common problems that can jeopardize reliability or validity, or both, include noncomparable data, tenuously related proximate measures, tendencies to under or overreport data, poor instrument design, observer bias, instrument decay, reactive measurement, nonresponse bias, and cheating. (p. 135)

According to Poister et al. (2014, p. 193), external influences have impact on performance measurement. These influences need to be considered when examining the data.

Required data is not always available and the need to specify how the data and measures relate to other constructs in a model and to one another makes performance measurement complicated. The measurements chosen will affect findings and choosing more and varied measures makes performance clearer since they also need to be modelled correctly (Richard et al., 2009, p. 737-738). Some obstacles in collecting data include cost, accuracy, decentralization, alternative measurement approaches, and survey biases, Pidd (2012, p. 34-35) says. Data collection needs to be done with precision to avoid issues later on.

### **2.3.3 How and why to measure?**

Measures of performance should align with their intended use, as different purposes require different measures. That is why clarity of the measurements purpose and intended use are crucial considerations. There are numerous views on why public services performance should be measured, Pidd (2012, p. 30-31) says. Additionally, priorities affect performance measurement since it is important to know if a public service offers value, Pidd (2012, p. 15) says.

According to Jarrar and Schiuma (2007), different performance measurement systems can:

Provide public sector organizations with means for planning and implementing strategies; for influencing organizational behaviour and to focus, compel, monitor and reward people; for communicating with stakeholders both internally and externally; and for adopting and developing the principles of a learning organization. (p. 5)

Useful measuring system that centres on result rather than data needs to focus on the right parts of performance as well as have a clear framework, Poister et al. (2014, p. 53) point out.

It is important to consider what customers or users consider important when measuring performance, Pidd (2012, p. 6) says. For example, the public might think it is important for ACAs to fight corruption efficiently and have integrity and this should be considered when measuring their performance. Since public services are publicly funded, it is highly important to show citizens how these services are performing. Therefore, performance should be measured for accountability also. Citizens might be interested in both cost efficiency as well as quality depending on their relationship with the organization (i.e. are they customers) (Pidd, 2012, p. 137). De Sousa (2009, p. 1) says that ACAs also have public authority which is another reason to measure performance.

Usually, performance is measured in specific time periods with chosen measures and indicators. The measures and timeframe are chosen based on what is the goal of the measurement. Commonly, the goals relate to costs, effectiveness, equity, competitiveness, and quality (Poister et al., 2014, p. 9-10). Choosing measures for an organization can be done by reflecting its mission and goals, because they represent what the organization hopes for (Poister et al., 2014, p. 88). Organization's goals are often multilayered, having higher level goals that are supported by lower-level goals (Poister et al. 2014, p. 108).

Operating efficiency of an organization can be measured with different efficiency measures while quality of service can be measured by service quality measures. Efficiency measures are about numbers or volumes, for example the cost per crime investigated. Quality measures on the public organization level can be turnover time, accuracy, and courtesy (Poister et al. 2014, p. 68-70). Outcome measures are important, because they represent the organization's goals and relate directly to the organizations purpose. Cost effectiveness measures measure the cost of the organization's actions, and they relate to outcome measures. System productivity measures involve evaluating the efficiency of an organization or a program in achieving its goals, for example, assessing the conversion of arrests or cases solved into actual convictions as a measure of their effectiveness (Poister et al., 2014, p. 71-73). Systematic analysis of performance data provides deeper understanding of the agency's performance as well as sheds light on things that could improve or hinder performance improvement (Poister et al., 2014, p. 175).

The reasons behind performance measurement in the public sector and its growing popularity can be attributed to various factors, Fritzen (2007, p. 23) says. The demand for transparency, results, and learning has become evident part of all organizations due to shifting environments. The focus of this section is on the reasons behind performance measurement.

Pidd (2012, p. 4-5, 109) identifies multiple reasons for performance measurement in general. According to him, measurement helps to set focus on certain goals or objectives, and it helps to identify if progress is being made or an intervention is required. Pidd also references Osborne and Gaebler (1992) who highlight the importance of measurement for distinguishing between success and failure. This distinction makes it possible to reward success and learn from it, and conversely, to correct failure. Pidd also adds that measurement serves as a tool for comparison, allowing organizations to be compared to one another or to compare different time periods within the same organization. This improves organizational learning.

Poister et al. (2014, p. 1-13) say that one purpose of performance measurement systems is to support other processes, such as decision making or budgeting. They also refer to Behn (2003) for additional managerial purposes of performance measurement. Improvement is the most important objective, followed by purpose, evaluation, control, budgeting, motivating, promoting, celebrating, and learning. Poister et al. say that Hatry (1999) on the other hand focuses on managerial functions that performance measurement can assist with, such as public's demand for accountability, budgeting, and supporting strategic planning. De Sousa (2009, p. 1) says ACAs might be politically attacked due to fear or incapacity of control. Performance measurement is one way to avoid these attacks.

Performance measurement does not go without criticism. Poister et al. (2014, p. 25-26) say it has faced critique for the things that are unmeasured, such as transparency or fairness, and for the focus on efficiency at the cost of other values. Also, the indicators may be chosen on wrong grounds, to better fit the organizations situation but not what is being measured. If done incorrectly, performance measurement can be costly and dysfunctional when it should add value. Performance measurement of public organizations is not an unambiguous matter, and it may be contested. Public organizations have a political dimension with different ideologies and viewpoints which demands more than focusing on inputs and outputs. Although contested, performance measurement is not a new or passing concept, Pidd (2012, 26-27) argues.

Performance measurement's results may have distorting impacts and the measures used for different purposes, like learning and accountability, might not always work effortlessly Fritzen (2007, p. 24) says. When the results of performance measurement are not what was desired, it can create more bureaucracy or innovation blocks. These perverse effects of measurement should be taken into consideration in the planning stages to avoid them Pidd (2012, p. 49-50) states. One important thing to note, is that the process of performance measurement should not end when the measurements are completed, and the results known – this should lead to action. Performance measurement is

pointless if it leads to nothing. Its goal is to improve an agency or a programme (Pidd, 2012, p. 38).

## **2.4 Performance measurement of anti-corruption agencies**

### **2.4.1 Measuring anti-corruption agency performance**

Measuring corruption is challenging, which makes measuring the success of ACAs challenging too since their effect on corruption is difficult to observe. The performance measurement of ACAs also needs to consider the diverse responsibilities agencies have. This is why measures are not universal between different agencies. Despite these challenges, it is possible to establish standards for ACAs – similar to standards other organizations have set up for themselves, Schütte et al. (2023, p. 4) say. Schütte (2023) notes that ACAs undergo organizational lifecycles, which affect their performance as much as any other organization. Changing political contexts, individual personalities, and changes in personnel all impact an agency's performance.

The performance measurement of ACAs needs to consider governance structures and the ACA's responsibilities. Johnsrøn et al. (2011, p. 2) explain that in order to have a properly functioning ACA, governance structures must be working correctly. This is why measuring the performance of ACAs requires consideration of what can be expected of them and which outcomes are realistic. Johnsrøn et al. (2011, p. 20-21) also say that the expectations placed on an ACA should match the power and resources it has available. For instance, an ACA focused purely on preventive work should not be measured based on law enforcement indicators. These institutional characteristics nor external factors should not be dismissed. Cabellos et al. (2023, p. 12) state that the effectiveness of different functions of ACAs should be measured with different indicators. Achieving goals, numerical indicators, or growth indicators, among other things, can display effectiveness. An example of these could be how many cases were resolved in a set time. Although citizens trust is essential to ACAs, it might be hard to use it as a performance indicator.



Some ACAs are seen more trustworthy than others even if they have not produced better results. This can happen due to the nature of ACAs interventions (e.g. attracting more attention to them) (Benjamin & Jamil, 2018, p. 382).

David-Barrett et al. (2020, p. 74) also say that corruption is a complex social phenomenon that can be hard to detect or measure. Anti-corruption efforts challenge those in power which makes it politically sensitive and the results of it not immediate. For the circumstance of ACAs, David-Barrett et al. argue that theory-based evaluations might work best for assessing the performance of ACAs. The evaluation uses academic research to identify intermediate outcomes, making judgements on performance while emphasizing evaluation of the capacity of ACAs by organizational capacity assessment, network analysis, and policy tracking.

Number of...	Amount of...	Other
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•staff</li> <li>•active cases</li> <li>•trials</li> <li>•convictions</li> <li>•new legislative proposals</li> <li>•asset declarations analysed</li> <li>•hosted delegations from ACAs abroad</li> <li>•initiated investigations</li> <li>•visitors on Open Day</li> <li>•pursuable reports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•budgetary allocation</li> <li>•money paid back to victims</li> <li>•money recovered in fines</li> <li>•money spent illegally on political party financing discovered</li> <li>•money recovered by the ACA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Respond to a report of corruption within 48 hours</li> <li>•respond to a report which does not involve corruption within two working days</li> <li>•Respond to a request for corruption prevention advice within two working days</li> <li>•Percent of population having confidence in the particular ACA</li> </ul>

**Figure 1.** Examples of Indicators for measurement (Johnsøn et al., 2011, p. 49-50).

The figure above shows examples of the indicators ACAs could use to measure their performance. This is not a complete list, and indicators should be chosen tailored to fit the ACA because the indicators need to be relevant to it (Johnsøn et al., 2011, p. 49-50). The *number of-* and *amount of-* boxes present different volumes which are quantitative data. The *other-* box presents more qualitative data, describing the quality of the agencies.

Each organization has a certain amount of resources they must operate with. Measuring results in relation to resources reveals information about efficiency, which is often measured as the ratio of outputs to inputs (Lusthaus et al., 2002, p. 114-116). One potential indicator of effectiveness could be the success of ACAs in achieving their goals. The duties of ACAs can include preventing corruption, raising awareness, educating people, investigating, and enforcing regulations. Corruption control is an especially important task for ACAs and therefore success in this could indicate effectiveness (Beniamin & Jamil, 2018, p. 384). For public services like ACAs, that do not produce products, resources include time and money. These resources are used for activities to create value. These activities can be measured for reflecting efficiency (Pidd, 2012, p. 16-17).

Investigative performance is discussed in length in the literature, which might be due to the fact that it is relatively easy to measure in numbers. Agency's law enforcement performance can be indicated by investigation, prosecution, and conviction activities. These can quite easily be measured by numbers (e.g. how many convictions were carried out in one year). There is advance in considering indicators related to all dimensions of agency's functions since it offers a more balanced appraisal. However, sometimes leaving dimensions out is inevitable for the lack of data for analysis (Choi, 2011, p. 50).

According to Peerthum et al. (2020, p. 9), one indicator of ACAs performance is conviction rates. The ICAC is an example of an ACA performing well from this point of view. According to Schütte (2023), agencies with law enforcement mandates face especially high expectations to achieve convictions in high-profile cases. The conviction rates can be used as a tool to measure enforcement performance, although it provides little information and cannot be attributed to investigation performance alone. Schütte also points out the importance of knowledge on the type of sentence (length, gravity of offence, were the ones convicted government officials or political opponents etc.). Although it is challenging to measure the different kinds of effects of anti-corruption activities, such as convictions, awareness-raising campaigns, and corruption risk assessments, it is possible.

According to Cabellos et al. (2023, p. 11), measuring investigative performance in tackling corruption by using enforcement data, comes with some limitations. First, high enforcement figures do not equal success, but it could rather stand for manipulation or political reasons. Second, it is not easy to prosecute corruption offenses and many cases fail due to technicalities. Third, collecting enforcement data involves making assumptions about how the data is classified. And lastly, using enforcement data does not give a qualitative assessment of the performance of the agencies; there are other factors such as professional skills and leadership quality, that need to be considered. Despite these challenges, if handled carefully, the data can still be a catalyst for reform, especially if detailed and disaggregated data is considered.

#### **2.4.2 Why measure anti-corruption agency performance?**

Performance is an element that affects ACAs development, delivery, and organisational continuity. Assessing the success of an ACA, is essentially looking at how well it tackles corruption compared to the size and scope of the corruption problem. To gauge its effectiveness, the resources it has, the skills it employs, and the challenges it faces need to be considered, Doig et al. (2007) state.

According to Schütte et al. (2023, p. 12), finding better measures for measuring the effectiveness and performance of ACAs is important. One reason for this is that the public has a right to know how an ACA is performing. Measuring performance can create accountability and manage expectations. According to Schütte (2023), ACAs should be proactive in managing the expectations of the public. They should demonstrate their value by clearly outlining their goals at both the output and outcome levels, as well as by gathering and analysing data from various indicators. Schütte says that managing expectations and building alliances with other institutions can be as important to ACAs success than actual interventions.

According to Ankamah (2019, p. 481-492), ACAs performance benefits from interactions with social accountability actors (such as journalists or whistleblowers), although the reasons behind this are unknown. Social accountability actors support ACAs by activating their investigations, amplifying and guarding their operations and activities, and defending their independence and powers. Although ACAs get a lot of support from social accountability actors, this is not always the case since they can be critical of ACAs, Ankamah says.

Performance measurement can also serve as an important tool for ACAs to show how they are using their funding, especially if more funding is required, Schütte et al. (2023, p. 4) state. Public funding is one of the main reasons for measuring ACA's performance since they need to be accountable of the use of the public resources as much as any other public organization. ACAs have a responsibility to demonstrate their effectiveness Johnsøn et al. (2011, p. 15) say. ACAs need public respect, credibility, transparency, and fearlessness. Since they are accountable to the public, the public can subject them to review (Pope & Vogl, 2000).

Osborne and Gaebler (1992) say that, in general, measuring results is important to distinguishing between success and failure. When they are distinguished, rewarding, learning, correcting failures, and winning public support becomes possible (Johnsøn et al., 2011, p. 15) Measuring effectiveness describes how well an ACA is doing. This can be done by measuring if they meet their goals. As the organization grows, measurement should be improved along with it. It is important to look inside and outside the agency to understand and improve its effectiveness (Doig et al., 2007).

### **2.4.3 Challenges in anti-corruption agency performance measurement**

ACAs performance is frequently critiqued. According to de Sousa (2010, p. 20), ACAs work in challenging environments, and therefore they are taking evaluations more seriously and developing their performance indicators. He also points out that though effectiveness usually affects political decision made on ACAs, performance might not be

noteworthy when evaluating the continuousness of ACAs. De Sousa (2009, p. 1) also says that even if performance indicators are used to decide on the continuity of an agency, they might be vague and do not consider the agency's individuality. Bautista-Beauchesne (2022, p. 1399) aligns with the view of ACAs limited effectiveness, attributing it to insufficient power, resources, and political will. He also points out the negative effects of the difficulties of cooperation with other institutions and the lack of legitimacy and credibility. Fritz (2007, p. 24) says that working together with multiple partner organization might lead to multiple interests and complex conditions.

Johnsøn et al. (2011, p. 1) say that some ACAs are perceived as "failures" due to unmet expectations, lack of credibility, and marginalization. They point out that ACAs do not work like magic and many challenge these critical views on ACA, arguing that these negative perceptions might be the result of measurement or design errors. This is why ACAs performance should be measured credibly and on evidence-based evaluations which often get neglected. Johnsøn et al. also note that performance measurement, and particularly impact measurement, can be difficult, yet not impossible.

Evaluations of ACAs are scarce, and when conducted, the quality thereof may be suboptimal. These evaluations mostly focus on output indicators, which reveal if certain tasks have been performed but reveal little of the results of these tasks. Statements about performance mostly focus on opinions, which can repeat the general negative perceptions of ACAs. Therefore, they might not offer realistic results. Besides, evaluations are meant for improvement and these types of evaluations hardly offer any ideas for it. Another problem is that many times the evaluators come outside of ACAs and only observe them for a short time. These types of evaluations might be too light to reveal how an ACA is actually doing (Johnsøn et al., 2011, p. 2-5). Based on information collected from agencies in Kenya, Indonesia, and South-Africa Cabellos et al. (2023, p. 10) recommend involving agencies from the beginning when external individuals collect and analyse data to ensure relevance and coherence. Schütte (2017) says these outside evaluations can

help to detect some areas that require improvement, nevertheless continuous data collection by the agencies themselves to evaluate ACAs performance is required.

According to de Sousa (2010, p. 20), some things that can negatively affect agencies future performance are choosing format, management, or location carelessly, inadequate attention to financial autonomy, expectations inconsistent with resources or poor recruitment. Not considering the ACA's environment and copying another countries' agency also can negatively impact an agency's performance, Bajpai & Myers (2020, p. 293) say.

### **3 Data and methodology**

In this chapter, the research approach of the thesis is explained. The first section explains the research choices made. The second section introduces the data used in the research, such as how it was collected and how it was analysed. Finally, the third section discusses the research validity and limitations, aiming to explain any shortcomings in the research.

#### **3.1 Research design**

The research followed a qualitative approach as two expert interviews were conducted. Qualitative research aims to gain a deep and comprehensive understanding of the subject at hand (Jyväskylän yliopisto, 2021). It is a type of research, that focuses on a phenomenon through the perspective of individuals, such as interviewees. Qualitative research is usually inductive, meaning that it draws conclusions from collected data with a strong emphasis on the data itself (Puusa & Aaltio, 2020). However, this study does not attempt to do so, despite heavily relying on data derived from conducted interviews.

Due to the focus on individuals, their perceptions, and knowledge, the data gained through qualitative research is often subjective, interviews being the most frequently used method of qualitative research (Puusa & Autio, 2020). For this research, the qualitative approach was selected based on practicality and the nature of the thesis subject. The field of corruption is complex and contextual, making the qualitative approach more fitting. Additionally, gathering a sufficient sample for quantitative research could have posed considerable challenges.

#### **3.2 The interviews**

The chosen method for this research was expert interviews. Interviews offer a great tool for exploring the views, experiences, and perceptions of others. The interviewer has an

active role in creating the data through conversations with the interviewees (Jyväskylän yliopisto, 2021; Qu & Dumay, 2011, p. 239).

Expert interviews are commonly semi-structured focus interviews, where the predetermined theme guides the conversation and keeps the interview focused on a specific issue. Semi-structured interviews often serve as the only source of data. These interviews are arranged in advance and revolve around already thought out set of open-ended questions. The interviews style is quite flexible, and conversations between the interviewer and interviewee can alter the course of the interview. Possible follow up questions should not influence the interviewee since the goal of an interview is to gain authentic knowledge (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 315-316). Expert interviews differ from other forms of qualitative research in a sense that they are more focused on the researcher's interest in a specific social field or aim to explore a specific field (Doeringer, 2021, p. 265-266).

The participants for the interviews were chosen by purposeful sampling, to gain in-depth information on ACAs. Purposeful sampling was chosen as a method to ensure this (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 317). The interviewees were chosen based on their expertise in ACAs, with both of the interviewees having extensive experience and research background with ACAs. The interviewees were contacted via email to confirm their interest to participate in the research and to make sure they understand the purpose and methods of the research. Both interviewees willingly consented to having the interviews audio-recorded for transcription purposes. The interviews took place via Zoom at separate times.

In semi-structured interviews, the questions asked are premeditated. The questions are based on the theme at hand and their purpose is to guide the interview in a direction that produces elaborate answers (Qu & Dumay, 2011, p. 246). A list of interview questions was sent to the interviewees in advance, and the same list of interview questions was used during the actual interviews. The list consisted of eight questions relating to



ACAs and their performance. These questions were discussed between the interviewer and interviewees. It was estimated that the interviews last between 45 minutes to an hour. The first interview lasted approximately 35 minutes and the second one lasted approximately one hour. This variance in duration was due to differences in how each participant chose to express their thoughts and responses. The questions were chosen based on gaps in the existing literature. The purpose of the chosen questions was to explore the strengths and weaknesses of ACAs performance, its measurement, and what the future might bring.

Following the interviews, the recorded material was transcribed without the use of transcription software. APA style was used throughout the transcription process. Intelligent verbatim form was used in the thesis to ensure and clarity of the interviewees' messages to the reader. This means that any unnecessary words, such as filler words or repetition of words, was removed while transcribing. It is important to note that while the language was refined for clarity, the content of the interviews remains unchanged. A thematic analysis was used to analyse the transcribed interviews. It is a method that can be used to identify, analyse, organize, describe, and report themes within qualitative data. The thematic analysis can be theoretically free and flexible which suits this study well (Nowell et al., 2017; Clarke & Braun, 2017, p. 297).

### **3.3 Validity and reliability**

The most evident limitation relates to the number of interviewees, resulting in reduced representativeness, which means conclusions about this topic cannot be drawn from it. As representativeness leads to generalizability, the results of this thesis may be less generalizable (Seale et al., 2004, p. 405). The issue of representativeness is a common challenge in qualitative research. Despite the inability to directly draw conclusions from this thesis, it effectively addresses the research questions and provides opportunities for future research. Practically, finding more genuine experts on ACAs proved to be challenging. Most interview invitations went unresponded, whilst couple of ACAs themselves

declined the invitation based on not being authorized to give interviews. Because the group of interviewees for expert interviews is very limited and cannot be changed easily, this can make them challenging (Alastalo and Åkerman, 2010).

While interviews can serve as a great tool to explore the views and expertise of others, they can be a challenging method due to language barriers, misunderstandings, and nuances. In expert interviews, the expert might be too involved in the subject at hand in a sense that they become biased and do not want to aid the research (Alastalo et al., 2017). Language poses other issues as well, as some issues with thematical analysis include restrictions assessing language use and the flexibility of it can cause problems of its own, such as inconsistency (Nowell et al., 2017).

It is important to note that the objective here is not to establish definitive conclusions or solid evidence but rather to explore ACAs performance and propose ideas for future research. The research was capable to observe effective aspects of ACA performance and identified areas requiring attention. The experts chosen for the research offered detailed and valuable information on ACAs performance, which might have been difficult to obtain in other ways. Taking all of this into account, for the purposes of this research, two interviewees were deemed sufficient.

## **4 Results and discussion**

In the following sections, the findings from the interviews are examined and analysed. First, the methodology of analysis is introduced. Next, the results are presented. The analysis of the results will follow the structure of the interviews, reviewing one interview question at a time. Finally, the section concludes with a summary of the main findings discovered through the interviews.

The goal of the interviews was to gain a deeper understanding of ACAs, their performance, and especially the measurement of their performance. As the aim was not to draw definitive conclusions, this section will observe what was said during the interviews in relation to the measurement of ACAs performance. The research questions guiding this thesis are:

What effects ACA's performance?

How can ACA's performance be measured?

How can the performance measurement of ACAs be improved?

After the interviews were transcribed, the contents were examined to identify similarities and differences between the opinions of the experts. Furthermore, the interview material was also compared to what was discovered in the existing literature.

The experts interviewed in this thesis are referred to as Expert 1 (E1) and Expert 2 (E2) to maintain their anonymity. Their anonymity is preserved since their identities are not essential for the purposes of this study.

### **4.1 Theory-based content analysis**

Qualitative data can be analysed with different content analysis methods which help to examine the meanings, consequences, and connections of the phenomena at hand. Content analysis also helps to identify the similarities and differences within the obtained

data. Theory-based content analysis relies on theories used in the study. This means that already available information guides the analysis of the data (Tampereen yliopisto, n.d.).

The process of theory-based content analysis includes material reduction, clustering, and abstraction (Tampereen yliopisto, n.d.). The goal of this process is to find meanings in the data and compile the data into information. This type of analysis is quite flexible and offers the writer freedom to apply the method to their research (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). Theory-based content analysis is a qualitative method that is based on the researcher making inferences between the data and the theory. This generates new information. The key in theory-based content analysis is shifting the focus between the theory and data. The theory does not dictate the analysis but guides it (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018).

Alastalo and Åkerman (2010) point out that sometimes the analysis of expert interviews does not become a separate work stage; obtaining of the data and analysing it wrap into each other because the interviews are tailored for the interviewee's knowledge. This requires analysing previous studies and theories as well as the people that are interviewed and the work they have done. How the data is analysed depends on what the goal of the research is. When analysing data from expert interviews, it is important to bear in mind that the data is conducted from someone's personal experiences and opinions. Even though they are professional and often well-reasoned opinions, they are still opinions (Alastalo & Åkerman, 2010). Also, interviews last a short time and because of the time constraint, everything necessary might not be said or remembered during the interview. Additionally, these interviews might produce information that is vague or suggestive. This kind of information should not be used, or it needs to be backed up with other information.

The analysis of the data began by reading the transcribed interviews multiple times to gain a comprehensive understanding of them. After that the data was examined in comparison to the interview questions and the existing literature. Points of interest for the

interview question were sought after. The data was reduced to find the most important and relevant parts. The reduction was made by focusing on the interview questions and already available data. Filler words, repetition, and irrelevant information was removed. In the quotes, the non-relevant information is replaced with “- -”.

## 4.2 Key findings

### Thoughts on the performance measurement of ACAs

First, the interviewees were asked about their general thoughts on anti-corruption agencies performance measurement. The goal was to gain an understanding of their overall perception of the performance measurement and their experiences with it.

So, I think, I generally think there's not much performance measurement. (E1)

In the literature, it was noted that there is limited information available on ACAs performance, despite the potential benefits assessing their performance could have. This deficiency of performance measurement could also be seen in the lack of sources on the matter. Additionally, performance measurement itself may be challenging. It requires resources, planning and time. However, without it, it becomes difficult to determine how an organization is doing. The performance measurement of ACAs poses even greater challenges due to the complex conditions created by corruption.

ACAs have been around for over 50 years. Both experts highlighted the proliferation of these agencies over the last two decades, attributed at least in part to the establishment of UNCAC in 2003. Despite this quite recent increase in numbers, many ACAs have encountered criticism.

I think that because of the UNCAC, a lot of countries proceeded with creating anti-corruption agencies and also anti-corruption strategies without really

thinking too much about... How they would measure performance or even sort of monitor what they're doing. I think that in the last five years or so, there's been much more interest in measuring performance. (E1)

Well, these agencies, they've grown in numbers in the last 20 years. Some as a response to the fact that these bodies have been specifically mentioned in the United Nations Convention Against Corruption - - It is something that could bring added value to the fight against corruption, both on the preventive and repressive side. So, the combination of Article 6 and Article 36 of the Convention, they are addressed as specialised bodies, both on prevention and repression. (E2)

The articles referred to by Expert 2 are UNDP articles that acknowledge the state parties mandate to have ACAs with independence and other adequate resources.

An aspect highlighted during the interviews is that ACAs do not “work like magic”. They cannot yield results without considerable effort and allocation of resources. They also require political support and support from other agencies. Sometimes, the reason to initiate their performance measurement comes from the realization that these agencies have not met the anticipated results, either in alignment with initial expectations or when compared to similar agencies.

The key issue is specialisation and specialisation internalised in a body, in a body that somehow is different from existing bodies, but that has to fit the existing institutional framework. - - They have to interact with other bodies that often are evaluated as inefficient or ineffective, or exposed to corruption. And because of that we need to set up a new fresh body dealing with this complex crime. Now, if that's the if the decision is taken this way then it becomes a bit of a puzzle because if you say that this other conventional bodies are exposed to corruption or they're inefficient, ineffective, they don't have specialisation and you set up a new body to overcome this institutional vulnerability or insufficiency the question is where are you going to get the stuff from? It's not coming from Mars, so where are you going to get this competence, this specialisation? - - They set up the agency partly in response to donor pressure, international pressure or because the industry of consultancy is recommending this as a possible... something that could bring added value to your national integrity system. That could bring the so desired specialisation that your conventional bodies are not able to deliver. (E2)

But so, it's sort of, I think you know these things come in waves. First of all, you set up the institutions, then there's a bit of a critique of them saying, oh hang on, they haven't solved the problem. And then you get kind of random... Well, actually, we don't really know what they're doing, and people start to move on to thinking about how to measure performance. So, I think it's a sort of emerging field. That's not to say that there haven't been efforts to do it in the past. (E1)

Therefore, at times, performance measurement of ACAs emerges in a similar manner to the establishment of ACAs themselves: as a response to a problem. When the agencies are not performing as anticipated, questions regarding their performance arise, drawing attention to the need for performance measurement. As mentioned in the existing literature, performance measurement supports other organizational processes. If an ACA is deemed insufficient, measurement might initiate as a process to strengthen agency's overall effectiveness. The existing literature states that you cannot judge an ACA solely based on reports. Their environment, context, and resources need to be taken into consideration. Expert 2 agrees with this view.

I think we got concerned about the performance of these bodies because unfortunately, we've seen this rush to create these entities without considering the context, the resources available, the capacity, the capacity within the procurement system to staff these agencies. So, the results were short of the expectations. (E2)

Expert 1 mentioned that the focus on performance measurement has really begun in the last five years, when asked why this might be they respond:

I think it's partly that they've been around long enough - - I think there's that whole field of anti-corruption is becoming a bit more... Partly reflective, but also feeling like they need to show that they're achieving something. And I think one of the drivers is not just, you know, wanting to know the answer to the question, but also wanting to be able to justify to another part of government why the agency should continue to get more money or resources, when it might not be obvious that it's having a huge impact on the actual problem. (E1)

Despite the criticisms faced by ACAs, they also face various demands regarding their performance. The public, other agencies, and professionals expect active results.

Governments seek straightforward solutions to the extensive problems that corruption creates. Expert 2 emphasized the issues of demanding such rapid results, often leading to attempts to emulate successful agencies like the ICAC:

Often the legislator, the decision maker, runs to the results. Looks at examples elsewhere and say yes, there are fantastic agencies in Asia doing a great job and 'puts the carts before the bulls'. So, they look at the outcomes, they look at the results, but they don't ask how... How did they get to have these results? You know, what was the process? And if they look at the process, then they will notice that perhaps one of the elements of success of the Hong Kong Agency was the fact that they were able to recruit people from abroad. This is something you cannot do in most countries. (E2)

According to Expert 2, recruitment might be an issue that effects ACA's performance. They note that often the specialized agents that are needed, are recruited from other agencies. They say that the recruitment process might be unbeneficial for the agencies.

You design the profile for that specific vacancy, and you might be able to get some competence, some specialisation there, but it's not very common. Most common is that people get recruited as they get for other state agencies, with the same procedure. And also, with the same salary and perks, that's another issue. You want specialisation, you need to pay for specialisation, it doesn't come cheap. (E2)

Resource related issues are common for ACAs, because they are publicly funded and require political will to function effectively. If they are not in political favour, their resources might be reduced. Moreover, ACAs must demonstrate results to secure funding – if they perform poorly, it might in return affect their resources. The literature suggests that inadequate number of staff might weaken an ACA's performance. Additionally, the quality of staff matters. The staff's knowledge and skills are crucial to ACA's success.

### **Key indicators or metrics to measure ACA's performance**

Second, the interviews shifted their focus on the key indicators and metrics that can be used to measure the performance of ACAs.



When asked about the key indicators and metrics Expert 1 referred to an UNDP report, the Jakarta principles, and Transparency International's attempt to measure the performance of ACAs. They mention the UNDP report being a good and useful report on the subject they have personally used in their work.

I mean, there I would really suggest looking at those tools and documents that we highlighted in the report on the workshop. So, for example, there's a UNDP report, there's the Jakarta principles, there's a Transparency International attempt to measure performance or effectiveness. (E1)

There are multiple sources by UNDP on ACA performance measurement, as an example, the Practitioner's Guide (UNDP, 2011), defines output, outcome and efficiency and productivity indicators that ACAs can use when assessing their performance. UNDP suggests that ACA choose the indicators themselves, to best fit their mandate and available data. Jakarta principles include 16 principles aiming to ensure the independence and performance of ACAs. Transparency International has also gathered indicators that can help ACAs to examine their performance and the environment it operates in. There are 50 indicators under six dimensions that include indicators on resources, integrity, preventative operations, and cooperation. Some of these indicators are based on the Jakarta principles (Transparency International, 2018).

Additionally, Expert 2 suggest examining various reports published by the ACAs themselves to see how they integrate monitoring and evaluation. They also point out the necessity of ACA's themselves being responsible for choosing the indicators most suitable for their specific functions.

Because it's important to understand what kind of... First, - - if monitoring and evaluation has been taken on board or not. Maybe it was discussed, maybe there was a consultant who said you should do this, maybe there was an external evaluator that said, well, are you evaluating the impact of your activities? - - I would say in quite a few cases you will find methodology concerning monitoring and evaluation. Now, is it the rudimental or not? Is it basic? Is it based on activities and outputs only? Yeah, probably, but you need to look into those documents and try to understand... First, have they taken monitoring evaluation

on board? Second, how? What kind of indicators have they've chosen to measure their own work? (E2)

Throughout the existing literature and interviews the importance of ACAs themselves being the primary decision-makers on issues related to their functions was highlighted. The highly specialized environments and the agencies individuality makes predetermined indicators ineffective.

E1 agrees that because corruption itself is so difficult to measure, it makes the measurement of ACAs performance difficult.

You know, we basically don't have good measures of corruption still. And so, trying to measure the impact of agencies is very difficult because it's not like you can easily measure the before and after corruption levels and... then you know, in addition, you would obviously need to be able to look at the... contribution made by the anti-corruption agency which you know is even more difficult. So, it's a tricky business. (E1)

Measuring corruption presents many challenges. While it is possible to measure the perceptions of corruption and the number of certain instances of corruption, the phenomenon of itself is extremely difficult to measure. On top of that, the hidden nature of corruption coupled with the changing perceptions of it further complicated the matter. Thus, using corruption as an indicator may not produce meaningful results.

It became evident that the indicators or metrics may be a challenging topic. Neither expert mentioned any specific indicators or example of indicators used. Factors behind this could be the fact that ACAs need to decide on the indicators themselves and that corruption is so complex, effecting the work of ACAs greatly. Additionally, factors such as the ever-changing mandates for ACAs, the ever-changing nature of corruption, and the unique environments ACAs work in could contribute to the issue.

### **Successful performance measurement of ACAs**

Next, the interviewees were asked about possible examples of successful performance measurement practices in ACAs.

When asked about this, E1 mentioned the KPK of Indonesia. They elaborated that one notable practice of the KPK is that it surveys three groups of people: the public, their staff, and their stakeholders. Expert 2 also reckons that surveying these groups could provide valuable information to ACAs.

So, I think they survey users in a way - - So, sort of the public. They survey the staff. And I think they also survey kind of stakeholders or partners of the agency and, and so bringing these sort of three perspectives to bear they sort of then give a view on how well the KPK is doing and what it's like to work with them. (E1)

When we ask citizens about whether they know of the existence of this body in surveys, it's important, and often we don't. - - It's important to understand... Not just if citizens are aware of the existence of this body, but if they are satisfied with the work delivered. - - But it would be better to have probably a mixture of both: we could have the citizens opinion, but also stakeholders' opinion and see how they're satisfied or not with the work delivered by this entity. We can also ask about trust - - if the entity is trustworthy or not. - - There's also a third group that we need to ask whether they are satisfied with the work that is being delivered, the public servants. Who are being targeted by this new body. - - Then it would be interesting to understand how far public officials have approached this body for advice and what their satisfaction was. (E2)

Surveys are a valuable source of data for ACAs to gauge the perceptions of them and their potential impacts. However, bias is a potential issue of surveys. People may provide inaccurate information intentionally or unintentionally. Usually, the reason is the former, for reasons such as faulty memory, misinterpretations, or exposure to misinformation. Surveys provide data that is related to opinions and perceptions and this needs to be considered.

If you go and ask partners, quite likely they'll feel compelled to be nice and say that things are going well. So, they there might be some biases there. With measuring the public's views, the public will not necessarily be well informed about... where the corruption is occurring and what the impact of the agency is. (E1)

The recognition of all measures having limitations was documented in the existing literature. Besides bias, issues such as random fluctuations, time limits, and qualitative data challenge performance measurement. Nevertheless, surveys offer valuable information to ACAs. The literature recognized the opinions of so-called customers important for performance measurement since what they consider important, might be suitable measurements. Stakeholders' interests also have an effect on performance that needs to be considered. Interestingly, the point of surveying the staff did not come up in the literature research, despite their unique vantage point on the agency's operations, achievements, and potential obstacles. In numerous instances, the literature highlights the opinions and knowledge of the ACA itself. Therefore, it seems logical to ask the people working in the ACA their opinions on performance and how to possibly improve it.

In the literature review, it was discovered that sometimes anti-corruption work might make the public think there is more corruption, because they start to pay more attention to it. When asked about this Expert 1 thinks this might influence the results gained from the surveys done for the public.

If you've got a good anti-corruption agency - - also, if you've got free media then there will be cases that will be covered in the press and that might give people the perception that there's more corruption when in fact all that's happening is that more corruption is being investigated and prosecuted. So, there is that paradoxical effect, particularly with serving exceptions measures. (E1)

Expert 1 also refers to the "basket of measures" that are part the UK's anti-corruption strategy. They are a set of actions and initiatives aiming to combat corruption.

So, the UK doesn't exactly have an anti-corruption agency. It's got a few institutions that do part of the job, but it does have an anti-corruption strategy and in that they tried to come up with what they called a basket of measures for analysing success. So, there is a paper on that which I think was, you know, also a sort of good, interesting effort. (E1)

Like many other countries, the UK does not have a dedicated ACA; instead, multiple public organisations handle corruption related issues. Consequently, while the basket of

measures is not tailored to ACAs specifically, it can still offer useful ideas for performance assessment. This basket of measures addresses various aspects, such help on choosing the indicators to use, measurement itself, and cooperation.

In the existing literature, the performance measurement of ACAs heavily focuses on cases being trialled. Expert 1 was asked how they see prosecutions and trials as measures. They see some difficulties with this, saying:

Sometimes corruption is defined very narrowly, and that might mean that quite a lot of things that we would want to call corrupt are not even defined as illegal. So that's part of the problem. Another problem is that enforcement tends to be patchy and not necessarily consistent. That might be because of weak resources on the part of the law enforcement agencies. It might be... Maybe that the corruption is done by very senior people who have a lot of power to cover it up. Equally, it might be that enforcement is very politicised and if you see a lot of cases then actually the enforcement is being used as a political weapon against opponents of those in power. So, it is difficult to interpret those kinds of statistics, I think. (E1)

While corruption is often related to illegal activities, not all corruption is illegal. Therefore, performance measurement solely focusing on convictions and trials overlooks aspects of corruption. These 'grey areas' require attention because especially the individuals in the positions of highest power often have the ability to mask their activities as something other than corruption or change the law altogether. Moreover, once again the hidden nature of corruption exacerbates the issue. Restricting measurement to trialled cases is very limited, as corruption being secretive, evades detection. Consequently, only a fraction of cases are brought to light, a smaller subset are trialled, and an even smaller portion result in convictions.

Expert 2 highlighted the importance of reporting both to recognise how the agency is doing but also to share it with the public.

So, you need to set a methodology to evaluate your work, your impact from time to time, and produce that in reports that are assessed internally, and some of them are publicised in the annual report of activities. Maybe not every single

result, but at least results that you would like to inform the public, because you know that learning about those results will bring higher support and visibility to the work of the agency. (E2)

In the literature it was discovered that an ACA needs the trust of the public to perform well – gaining trust is one of the most important outcomes of their work. Sharing its successes can increase this trust since the public can see the progress the agency is making, and it builds legitimacy. Conversely, corruption can undermine the public trust. Public outreach in general is one of ACAs main duties. They represent the commitment of the government to fight corruption and educate and inform the public on corruption for better detection and subsequently intervention. Repressive activities, high-profile trials, and other big cases might draw more attention from the public but as these types of cases can be rare, the everyday successes of ACAs ought to be displayed. Also, as was stated, the opinions of customers, in this case the public, should be taken into account when measuring performance. Keeping them satisfied with the work of ACAs is important. Furthermore, as a publicly funded agency, drawing attention to their success may increase the resources an ACA receives.

### **Definition of success or effectiveness for ACAs**

Success can mean various things for different organizations, therefore the next topic of discussion focused on how ACAs could define success or effectiveness for themselves. The interviewees were also asked about factors that could contribute to achieving these desired goals.

We need to compare the comparable. (E2)

Both experts concur that ACA's performance should only be measured based on what their mandates, goals, and duties are.

Well, I think in a way, agencies need to define it for themselves, and you can only really measure them against what they claim to be doing. - - So, I think it

depends a little bit on what the agency's focusing on and you probably need to develop indicators that fit the mandate of the agency. (E1)

You can't expect an agency that doesn't have investigative competencies to produce work in terms of how many people have been investigated or inquiries. - - You can't use that obviously because - - it doesn't have that competence. (E2)

And agencies do vary in, you know, many of them are just preventive. And now measuring the prevention of corruption is particularly difficult because how do you benchmark against... A kind of counterfactual or another world in which the anti-corruption agency didn't exist, so measuring prevention is particularly difficult. But where agencies will have new mandate to particularly tackle corruption in key areas you might be able to develop sector specific indicators that would work for a particular government function. (E1)

So, ACAs could define success through their mandates, what they are supposed to do, and how well they are performing those duties. Although the goal of ACAs is quite similar, to fight corruption, the literature found that ACAs come in variety of forms, having different mandates. The literature typically categorizes ACAs into being preventive, law enforcement, or both. Consequently, a solely preventative agency's success cannot be determined based on convictions, for example. Along with their mandates, agency's resources, amount of independence, and other factors vary. Thus, some factors do not have to do with the success of the ACAs but the environments they operate in.

E1 explains that preventative ACAs could take "an awareness raising approach" to define success.

So, you could then measure things like awareness of corruption or norms and attitudes around corruption, I suppose. So, for example, if you have a campaign to try and people to the fact that corruption has victims and causes harm. Then you might measure whether the attitudes to corruption change over time. (E1)

Awareness raising can be beneficial in preventing corruption from happening by improving its recognition and getting people do understand the harm it causes. It is part of corruption prevention, which is very important in the long run, the literature found. Awareness raising, like all prevention, takes time and may not yield immediate results. Therefore, it can be less visible compared to convictions. Sometimes awareness raising

can even have perverse effects, because due to it corruption can seem to be increasing. Nevertheless, it needs to be considered in relation to ACA's effectiveness.

Expert 2 says that resources and results are important when considering the performance measurement of ACAs:

Organisations have - - financial, material, and human resources. These are the inputs of the organisation - - So, they use these different resources, - - to develop activities within the frame of their competences and their strategic guidelines. As part of these activities, they produce outputs, results. (E2)

Outputs describe a dimension of performance, the results, that are achieved through various activities. In the literature it was stated that ACA's performance is often based on input and output reporting. Basically, what resources lead to what kind of results, which is usually seen as relating to efficiency. Outputs are what is usually expected of organizations, but some argue that this is not enough since public organizations have political dimensions. They want to see outcomes which are the broader results of outputs. Resources play a vital role in agencies' success, since those are the means, they have to produce outputs with. Achieving goals, the desired outputs from the available resources, could be seen as one indicator of success, in the existing literature.

One way of defining success has to do with reassuring various stakeholders that the agency is performing well, Expert 2 says.

Then there has to be a concern about measuring performance in the sense that we need to reassure citizens and external stakeholders, including the decision maker, that they're getting value for money. - - Again, are we doing this for other bodies in the integrity system? Probably not. Are we demanding more than we're demanding conventional bodies? Probably yes. - - I have a friend that used to have this expression 'we may be asking a fig tree to give melons' but the fig tree cannot give melons so we're asking the wrong thing. In the sense that sometimes these agencies, they're just 'window dressing'. They're not meant to function or to perform or to deliver. Forget it, they were just a cheap reaction to a scandal, to the pressure of a donor of an international organisation and they they're set up, and we know they're meant to fail. (E2)



Reassuring them is important because it is highlighted that ACAs need public trust which is one defining factor of their success. Expert 2 criticizes that this kind of reassurance is only expected from ACAs and not from many other public organizations. He also brings up the fact that sometimes defining good performance for ACAs is quite difficult because they might not be meant to perform well. Rather, they are meant to be there to fulfil different demands, often with little regard to how they perform. It could be, that the ACAs which lack resources, political will, independence, or the other requirements for successful ACA laid out in the literature, are not created to succeed but to rather just exist.

### **Challenges that hinder the measurement of ACA's performance**

Given the complexity of performance measurement, the focus of the interviews shifted towards the possible barriers or challenges that may hinder the accurate measurement of ACAs and the ways of addressing these obstacles.

Once again resources became a topic of discussion.

You need to be able to look at the mandate of the agency compared to its resources. So, if an agency has a really wide mandate, but actually it hasn't been given the budget or the staff to do that, then it seems a bit unfair to really judge their success in terms of whether they've achieved that or not. So, I think we sort of need a slightly relativized idea of what success is. (E1)

The problem is that - - there are very little resources. And then that could generate two problems. One is to try to do everything when you have very little capacity. Maybe the legislator has endowed this agency with a lot of functions, and they want to deliver in all those functions, but they don't have the human, financial, and material resources to do so. So ideally, they should be strategic. They should think what are the most pressing functions that we need to deliver. We're going to concentrate on those and as we grow, as we become more consolidated, then we will start dealing with the other areas, but we can't do everything in one go. (E2)

As previously discussed, the mandate of an ACA significantly influences its efforts. They ought to do and to be measured only on areas that are a part of their mandate. Some have a broader mandate than others, which impacts their performance measurement as well as the need for resources. Outputs require inputs, which are resources. The resources an agency has available can greatly affect their capacity to perform. The more resources the ACA has available, the more staff they can hire and the more they can spend on investigations, as an example. Especially the large-scale cases can be costly, but at the same time, often gain the most attention. Performance measurement itself requires resources, such as time, staff, and financial resources, and a lack thereof can hinder measurement efforts.

The existing literature recognized allocation of resources as one of the main determinants of the success of an agency, as in weaker agencies may suffer from the lack of resources. The expectations placed on an agency should take into account the resources available to it. As stated in the literature, the UNDP advises the states parties to ensure that the ACAs have enough resources at their disposal. However, the reality may not always align with this recommendation.

The KPK is often seen as a notable example of what ACAs can achieve with the adequate resources. They have managed to fulfil a lot of the tasks they have been assigned. The lack of resources may drive ACAs to prioritize their tasks in order to perform well at least in some of them if comprehensive coverage is not possible. This selective allocation of resources can partly impact the accurate measurement of their performance. E1 says that we need a “relativized idea” of success. Perhaps, success is not only the biggest things that are achieved, but also the smaller victories achieved with fewer, divided resources.

Cooperation with other organizations is important to ACAs but most of the time this can be difficult for them for various reasons.

The problem that agencies often have is that they are what John Githongo has called 'institutional orphans'. So, they're not going well integrated with other agencies. And that can mean that the other agencies don't cooperate, they don't give them information, they don't take the agencies advice and instruction. (E1)

The existing literature found knowledge to be a vital element in anti-corruption efforts, yet difficulties with cooperation with other organizations were recognized as an issue for ACAs. As for any investigation, sharing information is very advantageous but sometimes ACAs are excluded from cooperative efforts. Maybe they are feared, maybe they are seen as outsiders, or maybe their efforts are not seen as "enough". Ultimately, this has a negative effect on their performance, lowering their effectiveness since ACAs need the experiences and knowledge of other bodies to be strong.

Expert 2 also points out that other institutions might not be measured the same.

Do we do the same to conventional bodies? Are we evaluating the performance of the Prosecutor's Office? Of the National Audit Office? Of the judiciary police, if there's one? So, why should we evaluate? Why are we so pressed, so concerned, to evaluate the performance of bodies that have been created in the past few years? I mean, the other bodies we're talking about, prosecutors' office in some countries they are more than 100 years old. -- So why should we expect from a body that is like 15 year old -- when we look at bodies that had competence on this matter, both on prevention and repression, and they didn't deliver either. (E2)

The existing literature suggests that one reason behind the augment of ACAs has been the inability of other bodies to handle corruption-related issues. Whilst other organizations often have multiple responsibilities to measure their performance on, ACAs can be seen only having one: fighting corruption. Centralizing all its resources towards one task was seen as a sort of advantage in the literature. However, performance is often related to external expectations. ACAs are expected to perform in a certain way, whether it be realistic or not. It was established in the literature that many times the expectations placed on ACAs are quite harsh.

Sometimes people's or organizations' perceptions of corruption might be skewed.

Honest reporting is a problem... If you ask people about their experience of corruption, do you get the truth? And it's not even just about whether they're lying or not. It's about do they remember correctly, was their perception of it correct? (E1)

People might assume, you know, say you bid for a public contract, you don't win, you see that this other company wins, maybe you assume that they paid a bribe. But actually, you don't really know that. So generally, people lack the experience to make very good judgement, I would say, in terms of reporting. (E1)

There's also fear that comes into it. People might not want to report corruption because of fear of retribution. (E1)

Sometimes the perception of corruption can be somewhat oversimplified, being narrow or black-and-white. However, corruption comes in many forms, and it can be hard to recognize. Individual experiences, amount of knowledge, and the surrounding culture are factors that can affect people's perceptions of corruption and their ability to recognize it. Hence, one of the most important tasks of ACAs is education on corruption. While perceptions of corruption may be easier to measure than corruption itself, as was previously mentioned, bias is a risk of this type of research since experiences and perceptions are always subjective.

Expert 2 also draws attention to so called expert opinions, saying:

Experts view that certain agencies are not delivering, are not performing well. But when you read those reports, how do they assess that? You know, it's pretty much an opinion. It's an expert opinion, of course. Shouldn't be discarded. Shouldn't be treated as you know, just the normal opinion from any citizen. - - But generally, this is an impressionist opinion. Often supported by anecdotal evidence, in the sense of maybe some references to episodes that the management of those episodes was not satisfactory - - But there aren't concrete indicators of performance most of the times in in those reports. (E2)

The literature found that sometimes the opinions on ACAs echo the previously said negative things about them, disregarding the realistic achievements of these agencies. Once

again, it is important to recognize that opinions are subjective. While expert opinions may carry more weight than any opinion, they are opinions made by individuals. Therefore, one should be very careful when looking at how the conclusions on the performance of an agency were made; what was taken into account, what was left out, and what the agency should be doing compared to the results.

The hidden nature of corruption came up in the existing literature quite frequently. Expert 1 was asked about this. They saw this as one issue for ACAs and brought up that corruption does not mean the same thing for everyone.

We don't really know if everyone shares the same definition of corruption even. So, there might be something that you regard as corrupt, and I regard as new normal part of social life or so. Yeah, that's also a problem, I think. (E1)

Trust also raises some issues. ACAs need the trust of the public to succeed and politicians should never have influence or leadership on ACAs because it creates a risk of them abusing the agencies.

Often people don't trust because the government appointed, and the government doesn't want to change things, so they put some puppet guys there that they're not delivering. -- I'm not saying that it's necessarily true, but there's this suspicion that things don't work because they put the wrong people in front of these bodies. And if that's the case, then we need to ask how trustworthy do you consider these bodies to be? (E2)

ACAs need political freedom and political competition to maintain their integrity as well as an environment of strong governance since weak governance might lead to misuse of the agencies. Also, politicians are often related to corruption cases, which might be one reason why people do not trust the agencies these politicians aid to set up. In reality, politicians always have some control over ACAs, since they have control over their budgets and what is expected of them. If there is no political will to make ACAs succeed, it makes it difficult for them.

Expert 1 says changing mandates propose an issue for the performance measurement of ACAs.

So, sometimes the agency's mandate changes every few years, so that makes it quite difficult to measure for success. (E1)

Mandates are important to ACAs since they guide their anti-corruption efforts. Alongside mandates, the political contexts, personnel, and the nature of corruption keeps on changing so the agencies need to be able to adapt to constant changes effectively. Changing mandates can make long time performance measurement more difficult since comparing performance through time is hard when the mandate has changed in the meantime.

### **Improving the methods of evaluating ACAs**

Next, the interviewees were asked about their views on improving the existing methods of evaluating ACAs.

Expert 1 says the measurement field is going towards using more objective data.

It's objective in the sense that it says it's definitely corruption. But it's subjective in the sense that it reports on what happened in a process and you can then relate from that. (E1)

The existing literature found that performance can be measured by subjective measures, objective measures, or the combination of both. Since objective data is information obtained through facts or resources, objective measures have the advantage of being more “hard data” with a reduced risk of bias. Nonetheless, the data can be difficult to collect or be inconsistent.

Expert 1 finds it important, to examine all data very carefully and discover any underlying factors. They use public procurement as an example.

We know that in public procurement, that ideal is that it should be an open and

competitive process. Lots of companies submit bids and the best value for money one is chosen, and that company gets awarded the contract. Now, any deviation from that could be as a result of incompetence, but it could be the result of corruption. (E1)

Those indicators tend to be referred to as corruption risk indicators rather than corruption indicators because there could be other reasons that are perfectly legitimate, but they provided kind of a red flag or early warning that then people can use to go and investigate individual cases further. (E1)

They say that if things such as only one company bidding or giving inside information to only one company, may suggest potential foul play. However, there is no certainty of this. The need for vigilance was similarly discussed in relation to expert opinions. While certain indicators hint at the possibility of corrupted activities, close inspection is required before any conclusions are drawn.

Expert 2 highlights the importance of ACAs measuring their performance for their own interest, not only because of the external demands.

So, I would say that the kind of assessment of their performance for their own sake, not just because they have to report to third parties to the government or the Parliament or the Prosecutor's Office, internally or externally to the European Commission or the Council or GRECO. For their own sake, to understand how their work is impacting the target groups, the public service, and the society. (E2)

Performance measurement offers the organization valuable knowledge on how much it has done and how well it has done. It can also help to identify what is needed to perform better. These things are valuable to the organization itself offering it information on how it should act in the future.

Expert 2 draws attention to the outcomes ACAs can have.

The outcomes... It's an important concept related to output and that needs to be distinguished because the outcomes are the effects, the changes, that I can make via my outputs. - - We may carry out a survey to public officials in that

sector and the results of this survey, so we'll have a report that's an output and the results of this survey will enable us will inform the design and the development of a code of conduct. That code of conduct is an output. - - Now, what is the outcome? The outcome is how this code is going to change the behaviour of the target public. So how is it going to be implemented? How the agency, the agents are going to appropriate the rules and the principles that are in embedded in this document? - - I can't just expect that I adopt the code of conduct. I do some training for the Code of conduct and people will just follow in order and respect the code. They will, they will have, they will go through dilemmas that need to be addressed, that need to be clarified. (E2)

Outcomes represent a broader dimension of performance compared to outputs. They usually take more time to be noticeable since their impact is so broad. As an example, they may manifest as a change in peoples thinking or increased customer satisfaction. Outcomes are very important, because they are the ultimate measure of success since not all successful outputs produce successful outcomes.

### **Navigating through external pressures and maintaining effectiveness**

ACAs operate within a complex field with different external pressures. The seventh question aimed to gain an understanding of how these pressures can be navigated while maintaining the continued effectiveness of an ACA.

Expert 1 emphasized the significance of independence as a critical factor for ACAs in managing these external pressures.

Yeah, it's a very tricky position. I think it's very important that they have independence in terms of their powers, but also their budget. (E1)

The UNDP acknowledges the imperative of ensuring the independence of ACAs among state parties. However, the existing literature found that in reality, the level of independence varies between agencies. Independence has different dimensions, including financial and political independence. It is important for ACAs to be rid of outside influences, pressuring them to act in a certain way. The more independent the agency is, the better it performs, the existing literature found.



Sometimes the problems ACAs face have to do with the powerful people or entities they confront. High-profile corruption cases often involve senior officials who often have significant funds to defend themselves with. On top of their financial power, their political power may make the work of an ACA very difficult. Big cases usually attract more attention, which can be beneficial for the ACA, if it succeeds. The agency must carefully weigh its prospects and make challenging decisions regarding whether to pursue these 'big fish'.

There's a range of people that they could go after. So, they might know about corruption in a number of cases, and they have to balance it. Do we go off to the really big fish? Which carries some risks. Firstly, - particularly if they're on the government side, might turn around and close you down. But equally the big fish might have really powerful good lawyers because they have a lot of money off to and because they've stolen a lot of money. So, they might be able to come back, and you won't really be in a fair fight against them if you're on the prosecution side. (E1)

So, you have to make judgments about whether you sort of go for bigger or smaller higher status or lower status people, you have to make judgments about whether you sort of investigate really long, complicated cases that might take years and years to get any results or whether you go for quick wins and kind of smaller infractions and smaller cases. (E1)

Expert 2 identifies similar issues, stating:

You have an idea of how long it takes to judge a case of corruption where a Prime Minister is involved. You see variation across countries, but no less than 3-4 years. (E2)

Expert 2 gives an example of their home country, where a big case has lasted 8-10 years. So, prosecution is not easy and outside influences can make it slow, costly, and sometimes near impossible.

When asked about, if going for the more minor cases affects the image of an ACA Expert 1 replied:

I think this is a real difficulty for agencies as well that the expectations of the public are often really high, and yet it's a really difficult job. And so, there is often this sense of disappointment and then the agency starts to lose support and loses legitimacy. And then that makes it even harder, because if people don't perceive it as being independent and fair and effective, then it, you know, it becomes harder to get people to cooperate as well. So, the reputation is really important for an anti-corruption agency, but it takes a really long time to build and it's quite a hard thing to build. And I would say it's always fairly fragile. (E1)

As stated before, the expectations placed on ACAs are considerable and effectively managing them is important. Perceived “disappointments” by the public or other stakeholders may lead to the diminishing trust which ultimately can lead to diminished budget, cooperation, and overall legitimacy for the agency.

Expert 1 said that ACAs can manage the expectations of the public by being clear about what they are trying to achieve and by publicising successes.

Quite a lot really depends on the broader institutional environment and how, how much that is open and supportive. You know, the media can be a big friend of anti-corruption agencies, but it can also start to criticise them so... Generally, it's sort of it's good to be part of an ecosystem of many institutions that are all quite supportive, I think. (E1)

### **Future of performance measurement of ACAs**

Lastly, the interviewees were asked about their views on the future of performance measurement of ACAs.

Expert 1 thinks there will be more measurement in the future.

So, I think there's a tension between standardised measurement versus really contextualised measurement. So, if you want to compare agencies, then you need a sort of standardised measure. The difficulty is that if they've all got different mandates, different resources, different challenges, it doesn't really make sense to compare them across agencies. So probably what is more useful is being able to monitor the progress over time. And that requires quite specific tailored measures that fit the particular context and the particular mandate of the agency. So, I suspect that things will go towards that more tailored, you

know, contextualised kind of measure that can measure progress over time. Which would still be difficult for small agencies with low resources to do because monitoring progress is often quite expensive and costly. (E1)

Based on the existing literature, standardized measurement of agencies does not currently exist. It might be hard to create since the agencies and their environments are so unique and there really is no standardized version of what an ACA is. This is why Expert 1 suggest time-based comparisons instead. While the data collection takes time and natural fluctuations need to be considered, this way the measurement concept can be tailored to fit the specific agency.

In the literature it was found that some outside performance measurements of ACAs have been conducted but Expert 1 thinks that using external sources to measure performance might be difficult due to the sensitivity of the work ACAs do.

I think... Well, probably my inclination is that they will try to do it fairly in house. Of course, you know, it has the risk of bias. (E1)

Due to time constraints, the interview with Expert 2 concluded before the final question could be addressed. They were contacted afterwards to get their ideas on the future of performance measurement of ACAs but unfortunately, their answer was not received.

### **4.3 Concluding summary**

This thesis aimed to answer the research questions regarding the effects of ACA's performance measurement and how can the performance of an ACA be measured, as well as the potential ways of improving the performance measurement of ACAs. These questions were examined through literature review and expert interviews. The expert interviews were analyzed through theory-based content analysis, and the findings were compared to the existing literature. Many things that were discussed during the interviews were also identified in the existing literature, but the interviews also offered new outlooks.

The interviews supported that the number of ACAs has increased especially in the last few decades, which may be due to external pressures, inadequacies of existing bodies to handle corruption, and the need to react to corrupt activities and crimes.

Considerable emphasis was placed on the high expectations placed on ACAs. Often, results are sought after with very limited resources and somewhat unfairly compared to other public bodies. Although performance measurement has benefits, questions rose about the fairness of treatment towards ACAs and whether they are provided sufficient opportunities to succeed or are doomed to failure from the outset. Often the huge expectations lead to disappointments, when the ACAs struggle to deliver whether it be due to the difficulties with resources or the problematic nature of corruption itself. Since corruption is complex and hard to measure, it can make the performance measurement of ACAs difficult also.

ACAs do not run by themselves. They require vast resources and support from politics, other organizations, and the public. It is vital for their effectiveness. The interviews supported that recruitment, resource allocation, gaining and keeping trust and cooperation with other bodies are often challenges for ACAs performance. It was noted that resources should also be considered when measuring the performance of the agencies since insufficient resources may force them to focus only on certain areas, impacting their performance.

It was also noted that naming key indicators or metrics ACAs could use in their performance measurement proved challenging. ACAs are vastly different from each other and they should determine what indicators fit them as individual organizations. It was also suggested that ACAs should measure for their own sake and not for the external pressures they face.

Corruption can sometimes be defined narrowly, such as only relating to illegal activities, which can lead to ignoring parts of it that are just as harmful. Hence, the performance of ACAs should not only focus on prosecution and trial numbers. On the other hand, it was noted during the interviews, that not all that seems corrupted actually is. Sometimes it can be something much more trivial. One needs vigilance in assessing corruption.

One way ACAs could examine their performance identified in the interviews was surveying. The interviewees suggested surveying the staff and stakeholders of the agencies as well as the public to gather a comprehensive understanding of the agency's performance. Outputs also received some attention as an indicator of the ACAs success. It was highlighted, that ACAs should only be measured on what they are supposed to and claim to do. Otherwise, the measurement is not reliable. Surveys are about opinions which can lead to bias. Even expert opinions received some doubts during the interviews. Time-based measurement was also proposed for the sake of the agencies are very hard to compare to each other, although the changing mandates and environments may make this type of measurement challenging also.

Key factors influencing ACA performance were identified as freedom and trust. ACAs should be free of any political influence and should be accountable for their work and resource use. Trust from other organizations as well as the public is very important to the agencies and their freedom can affect the trust they receive. Without freedom and trust, the agencies cannot perform. To maintain this trust, they need to manage the expectations, which includes deciding whether to pursue the big corruption cases or go for the smaller ones.

In conclusion, ACAs face significant pressure to perform. They need to prove themselves to the politicians, other organizations, and the public. This needs to be done with sometimes very limited resources. Corruption, changing mandates, and the spectrum of different agencies make performance measurement complex.

## 5 Conclusion

This is the last paragraph of the thesis. It will conclude the thesis by covering what the results of this research indicate and how the implications relate to the aims and research questions of the thesis. Additionally, this chapter will cover what contributions this thesis offers to the field, suggestions for future research, as well as address the potential limitations.

As the literature expressed, ACAs offer interesting ideas for research as they are quite a new phenomenon, and their numbers are continuously growing regardless of their debatable nature. This and their dedication to fight corruption motivated the writing of this thesis. This thesis aimed to explore the performance of ACAs since a research gap in this area was recognized. The thesis also aimed to answer the research questions regarding what effects the performance of ACAs, how can their performance be measured, and how can their performance be improved. The research was done through expert interviews, where two experts on the matter were asked eight questions regarding the performance of ACAs. The goal was to gain in-depth comprehension on the topic.

The results indicate that the performance measurement of ACAs is a complex task influenced by numerous outside factors, such as pressure from the public and other organizations, the difficult and hidden nature of corruption, and possible political influences. Performance measurement requires resources, such as financial resources, time, and adequate staffing, which the agencies might not always have. Also, what is taken into account when measuring ACAs performance should be considered carefully since they have different mandates and operating environments which affects what can be taken into account and what should be left out. The research suggests that when the external influences, such as available resources and freedom, are in adequate, the agencies tend to perform better.

One recurring theme in the literature and interviews were the somewhat unfair expectations that ACAs face and whether ACAs performance is more scrutinized than other

similar organizations. For instance, these expectations can manifest as output expectations such as an expectation to achieve convictions. It is important for ACAs to manage these expectations because this can be as important to their success as their corruption control activities. Expectations should be matched with the resources an agency has and the goals it has. Managing these expectations and being clear of the agency's goals may help to diminish the risk of disappointment from the public or stakeholders which usually would have negative impacts, like smaller budget or less cooperation, for the ACA.

Another interesting aspect is that guidelines on how to measure or improve ACAs performance proved difficult to provide due to the uniqueness of the agencies and their environments. As of now, standardized performance measurement of ACAs does not exist. Some ideas did emerge during the interviews, such as using time comparisons or interviewing the stakeholders of ACAs to gain knowledge on their performance.

This research has partially addressed the research gap on the performance measurement of ACAs. The most notable discoveries were made regarding what effects the performance measurement of ACAs, finding many valuable things that need to be considered when such measurements are done. These things include the mandate of the ACA, the environment of the ACA, natural and random variation in performance, and time. Additionally, the research described what success can mean for these organizations, using the KPK and ICAC as examples of ACAs performing well. This thesis also demonstrated some ways that the measurement can be improved, such as detecting possible underlying factors in the data, measuring for the sake of the agency and not for external reasons, and focusing on outcomes alongside outputs.

Knowledge on corruption and ways to fight it are valuable and this thesis makes a valuable effort to bring forward more information on ACAs, the organizations that fight corruption. Additionally, the findings offer practical applications for the measurement of the performance of ACAs since the information gathered in this thesis could be used in practice to help ACAs to determine their measures, avoid the obstacles performance

measurement can have, and what factors contribute to their performance, as an example. This may help in understanding the factors that contribute to their performance as well as the problems that need to be considered in this regard.

A comprehensive literature review was also conducted. It offers a solid foundation for this research by gathering relevant information available at the time of writing this thesis. The existing literature confirmed that there is somewhat of a gap in the literature regarding the performance measurement of ACAs, as finding research on this specific topic proved to be a bit challenging.

As previously mentioned, this research has some limitations. The most notable limitation pertains to the method and sampling, as the interview invitations resulted in two interviewees. Although it was anticipated that the number of possible interviewees would be limited, this limitation became even more evident during the research. The vast majority of the people and organizations contacted did not reply, and a few declined. While the number of interviewees makes the results ungeneralizable, the interviews provided valuable and insightful information on ACAs and their performance, drawing from experts with years of experience and valuable knowledge on corruption and ACAs. Despite the limited number of interviews, the information gathered proved sufficient for the research aims, as the intention was not to draw any direct conclusions but to gain insight. Also, although the number of interviews was lower than expected, the data gathered was new and informative, offering new outlooks on ACA performance as well as supporting what was discovered in the existing literature.

Time created constraints since the time planned for the research posed some difficulties for the scope of the research. Relevant literature was at times scarce, and finding suitable sources also took longer than initially expected. Additionally, interviews as a method pose some potential limitations since the information gathered from them comes from individuals, which has the potential of bias, faulty memory, or other issues. Despite this,



interviews were still considered the best option for the research, as a deeper understanding of ACA performance was aimed at.

As is often the case with corruption and related issues, there are vast possibilities for future research. The existing literature as well as the interviews offer multiple ways ACAs could be explored further. The methods on how the performance of ACAs could be measured could be further explored and refined. Given the many difficulties with performance measurement identified in this research, it would be valuable to explore possible ways to overcome these barriers, and how societies and leaders could support ACAs to perform better. This research found that the differences between agencies made it difficult to establish specific ways to measure or ways to improve, and it would be interesting to see how this could evolve in the future.

One possibility for future research could be developing methods for ACA performance measurement based on the information gathered from their stakeholders, who are often already interviewed on the agencies' performance. Another possibility in the future could be to research the actual benefits ACAs can get from performance measurement. Additionally, one of the most highlighted factors that came up in this research was that ACAs do not operate by magic and yet they are expected a lot from. It would be interesting to delve deeper into these expectations and examine how they affect the performance of ACAs.

In conclusion, this thesis examined how to measure the performance of ACAs, identifying key factors, and trying to shed light on how such measurements could be done, contributing to the field of anti-corruption efforts. Although the study faced some limitations, the findings highlight the importance of unique approaches to measurement and the complexities ACAs face. Future research should continue to explore these areas, aiming to refine measurement techniques and better understand the impact of expectations on ACAs effectiveness. Ultimately, this thesis provides a foundation for research on ACA performance measurement and practical advancements in the fight against corruption.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1. Interview Invitation

Subject: Invitation for an interview about ACAs

Dear (name),

I hope this message finds you well.

My name is Amanda Dahlroos, and I am a fifth-year student at the University of Vaasa. I am currently pursuing a master's degree in administrative sciences within the Public Management program. Under the guidance of Professor Christoph Demmke, I am writing my master's thesis focusing on anti-corruption agencies' performance, and I am reaching out to you with an invitation to participate as a subject matter expert in my master's thesis.

My thesis is about measuring the effectiveness of anti-corruption agencies and seeks to explore how the performance of ACAs can be effectively measured and what factors influence their performance.

I am planning to conduct a semi-structured interviews lasting approximately one hour, scheduled preliminarily for weeks 9 and 10 / end of March. The interview can be conducted via Zoom or Teams, and the exact timing can be tailored to accommodate your schedule.

With your permission, the interview will be audio-recorded solely for the purpose of transcribing and analysing the conversation in detail. Subsequently, the recording will be promptly deleted. You will also have the opportunity to review the thesis before it is published and provide any remarks or corrections you deem necessary.

Please find enclosed the interview questions for your kind consideration.

Thank you for considering my request, and I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Amanda Dahlroos

(contact information)

## **Appendix 2. Interview questions**

1. What do think about the performance measurement of anti-corruption agencies?
2. In your opinion, what are the key indicators or metrics that can be used to measure the performance of anti-corruption agencies?
3. Do you know examples of successful performance measurement practices in anti-corruption agencies?
4. How would you define success or effectiveness for an anti-corruption agency, and which factors contribute to achieving these goals?
5. Are there specific barriers or challenges that hinder the accurate measurement of anti-corruption agency performance (such as lack of resources or state capture), and how can these obstacles be addressed?
6. In your opinion, what improvements could be made to existing methods of evaluating anti-corruption agencies?
7. How can anti-corruption agencies navigate external political and economic pressures while maintaining their effectiveness?
8. Looking ahead, what trends do you foresee in measuring the performance of anti-corruption agencies?