Framing as a Social Process: The News Media Construction of Corruption in New Zealand and Italy

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ABSTRACT

Corruption is considered a relevant problem both locally and at a global level. Journalism has a fundamental role in curbing corruption, and levels of corruption can be significantly influenced by how the news media play their watchdog role. However, the way in which the media represent corruption is a relatively under-explored area of corruption studies. As an arena for public debate, media are central for the public understanding of complex, contested issues. As active participants in the public debate, they have the power to exert influence over the political and social life of a country. Through a multi-layer research design, this thesis explores the role of the media in the social construction of corruption in New Zealand and Italy, two countries characterised by very different levels of corruption. According to Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, New Zealand is among the least corrupt countries in the world, while Italy is among the most corrupt countries in Europe. Through a framing analysis of the news media coverage of two corruption scandals, and of the coverage of the yearly Corruption Perception Index, this thesis explores how corruption is differently framed in the two countries, focusing in particular on the different use of conceptual metaphors, personifications, metonymies and narratives. Results show that Italy is dominated by a "systemic corruption" frame, characterised by disease, war and disaster metaphors, and by a tendency to dilute or externalise responsibilities. On the other hand, New Zealand is characterised by a "corruption as individual crime" frame focused on prevention, in which corruption is constructed as a responsibility of individuals, in opposition to an integrity embodied in society and institutions. The empirical research is completed by an analysis of a debate developed in the New Zealand media over the practices of *Iafo* and *koha* (Polynesian gift-giving traditions) in the context of New Zealand politics. Results show that by entering the framing contest, news media can have a powerful effect in developing informal and formal rules to regulate contested issues and grey areas of corruption. This empirical research offers new insights into the social construction of corruption in different contexts, in particular by using a comparative perspective on most different cases, and shifting the attention towards the construction of corruption in a context characterised by high levels of integrity.

Theoretically, the empirical research is informed by a social constructionist perspective on framing. In opposition to recent claims for limiting the field of framing to the study of cognitive effects of equivalenced-based media framing, this thesis argues for a radically different perspective that sees framing as an eminently social process. Drawing from Serge Moscovici's

theory of social representations, some conceptual tools to overcome unclear points and missing gaps in framing theory are introduced. Firstly, this thesis shifts the attention from the debated question of the location of frames, to a more fundamental issue of the nature of frames. It is argued that frames are products of social processes, rather than elements of media content or human cognition. Moreover, a categorisation of frames' dynamism is suggested, separating the two mechanisms on *internal* and *interactive* dynamism. Exemplifying it with results from the framing analysis of the media coverage of corruption, anchoring and objectification (drawn from social representations theory) are introduced as explanatory mechanisms of how framing devices are linked to their frames. Finally, a re-definition of frames that integrates conceptual and operational concepts, and supports a social constructionist perspective on framing, is suggested.

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ATTESTATION OF AUTHORSHIP

"I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning."

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CHAPTER 1 – INTRODUCTION

The empirical aim of this thesis, an investigation of the social construction of corruption in the news media, requires a series of premises. First of all, about the recognition that, side by side with the study of its universal aspects (in terms of causes, consequences, mechanisms and definition), it is necessary to acknowledge and investigate the social, cultural and contextual aspects of corruption. This includes the investigation of localised corrupt practices, but also an analysis of how the issue of corruption can be (and often is) differently constructed and understood in diverse contexts. This is not a secondary issue, as the success or failure (or sometimes even the actual development and implementation) of anti-corruption policies cannot be separated by the social and cultural context of their application.

Given the role recognised by the media in controlling corruption (Stapenhurst, 2000) and in developing a public debate about it (Peters, 2003), the analysis of media representations of corruption represents a central aspect for generating knowledge about its public understanding. The relevance of an improved awareness of how corruption is locally understood is revealed by the relevance of a similar debate in academia. The debate over the definition of corruption, which will be presented in this chapter, demonstrates that a different definition brings to a different focus on causes, solutions and mechanisms.

Defining the issue of corruption can be seen as a matter of framing. Framing is intended, in this context, as a process of social construction of issues that, by focusing on different aspects, offers specific definitions, causal attributions, moral judgements and solutions (Entman, 1993). What feels particularly important to underline, however, is the social nature of these processes of framing. Before individual attitudes and beliefs about corruption, and before policymaking, there is the public understanding of corruption, socially constructed and framed in the public debate. There have been, recently, some critiques of a social constructionist perspective on framing, and a perspective on framing as a theory of media effects (Scheufele, 1999; Cacciatore, Scheufele & Iyengar, 2016; Scheufele & Iyengar, 2017). However, the concept of framing seems too broad and useful to be limited to the study of individual effects of media content.

In a circular fashion, this thesis adopts a social constructionist perspective on framing to investigate the social construction of corruption in the media. It uses empirical results to argue in defence of framing as a social theory, and against framing as a theory of media effects. That is why it develops around two sets of questions, empirical and theoretical. Framing, it is argued, is

the best theoretical and methodological approach for the investigation of the media construction of corruption. Results from this empirical investigation, in turn, offer a chance to exemplify some new theoretical concepts, introduced in framing theory, which may help to develop a social theory of framing. As a result, the thesis generates two sets of answers. Empirically, it generates knowledge on how corruption is differently framed in news media in different contexts, and on the role and power of media in influencing anti-corruption policies. Theoretically, it suggests a series of developments in framing theory, and, by exemplifying some of them with results from the empirical investigation, it argues in favour of a social theory of framing that sees framing as a social activity and a series of social processes.

In the next section, I will offer a general overview of the research, its theoretical and methodological approach, and the questions it aims to address..

1.1. OVERVIEW OF THE RESEARCH

A constructionist/critical approach to framing (D'Angelo, 2002) assumes that issues are socially constructed in the course of a framing contest (Entman, 2003) in which different perspectives are confronted, and arguments and counter-arguments developed. The relative power of different groups (such as the media) plays a relevant role in determining which frames will dominate.

This perspective on framing resonates with other constructionist research approaches, and in particular with the theory of social representations (Moscovici, 1984), developed in social psychology. Both theories, framing theory and social representation theory, are interested in unpacking the nature and structure of issues, as well as in investigating how these are contextually created and re-created in communication and discourse.

However, the paradigmatic nature of framing, matched to the very different approaches that have been suggested over time, has opened up new questions and generated a few ambiguities (Reese, 2007). As will be outlined in detail in the next chapter, some of these questions relate to the location and dynamic nature of frames, and to the specific links between frames, their communicative functions, and the framing devices found in discourse.

This thesis approaches the open questions of framing theory by using concepts and tools of social representations theory, in particular the concepts of "anchoring" and "objectification", as found in Moscovici, 1984, and the notion of "argumentative thinking", as found in Billig, 1991). On

a theoretical level, I focus on “internal” and “interactive” dynamism of frames by examining the mechanisms of anchoring and objectification to clarify the nature of the relationship between frames, framing devices, and frame functions. Frames are re-defined as purely social (rather than cognitive) entities, created and re-created in discourse, and capable of having concrete effects at the individual, societal, and political level.

In order to explore and exemplify these concepts, the framing of corruption is investigated at a comparative level in New Zealand and Italy, with a focus on news media, due to its relevance and contribution to the social construction of this particular issue.

Given its contested nature, the corruption phenomenon is used as an example of framing as a social process influenced by context-specific features. The social construction of corruption, and in particular, the role of the media in framing corruption, is an under-investigated in academic scholarship despite being highly relevant for understing corruption.

By means of comparative analysis of news reporting on corruption in two liberal democracies with opposite levels of corruption, this research investigaties how corruption is framed in the New Zealand and Italian media. In particular, it aims to answer the following questions:

- Is corruption differently (or similarly) framed in New Zealand and Italy?
- How can differences/similarities be explained, in light of the contextual specificities of the two countries?
- What is the role of the media in the framing contest about corruption, and - given the importance of the media in curbing corruption (Stapenhurst, 2000), how can media influence powerful actors, political activities, and policy developmen

Methodologically, framing analysis is conducted by means of inductive generation of categories based on frame functions (Entman, 1993), followed by a coding phase and a more interpretive, qualitative investigation of framing devices (in particular, rhetorical devices such as conceptual and ontological metaphors, and narratives).

The media construction of corruption is investigated through the use of case studies: media coverage of two major corruption scandals, the “Taito Philip Field” scandal in New Zealand, and the “Expo” scandal in Italy. Furthermore, I conduct an analysis of the media coverage of the Corruption Perception Index over a period of twenty years (1996-2016) and look at the role and potential power of the media in influencing political activity and policy development. This is

investigated through the case study of the framing of *lafo* and *koha* (two Pacific cultural practices of gift-giving) in the context of New Zealand politics.

1.2. DEFINING CORRUPTION IN ACADEMIA: A FRAMING PERSPECTIVE

Corruption studies constitute a multidisciplinary field of academic interest, involving areas of research, such as political science, economics, law, cultural studies, and media studies. The study of corruption is also central at a global and local level, given the severe impact that high levels of corruption can have for countries, societies, and international relations. There is general agreement that corrupt exchanges always involve an abuse of power (Rose-Ackerman, 1999; della Porta & Vannucci, 2012a), and that citizens, especially those who do not engage in corrupt exchanges, are the major victims of corruption (Vannucci, 2012). Corruption can take a high toll on society; for instance, high levels of corruption have been correlated to high child mortality (Hanf et al., 2011). In economic terms, corruption undermines growth (Mauro, 1995), is responsible for the waste of public money (see for instance Golden & Picci, 2005), and it constitutes an "immoral tax" that is paid by citizens (Donato & Bianco, 2010).

However, corruption is also an abstract concept surrounded by a complex debate over its definition, and, more broadly, over the possibility of reaching agreement over one single definition capable of fully explaining corruption and the set of practices that it encompasses (see Kurer, 2015). One of the most popular definitions of corruption is that offered by Transparency International, the largest non-governmental, anti-corruption organisation. Transparency International defines corruption as "the abuse of entrusted power for private gain"[1], a definition that echoes (with little or no variation) in the work of several scholars (e.g. Rose-Ackerman, 1999; Jain, 2001; Sieger, 2011; Kunicovà, 2006; Johnston, 2005).

However, this is quite a general definition and requires a more in-depth analysis in order to better define the peculiarities of corrupt actions. For instance, Kunicovà (2006, p. 142) defines the term "misuse" as a "deviation from moral and legal standards sanctioned by the people". This would include the range of corruption, also those acts that do not break any law but are considered unethical. However, laws and moral rules can vary substantially from country to country. Does

[1] https://www.transparency.org/what-is-corruption#define. Accessed on 12 April 2018.

this mean that the definition of corruption itself is variable, or are there some universal rules that constitute a reference for everyone to define what is corrupt and what is not?

Bicchieri and Duffy give a definition of corruption that is very similar to that of Rose-Ackerman, describing it as the “illegitimate use of public roles and resources for private benefit” (Bicchieri and Duffy, 1997, p. 61). However, they specify that the illegitimacy of the corrupt action must be based on legal norms, and not on public opinion or social norms. By giving their own definition of corruption, they underline how other definitions are possible, based on different rules. This issue is more deeply faced by Heywood (1997), who tries to define corruption first by legal norms, then through the concepts of democracy and public accountability and eventually by reference to social norms. Legal definitions, he argues, have to face a substantial problem, which is the variability of laws and legal systems in different countries. According to legal definitions, an act that is considered corrupt in one country could be perfectly acceptable in a country with different laws. A second way to define corruption is through the concept of democracy, which is based on the principle of public accountability. When this principle is broken, there is corruption. A further definition of corruption is based on the idea that an act is corrupt as long as it is perceived as such by the public. This definition can be problematic, because of the extreme difficulty in comparing corruption in different cultures (due to the variations in the cultural-based definitions) or the assumption that the public is aware of all sorts of corrupt events that take place.

Similarly, Philp (1997) describes three different ways of defining corruption: “public office-centred”, where corruption is considered as a deviation from the formal duties of a public officer in order to obtain private gain or advantage; “public interest-centred”, that describes corruption as the damage of public interest for private interest; and “market-centred”, that tries to describe corruption using economic methods and models. According to the author, this variety of definitions creates the risk of falling into “conceptual relativism” (Philp, 1997, p. 26) while attempting to universally define corruption. However, the author suggests a way out of it by defining political corruption as the opposite of politics. Arguing that politics implies the right to rule according to common good principles, corrupt actions are those in which a private interest damages the public interest, which is the objective of politics. This definition is not so different from that given by Rose-Ackerman and several other authors and organisations, which acknowledges the existence of corruption in all those cases in which a power-holder is induced by the offer of a reward to act in favour of the donor and therefore against the public interest.

Cartier-Bresson (1997) reports a definition in which three different actors (an agent, a principal, and a third party whose gains and losses depend on the agent) interact. Corruption is defined as the situation in which the agent goes against the interest of his principal and in favour of his own benefit, breaking the law in doing so. If we consider the public as the principal and a public officer as the agent, with a briber acting as a third party, this definition appears to be very similar to the one of Bicchieri and Duffy (1997) reported earlier.

From a social constructionist perspective (Berger & Luckmann, 1967), the variety of definitions, the "definitional dilemma" (Heywood, 1997, p. 5), and the difficulties of reaching full agreement on a normative frame for corruption, show that the idea of corruption is a highly contested issue. Specifically, the debate over the definition of corruption could be seen as a debate over the *framing* of corruption. Frames, in the social constructionist perspective developed principally in the field of political communication and media studies (D'Angelo, 2002), can be defined as "organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world" (Reese, 2001, p. 11). A popular operational definition suggests that frames perform four functions: they "promote a particular problem definition, causal interpretation, moral evaluation, and/or treatment recommendation" (Entman, 1993, p. 52).

Defining corruption according to moral, legal or social norms, or attempting to explain it in terms of its economic causes and consequences, could be described as different choices about how to frame corruption. This act of framing has consequences on how the problem of corruption is defined, its causes and consequences determined, and particular solutions suggested. Framing corruption in strictly legal terms means excluding from the range of corruption phenomena all those actions that might be seen as immoral despite being legal. On the other hand, a purely ethics-based definition of corruption would base the judgment of corruption exclusively on moral principles, while framing corruption as a violation of social norms would suggest a cultural interpretation of the phenomenon. Similarly, an economic perspective would tend to focus on the economic determinants of high or low levels of corruption. These perspectives, as well, bring to a different conclusion about what are the most efficient policies against corruption. A legal frame will tend to focus on the need for changes in the law, or a reinforcement of the judiciary system. An economic perspective will focus on how changes in the economy of a country or a region may help to curb corruption, and what positive effects on the economy can have a reduction in levels of corruption. A political frame will focus on the relationship between political institutions, political

systems, and corruption. All these aspects of corruption have been thoroughly investigated, as will be seen in detail later in this thesis. A last perspective, however, frames corruption as a cultural issue. Rose-Ackerman, for instance, has recorded how several authors “claim that deep cultural, historical and social factors are the fundamental determinants of corruption and also can explain the impact of corruption on economic growth and other variables” (Rose-Ackerman, 2006, p. XX).

The cultural perspective on corruption could be seen as composed of two different layers. The first one (and perhaps the most investigated by scholarly research) is centred on the cultural norms and practices that can favour or reduce corruption and on localised practices of corruption and the normative aspects of corruption networks. Examples are the investigation of religion, familism, the presence of organised crime, or the strength of civic sense in influencing levels of corruption (see Vannucci, 2012), or the analysis of how socialisation to corruption works in specific environments (e.g. Torsello, 2016). This layer includes all research focused on the cultural aspects of corruption.

The second layer, on the other hand, is centred not on corruption practices, but on the public understanding of corruption, that is on how corruption is socially constructed in specific contexts, and what are the potential causes and consequences of the social construction of corruption. This stream of research includes, for instance, studies that demonstrate that corruption negatively affects the relationship between citizenry and political institutions (della Porta, 2000; Anderson & Tverdova, 2003; Clausen, Kraay & Nyiri, 2011). The issue of how corruption is socially constructed, however, has generally been in the background of corruption studies. This, despite its importance, has been suggested by several scholars, who showed how attempts at reform can be unsuccessful when faced with the political officials’ reluctance to make changes, and with a high degree of disengagement on the side of citizens. Della Porta and Vannucci, for instance, have demonstrated how these two features (reluctant politicians, and civic disengagement and disillusionment) have blocked anti-corruption reforms in Italy (della Porta & Vannucci, 1999; 2007).

It has been shown, in the previous paragraphs, how different framings of corruption are able to influence the scholarly debate, and move the focus of academic research. Clearly, academic research combines and integrates different frames and different approaches, and tends to the construction of an integrated body of knowledge that includes all possible and relevant aspects of corruption studies. Nevertheless, the vitality of the academic debate should suffice to

demonstrate how contested is the social construction of corruption, and how differences in definitions and framing can shift the focus on the determination of causes, consequences and judgements of corruption. This social construction of corruption can be assumed to take place (at some level, and perhaps in different forms) in the public debate. Given the importance of framing in determining the dominant perspectives over an issue, the social construction of corruption (that has been defined here as the "second layer" of the cultural perspective on corruption in the academic field) should be considered central to the understanding of corruption in different contexts. An investigation on the public understanding of corruption in different contexts, that is, should constitute a necessary integration to the study of all other aspects of corruption (legal, moral, political, and economic).

This thesis will therefore focus on what is considered a central aspect of the public understanding of corruption, namely the way it is framed in the news media. While the justification of this choice is postponed to the next section, it is here important to observe that the particular perspective supported here (the concept of corruption as a social construction, and an issue of framing) necessitates a clarification of what is meant by framing, and what perspective on framing theory is adopted.

D'Angelo (2002, 2012) suggests that framing should be seen as a multi-paradigmatic research programme, which includes a constructionist paradigm, a critical paradigm, and a cognitive paradigm, and that the combination of results from research in each of these paradigms can bring an integrated, growing body of knowledge. However, in recent years some scholars have argued that framing should be limited to a theory of (cognitive) media effects (see Scheufele & Iyengar, 2017; Cacciatore, Scheufele & Iyengar, 2016). Having its premise in a social constructionist perspective, this thesis argues exactly the opposite, namely that framing is always a social process, and it should be investigated as such. The processes of framing are processes of social construction of reality. They might (and do) have cognitive effects, but that should not invalidate the strictly social nature of framing. Such a perspective, of course, needs to be defended. Therefore, this thesis will develop a critique to framing as a narrow theory of media effects, and will at the same time attempt to develop a systematic and full conceptual and operational perspective on framing as a social constructionist theory. The study of media framing of corruption, in this sense, constitutes both the premise for the theoretical issue raised in this thesis, and the means for the development of new concepts and suggestions in framing theory.

The next section will focus on presenting the research problem and justifying the objects of empirical study of this thesis. Subsequently, the theoretical questions that this thesis raises and attempts to answer will be outlined.

1.3. MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF CORRUPTION IN A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

It has been shown that the concept of corruption is a highly contested one, both in academic discussion and public debate, and that the social construction of corruption is an intriguing and under-explored area of research. Research has demonstrated that the success of anti-corruption reforms can be jeopardised by low trust in politics and civic disengagement (della Porta, 2000; della Porta & Vannucci, 1999), and that these factors can be generated by a perception of corruption as a widespread feature of the political system. In the context of modern democracies, it is reasonable to assume that the news media have a central role in the construction of a public debate on corruption. The central role of the media in the construction of a public understanding of complex issues has been underlined in a seminal paper by Gamson and Modigliani (1989), where the two authors underline the importance of media frames in socially constructing contested issues (in that case, the issue of nuclear power). Corruption is constituted by a range of complex and usually hidden activities, which enter the public debate generally through the news media. It is through the news media that most citizens obtain information over corruption scandals, anti-corruption policies, and developments in the debate over corruption. It is therefore in the news media, that the idea of corruption is socially constructed and re-constructed over time. The central role of corruption has been underlined by research linking lower corruption levels to higher levels of press freedom (Brunetti & Weder, 2003; see Gerli, Mazzoni & Mincigrucci, 2018, for a partially different perspective on the topic). Moreover, scholars have underlined the relevance of the media as a watchdog against corruption that functions through reporting of corruption scandals, encouraging improvements of anti-corruption policies, enhancing public awareness and, more broadly, developing a public debate over corruption, good government and democracy (Stapenhurst, 2000; Peters, 2003).

Constructing and framing corruption in the news media, therefore, is not only to be intended as a means of organising knowledge, but as the potential basis of social behaviour and political action. In this sense, it seems appropriate to draw an analogy with the concept of social representations (Moscovici, 1984), which are considered shared systems of knowledge that guide

behaviours (see, for instance, Jodelet's work on social representations of madness: Jodelet, 1991). Constructing the issue of corruption is not simply a way to understand corruption, but should be seen as potentially able to influence how corruption is addressed at the individual, social and political level.

The fundamental role of journalism in shaping and/or promoting specific perspectives on issues, and specific public policies, has been underlined in much research (e.g. Entman, 2003; Lewis & Reese, 2009), and will be further demonstrated in this thesis. The central problem, in this sense, is the necessity to understand how corruption is framed in the media, and how framing constitutes a social process that is linked to the specificities of different contexts. Research in this area is relatively scarce (Hajdu et al., 2018). A few exceptions are constituted by studies that investigate news media construction of corruption in particular countries (e.g. Kramer, 2013) or in the coverage of a particular corruption scandal (e.g. Giglioli, 1996; Breit, 2010). The most recent research has started to explore the field with a cross-country, comparative perspective. Using computer-assisted content analysis, some scholars have investigated what are the main features of media representations of corruption in a series of European countries, and have found that countries with lower levels of corruption tend to focus more on international scandals, rather than national ones (Mancini, Mazzoni, Cornia & Marchetti, 2017; Hajdu, Pápay, Szántó & Tóth, 2018). However, the methods of this study do not allow an in-depth comparative analysis of the framing of corruption in different contexts, and more research in that sense is necessary (Mancini et al., 2017). The gap has been partially filled by two recent studies investigating how corruption is narratively and metaphorically constructed in seven European countries. These studies have shown how the metaphorical construction of corruption in the news may affect public debate, in particular by hiding certain aspects in favour of others (Bratu & Kažoka, 2016; 2018).

In its empirical chapters, this thesis aims at expanding the knowledge on media framing and representations of corruption. In approaching the subject with a cross-country, comparative perspective, it investigates the topic from a novel perspective. Most research on corruption tends to focus on countries where corruption is widespread or relatively common. In this case, it has been chosen to compare a country with high levels of corruption (Italy) with a country historically characterised by very low levels of corruption (New Zealand). A comparative analysis of most different cases allows making differences and analogies more visible (Skocpol & Somers, 1980; Dogan & Pelassy, 1990), and offers a chance to investigate the unexplored topic of how corruption is socially constructed in countries characterised by high levels of integrity.

1.4. WHY NEW ZEALAND AND ITALY?

New Zealand and Italy are two modern democracies which have a highly relevant difference in terms of levels of corruption. This difference has been certified over the years by Transparency International's yearly Corruption Perception Index (CPI), which ranks countries according to their levels of corruption[2]. Published in early 2016, the CPI 2015 saw New Zealand at its top, scoring 91/100 points and being regarded as the least corrupt country in the world. At the 61st place was Italy, considered (with 44/100 points) the second most corrupt country of the European Union (Bulgaria was at 69th place, with 41/100 points)[3].

A rapid look at the previous and following CPIs shows that the situation of the two countries has been rather stable over the years, indicating that New Zealand has maintained a strong reputation of integrity, while Italy has not been able to successfully tackle widespread corruption. A simple statistical figure can demonstrate the wide gap between levels of corruption in the two countries. In 2007, in New Zealand, there were 0.6 charges of corruption for 100,000 public officers, against the 7.6/100,000 of Italy (Vannucci, 2012, p. 79).

The "Global Corruption Barometer 2013"[4] (another Transparency International's publication) can be used as a basis to draw some comparisons between citizens' perceptions and experiences of corruption in the two countries (full comparative tables are found in Appendix B). For instance, in 2013 a striking 45% of Italians thought that corruption increased a lot in the previous two years, against only 25% of New Zealanders. This, despite the fact that Italy already started from very high levels of corruption, while New Zealand already had an established reputation of honesty and integrity. This detail was well known by citizens of the two countries, as 61% of Italians considered corruption "a serious problem" (against only 18% of New Zealanders), while 28% of the New Zealanders did not believe corruption levels were problematic in their country (the corresponding Italian figure for this question was 2%). As a result, over 60% of Italians believed that government's action against corruption was "ineffective" or "very ineffective", while the same belief was shared by only 34% of New Zealanders. Finally, figures show that in Italy political parties and the Parliament are generally considered corrupt (by respectively 89% and 77% of the

[2] The CPI is a perception-based measure of levels of corruption, but it is regarded as one of the most precise indexes of levels of corruption (see Chapter 4 of this thesis for a detailed discussion).
[3] The most recent version of the CPI (2017) shows a very similar situation. New Zealand is still ranked 1st, while Italy has recovered a few positions and is now in 54th place.
[4] https://www.transparency.org/gcb2013 (Accessed on 8th June 2017). Tables and graphs presented in Appendix B are elaborations of this data.

people), while these figures are halved in the case of New Zealand (46% and 33%). Similarly, the judiciary is considered corrupt by 47% of Italians and 20% of New Zealanders, while public officials and civil servants are considered corrupt by 61% of Italians and only 25% of New Zealanders. All these figures are linked to a higher distrust in Italy in the potential of ordinary citizens to have a positive impact in the fight against corruption (see Figure 2 in Appendix B).

These differences are deep-rooted, and have been linked to socio-historical features of the two countries. The egalitarian culture of New Zealand, its Calvinist tradition and its social conformism, together with its rigid bureaucracy, are all considered determinants of the country's low levels of corruption (Gregory, 2002; Gregory & Zirker, 2013). On the other hand, corruption scandals in Italy have been numerous from the first years after the unification of the Kingdom of Italy in 1861 (Turone, 1992). The systemic nature of corruption in Italy emerged with particular strength in 1992, when the so-called *Tangentopoli* (Bribesville) scandal exploded, involving thousands of people and politicians from all the major political parties, accused of exchanging favours and illegal political funds.

In the context of modern liberal democracies, New Zealand and Italy are positioned at the two ends of the spectrum of levels of corruption, and therefore constitute two valid contexts of study for a comparative analysis of most different cases.

1.5. FRAMING CORRUPTION IN THE NEWS MEDIA: A COMPARATIVE LOOK AT A SOCIAL PHENOMENON

The concept of corruption, as seen, is socially constructed. As such, it is a contested concept, and its construction will be dependent on features of the context in which it is publicly debated. It has been noticed, moreover, that news media are central in the construction of a public debate over contested, complex issues which are relevant to the public life of a country or a society. Understanding how corruption is framed in the news media in different contexts becomes, therefore, a central objective of corruption studies. In a comparative perspective, the empirical part of this thesis is particularly interested at looking at the news media framing of corruption in two contexts characterised by very different levels of corruption. This, as said previously, is a particularly under-investigated field of study. Given this research problem, the choice has been made to analyse how corruption is framed in the news media in New Zealand and Italy, based on

the position of these two countries in the yearly CPI, and on their social and historical features of corruption. I refine the main research questions, therefore, as:

- RQ1: *How is corruption socially constructed in the news media in New Zealand and Italy? Are there relevant differences or similarities? And how can they be interpreted?*
- RQ2: *Can news media, by promoting public debate and participating in the framing contest, contribute to tackling corruption and related issues by influencing powerful actors, political activities, and policy development?*

To answer these questions, this thesis develops a multi-layered research plan. It starts from the analysis of how print news media covered two major corruption cases in New Zealand and Italy. The two cases are chosen according to their relevance to the political life of the country, and this choice reflects the need to investigate corruption at a moment when the public debate about it is particularly lively. In the case of New Zealand, the selected case is the "Taito Phillip Field scandal", which represents the only case in the history of the country of a Member of the Parliament accused and convicted on corruption charges. The case exploded in 2006, and it developed until its conclusion in 2009 with the conviction of Field on several charges. The initial allegation was that, in his position as a Cabinet Minister of a Labour Government, Field had obtained a work visa for a Thai immigrant in exchange for free work on his property in Samoa. For Italy, the case selected is the "Expo scandal", which exploded in 2014 when six individuals (public officials and former politicians) were accused of receiving bribes from an entrepreneur, in exchange for public contracts related to the construction of infrastructure for the global event "Expo 2015", to be held in Milan in 2015.

Methodologically, the coverage of the two cases is investigated by means of a framing analysis operationalised through Entman's definition of frames as performers of four functions (defining a problem, its causes, its moral judgment and its solutions) (Entman, 1993). In this definition can be seen the roots of the idea that framing issues (that is, socially constructing them by giving salience to particular aspects) is not just a discursive act, but the basis for more performative acts. Outlining causes, solutions, and moral judgments clearly constitute a basis for a potential action to address an issue.

Subsequently, results are expanded and confirmed with a framing analysis of the coverage of the Corruption Perception Index in two main print media outlets (one for each country) over a period of 20 years (1996-2016).

The last empirical section further investigates not only the role of the media in framing corruption, but also the power the news media can have in curbing corruption and sparking the development of new policies. Using articles from the media coverage of the "Field scandal" in New Zealand, the role the news media had in developing a public debate over some forms of Polynesian gift-giving practices (specifically, the Samoan practice of *lafo* and the Māori practice of *koha*) is analysed in the context of New Zealand politics. This constitutes further evidence of the social nature and role of framing, and it shows that framing effects not only happen at a cognitive level, but can be independent of the effects of frames on individuals.

The theoretical premise of the whole empirical study lies in a cultural perspective on framing (Van Gorp, 2010), rooted in a social constructionist paradigm of research (D'Angelo, 2002). While this social constructionist perspective on framing is functional to the investigation of the news media framing of corruption, the opposite is also true. Empirical results, that is, are here used to argue that framing is strictly a social process. Moreover, findings are used to exemplify how framing theory can be operationalised in terms of a theory of social interaction.

Engaging with the theoretical debate on framing theory is necessary, in order to justify a social constructionist approach to framing, and to offer an alternative to a narrower perspective on framing as a theory of media effects (Scheufele, 1999; Scheufele & Iyengar, 2017). This last theoretical perspective, indeed, would be incompatible with the theoretical premises of the empirical research presented in this thesis.

1.6. A THEORETICAL DEBATE: LINKING FRAMING THEORY AND THE THEORY OF SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS

The decision of undertaking framing analysis in a social constructionist perspective leads to the necessity of engaging with different perspectives and developments in framing theory. As outlined by D'Angelo (2002), the constructionist paradigm constitutes one part of framing theory as a research programme, the other two paradigms being the critical and the cognitivist. However, a social constructionist perspective on framing theory (Van Gorp, 2010; Reese, 2010) views framing as a social activity, a social process of construction of meaning and reality. This carries a number of consequences. The first one involves some open debates and unresolved ambiguities in framing theory, namely the debate over the location of frames (see Reese, 2010; D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010), and some lack of clarity over the nature and mechanisms of frames'

dynamism (see Chapter 2). The second one involves a particular school of thought that lobbies for a narrower perspective on framing as a theory of (cognitive) media effects (see Scheufele, 1999; Cacciatore, Scheufele & Iyengar, 2016; Scheufele & Iyengar, 2017). This school of thought seems to disagree with the idea of framing as a multi-paradigmatic research programme (D'Angelo, 2002), and claims that framing analysis should be limited to the investigation of individual cognitive effects of media frames.

As this thesis uses a social constructionist view of framing for its empirical analysis, there is a necessity to defend this approach. Therefore, before delving into the empirical part of the thesis, Chapter 2 and, in part, Chapter 7 engage with some theoretical questions involving framing theory:

- TQ1: *Is there a possible theoretical development to solve the debate over the location of frames?*
- TQ2: *Is it possible to conceptualise frames' dynamism so as to agree on its nature,* locus *and potential degree?*
- TQ3: *Is there a possible definition of frames (conceptual and operational) that supports a social constructionist theory of framing, in opposition to framing as a theory of media effects?*

To answer both the empirical and theoretical sets of questions, I start by introducing the theory of social representations (Moscovici, 1984) and the concept of argumentative thinking developed in the field of rhetorical psychology (Billig, 1991). By drawing similarities and introducing new notions, Chapter 2 proposes a theoretical development that sees framing as a theory of social interaction. This expansion and clarification of the scope and concepts of framing, it is argued, becomes necessary when scholars are faced with the challenges of modern communication, the emergence of the concepts of "produser" (Bird, 2011) and "participant audience" (Livingstone, 2013), and the dynamics of interaction in a digital world. This larger scope should be rooted in a multi-paradigmatic approach based on constant dialogue and integration of the results. Social representations theory, I argue, offers a series of ideas and conceptual tools that are introduced in and adapted to framing theory, which might help to expand its scope and clarify its theoretical application.

Moreover, the chapter suggests the introduction of the concepts of "anchoring" and "objectification" (Moscovici, 1984) as explanatory mechanisms of the link between framing devices and frames. By using the news media construction of corruption as a case study, I will

subsequently demonstrate how framing devices are used to anchor and objectify reality through frames.

1.7. STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

The thesis is divided into eight chapters. Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical background of this research. Broadly, it introduces social constructionism and the role of language in the study of the social construction of reality. Later, framing theory is introduced as the chosen approach for the empirical part of the thesis. In order to justify a social constructionist approach to framing, the theoretical debate about framing theory is introduced, and some issues are identified. By drawing comparisons with the theory of social representations (Moscovici, 1984) and rhetorical psychology (Billig, 1991), an attempt to solve some of these issues is made. The chapter tries to answer some of the theoretical questions outlined in this chapter.

Chapter 3 introduces the theme of corruption through an extensive literature review that summarises various debates, from its definition to the identification of its causes, consequences and mechanisms, and its relationship with the media, citizens and democracy.

Chapter 4 is focused on research design and methodological choices. A comparative approach of most different countries is justified. The chapter delves into the historical and social features of corruption in the two countries under investigation (New Zealand and Italy), and outlines their main anti-corruption laws and institutions. By reviewing different theoretical and methodological approaches to framing theory, the chapter also develops an original approach to framing analysis, based on Entman's operationalisation (Entman, 1993) of frames as performers of four functions (identifying causes, offering problem definitions, giving moral judgments, suggesting solutions). This approach is composed of an inductive approach to the creation of codes and categories (Van Gorp, 2010), a systematic coding phase (Matthes & Kohring, 2007), and a more qualitative, in-depth analysis of the texts, with a focus on framing devices, such as metaphors and narratives.

Such a mix is aimed at offering reliable results (through systematic coding and calculation of intercoder reliability), with the minimum loss in terms of validity, depth, and nuances of the analysis. Finally, the chapter describes and justifies the choice of two case studies, and the sampling method.

Chapter 5 shows results from a framing analysis of two case studies (one for each country, selected as prototypical cases). Results from the coding phase are expanded and explained by means of qualitative analysis, in particular by looking at important framing devices, such as metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2000) and narratives. Two dominant, contrasting frames are identified, and their different relevance to the two countries is discussed. A third frame (the "justification" frame) is shared by the two countries, and is discussed separately.

In Chapter 6, the analysis is extended to a sample of articles covering a period of 20 years, to corroborate the findings. Moreover, some anecdotal evidence about the dominance of similar frames in discursive productions of anti-corruption organisations is presented. The chapter also connects the empirical results to the theoretical debate over a social constructionist framing theory. In particular, empirical results from Chapter 5 are used to exemplify how anchoring and objectification (drawn from social representations theory) can be introduced in framing theory as explanatory mechanisms for the link between framing devices, frames, and frame functions. This is a fundamental step towards a full operational definition of frames.

Chapter 7 expands the discourse over the role of news media in constructing corruption, presenting a specific case study of the frame contestation process in which the Samoan cultural practice of *lafo* (a form of gift-giving) is compared with the concept of corruption and negotiated in the context of New Zealand politics. This does not simply represent an interesting case study in the context of New Zealand, but it shows a framing contest in the making, the role played by the media in this contest, and the potential that they have in determining new systems of rules, official positioning, and the development of policies in the context of a legal and institutional void.

The concluding chapter (Chapter 8) puts together all the theoretical and empirical issues touched on in the thesis, and draws a series of conclusions. First, conclusions about media representations of corruption, and the role of the media in the social construction of corruption are outlined. Then, with reference to Chapters 2 and 6, the introduction in framing theory of the two concepts of anchoring and objectification is integrated into a scheme that links the three conceptual and operational concepts of frame, frame functions, and framing devices. After developing a critique to framing as a narrow theory of media effects, a re-definition of frames (rooted in a social constructionist paradigm) is suggested. This definition includes both conceptual and operational elements. Finally, the main results of the thesis are summarised, strengths and limitations of the empirical study are outlined, and avenues for future research are explored.

CHAPTER 2 – THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Corruption affects all aspects of the social, economic and political life of a country. Perhaps more importantly, research has shown that levels of corruption are influenced by a wide range of economic, political and social variables. Democracy, for instance, is linked to lower levels of corruption (e.g. Shen & Williamson, 2005). Not all democratic countries, however, have low levels of corruption. Italy is a vivid example of a democratic country with high levels of corruption.

Many economic, political and institutional determinants (or facilitators) of corruption have been thoroughly investigated (e.g. Lambsdorff, 2006; Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). This includes the study of the link between press freedom and corruption (Brunetti & Weder, 2003). However, one of the most quoted, but perhaps less studied aspects of corruption is its cultural aspect. Culture is often considered the most important determinant of corruption levels (Rose-Ackerman, 2006), and corruption has been linked to cultural aspects of societies, such as religion, nepotism, and widespread cultural practices (Vannucci, 2012; Heywood, 1997).

Finding statistical correlations between levels of corruption and cultural beliefs or practices can present several difficulties, and the limitations inherent in the quantification of social constructs. That is why investigating cultural aspects of corruption (one of the main objectives of this thesis) can certainly benefit from a social constructionist approach. Studying the social construction of corruption in particular contexts is a fundamental step towards localised understandings of corruption. This is even more so when it takes the form of a comparative study between countries with similar institutions and political systems, but very different outcomes in terms of corruption levels.

This chapter introduces the social constructionist paradigm of research and the importance of language for the social construction of corruption, and consequently explains the choice of using a social constructionist approach to framing analysis for the study of corruption in New Zealand and Italy. Framing theory has the double advantage of focusing on communication (and in particular on language) to understand how issues are socially constructed, and of being interested in the relationships of dominance (that is, in the study of contrasting frames, and how some of them dominate the public discourse in specific contexts) in the framing contest (Entman, 2003).

The chapter proceeds by summarising the current state of framing theory, and outlining a series of open debates and ambiguities in the theoretical system. Specifically, the difficulties in the integration of the constructionist/critical approach with the cognitive one; the unsolved debate

over the location of frames; the ambiguity in defining the nature of frames' dynamism; and the need to clarify the role of framing in influencing political action and group behaviour.

By introducing ideas and concepts from the theory of social representations (Moscovici, 1984) and from rhetorical psychology (Billig, 1991), it is shown how these ambiguities can be overcome. This strenghtens the idea of framing as a multi-paradigmatic research programme (D'Angelo, 2002) that includes a real integration of results obtained through different approaches. This is mainly the result of reformulating framing as an eminently social constructionist concept, eliminating the conflict between constructionist and critical views of framing, and a narrower cognitive approach to framing as a theory of media effects.

The chapter concludes by situating the empirical part of this thesis in the constructionist paradigm, and by underlining how results from the empirical analysis are explanatory of some of the new concepts introduced in framing theory.

2.1. SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONISM AND THE IMPORTANCE OF LANGUAGE

Rooted in symbolic interactionism (Mead, 1934; Blumer, 1969), social constructionism is a multidisciplinary theoretical orientation that offers an approach alternative to traditional empiricism (Danzinger, 1997) in the social sciences, and in particular in sociology and social psychology (Burr, 2005). It was introduced into sociology by the work of Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, who theorised a "sociology of knowledge" dealing with "the empirical variety of 'knowledge' in human societies, but also with the process by which *any* body of 'knowledge' comes to be socially established *as* reality" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 15, italics in original). According to their ideas, what people perceive as "reality" is in fact "common-sense knowledge" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 27), and this knowledge is built on social interaction. Social interaction, therefore, has a performative power that develops on at least two levels: first, it *creates* and *re-creates* reality, that is, it gives specific meanings to objects, events, relationships; secondly, it is the basis for human behaviour.

Social constructionism is characterised by a degree of scepticism towards the presumption of objectivity and the use of scientific method in the social sciences (Burr, 2005; Danziger, 1997). One argument is centred on the idea that the scientific method is not suitable for the study of "facts that are largely nonrepeatable and which fluctuate markedly over time" (Gergen, 1973, p.

310), such as human behaviour (which substantially differs, for instance, from physics or chemistry). Human behaviour is considered context-dependent, and its understanding, according to social constructionism, should be historically and culturally grounded, rather than based on an attempt to draw universal laws (Gergen, 1973, Burr, 2005). This view implies a series of methodological considerations, including a critique to purely quantitative approaches to social research and a centrality of qualitative, explorative studies that better suit the investigation of social phenomenon. In a social constructionist perspective, protocols, variables, statistics and controls, despite their elegance, "do not provide the empirical validation that genuine empirical social science requires" (Blumer, 1969, p. 32), and "what is needed is a return to the empirical social world" (Blumer, 1969, p. 34).

As the most common means of social interaction, language and discourse are a central concern of social constructionism. Berger and Luckmann (1967, p. 51) regard language as "the most important sign system of human society", and sign systems are considered the means for the creation of reality. But the power of language extends beyond the simple creation of the present reality. Through language it is possible to construct abstract concepts and to bring back realities from the past, actualising them in the present. Language is the means to construct and re-construct reality over time, and becomes therefore "essential for any understanding of the reality of everyday life" (Berger & Luckmann, 1967, p. 52).

Language, moreover, is not transparent. Realities created through language are not necessarily objective. Categorisation through language, for instance, creates socially constructed boundaries that can be modified over time, but it becomes, nonetheless, the basis of knowledge and human action in their specific context. Mills, for instance, shows how the socially constructed category of "animals" once included bacteria, which later came to constitute a category of their own (Mills, 2004, p. 47). Discursive psychology, moreover, offers a strong conceptualisation of the performative power of language. Language is not just used to construct knowledge, but to produce effects on reality, such as in the case of a priest declaring two individuals "husband and wife" (Burr, 2005). Through the use of interpretative repertoires, individuals use language and discourse to pursue their objectives and act on reality (Potter and Wetherell, 1987, Potter, 1996, Billig, 1991). The study of language is therefore central to social psychology, as the struggle to shape a favourable reality for the individual takes place inside discourses.

Far from denying the importance of other elements, such as behaviour or attitudes, social constructionism suggests that language and discourse have a strong influence on societies and

individuals. Their power lies in the capacity of creating societies' perceived realities, modifying them in space and time, and therefore constituting the basis for the knowledge that guides attitudes and behaviours.

The social constructionist perspective on language as a tool for constructing reality and exerting power is strictly linked to another theory interested in the relationship between communication, knowledge and power. Framing theory investigates how knowledge is structured and organised in the public discourse through the process of framing, and how different frames of the same object of knowledge, supported by different powerful actors, constantly engage a battle for dominance in what has been defined as a "framing contest" (Entman, 2003, p. 419).

2.2. FRAMING THEORY AND FRAMING ANALYSIS: CONCEPTS AND DEBATES

Framing is a well-established and widely used concept in communication research, and framing theory is at the core of many studies in political communication and mass communication (D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010). It makes large use of the analysis of language, images and symbols to investigate how issues are socially constructed in the interactive public arena (which includes the media, politics and citizenry), and how these constructions can influence individual cognition, social behaviours and political choices.

Throughout the years, framing theory has been the subject of a lively debate involving its definition, scope and concepts (e.g. Entman, 1993; Scheufele, 1999; D'Angelo, 2002; Reese, 2007; Van Gorp, 2007; Cacciatore, Scheufele & Iyengar, 2016; Krippendorff, 2017).

Gamson and Modigliani (1987) define a frame as a "central organizing idea or story line that provides meaning" through the use of linguistic and/or visual devices. In their view, frames are inserted in a larger cultural environment in which public discourses are built and modified over time by different actors in different arenas. Therefore, media are by no means the only producers of frames, although they are particularly relevant in the study of framing in their double role of contributors to frames' creation and arena for multiple voices participating in public debate (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989).

Similarly, Reese (2001, p.11) defines frames as "organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world", and he underlines their dynamic quality (Reese, 2007).

This cultural perspective on framing derives from a social constructionist approach to knowledge, situating frames at the level of society. In this view, media, politics, citizenry and other relevant participants to the public debate all contribute, with different levels of power, to the social construction of frames. Frames, therefore, are built and modified by opposing forces, some that tend to reproduce (strategically or involuntarily) existing frames, and some that use their power of influence in an attempt to introduce new frames, modifying existing ones, or changing their order of dominance over the public debate (Entman, 2003; Reese, 2010).

Entman (1993) locates frames at four different levels: communicator, text, receiver and culture. A culture, he specifies, is the "empirically demonstrable set of common frames exhibited in the discourse and thinking of most people in a social grouping" (Entman, 1993, p. 53). Similarly, Van Gorp describes the framing process as a form of interaction with cultural elements and repertoires used to make sense of emerging issues (Van Gorp, 2007, 2010). Framing, moreover, involves power, as frames are reproduced in media content and influenced by powerful actors with interests in specific issues. The interaction between politics and journalism practices, for instance, is at the centre of several framing studies (e.g. Lewis & Reese, 2009; Reese & Lewis, 2009), and so is the analysis of the social movement's influence on framing contests (Carragee & Roefs, 2004).

Part of the debate, on the other hand, has focused on how frames can affect the schemata of individuals by emphasising particular elements, and how these pre-existing individual schemata can function as a filter through which news texts are read and interpreted (Entman, 1993). This perspective emphasises the social psychological aspects of framing, and in particular the modes of and extents to which frames can influence individual attitudes, behaviours and emotional responses. Entman (1993) exemplifies the concept of framing effects by bringing an example of the seminal work of Kahneman and Tversky (1984) on the interaction between framing and the individual's decision making. In this view, while frames are formally situated at the level of culture, the focus of framing theory lies in the interaction between news frames and individual schemata.

De Vreese (2005) refers to two different processes of framing, namely "frame building" and "frame setting". While the first one is focused on how frames are constructed in the media environment (through internal and external factors), the second one is concerned with the "interaction between media frames and individuals' prior knowledge and predisposition" (de Vreese, 2005, p. 52). Moreover, de Vreese underlines that frames have effects at an individual level (for instance with changes in attitudes) and at societal level (as contributors to the shaping

of social processes). However, the influence of these frames at the societal level are not further investigated or conceptualised.

Following a quite strict cognitive paradigm of research, some framing scholars have called for a narrow definition of framing as a theory of media effects (Scheufele, 1999; Cacciatore, Scheufele & Iyengar, 2016, Scheufele & Iyengar, 2017), focused exclusively on the interaction between media frames and individual cognition, attitudes and emotions. Using this approach, Iyengar (1987) has demonstrated that individual's explanations of relevant issues can be influenced by how the media frame them. In particular, Iyengar's study shows that individual explanations of issues as caused by societal factors or individual factors can be influenced by reading news that frames these issues in thematic or episodic terms. However, while this influence was demonstrated for issues, such as poverty and terrorism, it was not for unemployment. Iyengar offers two alternative explanations for this exception, namely an intrinsic, semantic frame of the word "unemployment", or the prominence of economic problems in the public discourse leading to the suggestion that economy is the cause of unemployment. However, a broader approach to framing might be of help in explaining these results. Out of the cognitive paradigm and the experimental setting, and according to a cultural perspective on framing, the last of Iyengar's explanations could be seen as the influence of a pre-existing, dominant and widespread frame that leads to people's interpretation of unemployment as a social issue, regardless of the frame presented in the specific text used for the experiment. Therefore, Iyengar's study does not necessarily disprove framing effects on the issue of unemployment. It suggests, instead, the possibility that the contingent presentation of a particular frame is not always able to exert more power than a pre-existing, salient frame. This suggestion is somehow supported by Iyengar's own data on the mainly thematic (instead of episodic) coverage of unemployment in American media during the period 1981-1986 (Iyengar, 1990). One of the problems of studying frames exclusively as structures of the news with potential "activation" effects on individuals (Scheufele & Scheufele, 2010) is that the social and cultural aspects of frames are relegated into the background, and all potential influences at the societal level tend to be disregarded. Studying framing effects, however, should keep account that "citizens are […] quite susceptible to framing effects in the real world, which often involve not one exposure to a slight message variation, but a pattern of repeated exposure of resonant words and images" (Entman, 2010, p. 333).

Certainly, the study of framing effects and “activation” models (Cacciatore, Scheufele & Iyengar, 2016) constitutes an important part of framing theory and framing analysis. However, it might be useful to approach framing more broadly, by integrating quantitative and qualitative methods, experimental and non-experimental designs, research on media effects, as well as the role of “individual critical thought and social interaction […] in shaping the connections between media frames and public opinion” (Brewer & Gross, 2010, p. 173).

D’Angelo (2002) has schematised these different approaches into three main paradigms: cognitivist, constructionist and critical. While research under a cognitive paradigm is focused on framing effects on individuals, the other two paradigms investigate framing at the societal level, the processes of frame building and evolution, and the role of power in the framing contest. Research conducted under each of these paradigms has produced important results, and improved our understanding of the framing processes and their potential to influence individuals and groups. In an attempt to unify all these research efforts, D’Angelo inserts them into a larger multi-paradigmatic research programme, a view endorsed by scholars such as Reese (2010) and Matthes (2012).

Frames, therefore, should not be considered elements of media content or individual cognition. They constitute the cultural environment (as per Entman’s definition, 1993) in which knowledge around an issue is constructed, re-constructed, reinforced, partially destroyed or modified. It is a dynamic environment where “frames define the terms of debate; shape public opinion through the persuasive use of symbols; and, when most effective, lead to public policy change” (Lewis & Reese, 2009, p. 85). In other words, “frames are more than cognitive structures of meaning […] They are tools used by social actors to structure reality, […] are embedded in and resonate with everyday culture, and thus are considered normal and natural” (Lewis & Reese, 2009, p. 87).

A cultural approach to frames may not appeal to those who have preference for controlled experiments that can demonstrate or disprove the existence of causal links between frames and elements of individual cognition. However, the search for causal links is not able to explain the totality of the interaction between media content, the processes of media content production, media content exposure, and the interaction between media and powerful actors of the public arena. The scope of framing (which includes, but should not be limited to, the study of framing in terms of media effects) can be seen as broader, as a thorough investigation into how issues are socially constructed, which actors exert more or less power in this public process, and what

potential effects can frames have for societies, in terms of individual attitudes and behaviours, but also in terms of group behaviour, and policy development.

Integrating knowledge emerging from a range of different approaches allows obtaining more significant results. Studies in the cognitive, attitudinal and emotional effects of media frames (e.g. Iyengar, 1987; Gross, 2008) have demonstrated that these effects exist. As a consequence, we can realistically assume that the struggle for dominance in the framing contest has the potential to affect individuals and societies at large. We can realistically expect, moreover, that widespread frames will have an influence on the development of public policies and, once they are embedded in a culture, will turn into socially shared perspectives that are taken for granted (Lewis & Reese, 2009; Van Gorp, 2010).

Moreover, a social perspective on framing helps to remember that frames have a multi-directional influence, and media content producers (including journalists) are influenced by dominant frames during the processes of news selection and creation (Van Gorp, 2010). This is clearly evidenced by results (drawn from qualitative analysis) of research into the framing in the USA of the "war on terror" (Reese & Lewis, 2009; Lewis & Reese, 2009). This study also shows how a specific frame, in this case, was strategically built by the world of politics, adopted by the media and became socially shared.

The variety of approaches, the different definitions, and the multidisciplinary reach of framing theory have generated a vast and complex theoretical system. However, the theoretical background of framing is not devoid of ambiguities and issues. In the next paragraph, these points of debate will be outlined and described, before attempting to solve them by introducing a second theory, the theory of social representations.

2.3. AMBIGUITIES AND THEORETICAL GAPS IN FRAMING THEORY

The previous paragraph introduced what is arguably the main unresolved issue of framing theory, namely the possibility of different approaches and paradigms to coexist and integrate their results. While the idea of framing as a multi-paradigmatic research programme (D'Angelo, 2002) has the merit of offering a valuable step towards the co-existence of multiple approaches, the integration of a cognitive paradigm with the other two (constructionist and critical) remains complicated. On the one hand, some influential supporters of framing as a theory of (cognitive) media effects have been reluctant to expand the scope of framing, and have instead reaffirmed

the importance of a narrow scope to obtain significant results (Cacciatore, Scheufele & Iyengar, 2016: Scheufele & Iyengar, 2017). On the other hand, D'Angelo's formulation of a multi-paradigmatic research programme perhaps has not effectively underlined the importance not only of using multiple paradigms, but of integrating results from different perspectives so as to increase the body of knowledge in the field of framing. Arguably, however, the main obstacle to the creation of an integrated research programme lies in the difficulties of reconciling a social constructionist and critical perspective with a cognitivist one. The solution, as will be argued later in this chapter, might lie in the formulation of framing theory in a strictly social constructionist perspective that, however, incorporates the study of how social constructions can affect human cognition and emotional responses.

A second issue in framing theory, as recognised by some scholars, is about the "continuing and unresolved debate about the […] location of frames (D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010, p. 2; see also Reese, 2010). Are frames to be found in media content, news organisations, individual cognition, culture, or in a mix of these places? This issue is somehow linked to the first one, as specific answers (e.g., frames are part of the individual cognition, versus frames are part of culture) might reinforce a particular paradigm of research at the expense of the others. Here, it is argued that this point of contention could be solved by shifting the question from *where* are frames found, to *what is the nature* of frames?

While these first two points represent open debates in framing theory, other issues could better be defined as ambiguities, parts of the theory that have not been fully clarified or have been, for one reason or another, neglected.

One of these ambiguities concerns the dynamism of frames. While the dynamism of frames has been theorised (e.g. Scheufele, 1999; Reese, 2010) and is somehow implicit in the idea of the framing contest (Entman, 2003), it has never been fully clarified. What is the nature and the extent of this dynamic quality? Is the dynamism of frames limited to changes in dominance of opposing frames, or are frames internally dynamic, subject to gradual or abrupt change? What forces drive the dynamism of frames? This chapter suggests that dynamism in framing could be classified in terms of interactive and internal, two intertwined but conceptually separated processes that both have a fundamental role in the framing activity.

Another ambiguity (perhaps a fully missing concept) concerns the description of the processes that link specific framing devices, such as metaphors, images, and symbols, to their frames. While the mechanisms through which framing devices and frames exert power in the framing contest

have been described as salience, placement and repetition (Entman, 1991, 1993), it is not clear how the connection of a framing device to a frame should operate. Here, it is argued that two concepts drawn from social representations theory (anchoring and objectification) have the characteristics to be introduced in framing theory to explain this particular process.

Finally, while the role of framing in influencing opinions, attitudes, emotions and individual behaviours has been widely explored, the potential link between framing and socio-political action (such as policy development, or group dynamics) remains under-explored. Despite the limits for the investigation of such issues, it is important to focus part of the theoretical debate on their potential.

In an attempt to disentangle the outlined debates, and solving ambiguities, it could be useful to draw and adapt some concepts from the theory of social representations (Moscovici, 1984).

Social representations theory and its interest in common people's construction of knowledge and their role in social interaction allows expansion of the focus of framing theory to the potential of citizens in influencing the framing contest. This is particularly important in relation to the profound changes that have happened with the development and spread of digital means of communication. These changes have heavily involved the relationships between communicators and audiences, with growing means of direct, multi-directional interaction (for example through social media) of politics, journalists and citizens. For example, during the Arab Spring, common citizens' conversations online had a prominent role in framing the issue of democracy and sparking a debate that would eventually become an organised protest (Howard et al., 2011). It is more and more common, in the digital era, that content produced by individuals (and not just by organised, relatively powerful social movements) becomes "viral" and influences the public debate over specific issues. It is important for framing theory to recognise the full potential of framing processes, and to view audience members not only as active interpreters of frames (Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Entman, 2003; Matthes, 2011), but also as active participants in the framing contest. It seems important to recognise that this active role is not necessarily limited to organised groups and movements, but that in widely connected environments, single individuals and small interactions may gain a strong framing power.

The following sections constitute an attempt to link framing analysis and social representations theory, and to use some elements of the latter to clarify ambiguities and a lack of precision in the former. Firstly, it is necessary to introduce the theory of social representations as proposed by Moscovici (1984), which was developed in the course of a long debate over the nature and

importance of social representations in the field of social psychology. As will be seen, this theory has several points of contact with framing theory. Some of its concepts, therefore, can usefully contribute to the development of framing theory. In the light of all these elements, the scope of framing theory can be reformulated in favour of D'Angelo's view of framing as a multiparadigmatic research programme (D'Angelo, 2002); a paradigm that is reinforced by these proposed theoretical developments.

2.4. THE THEORY OF SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS

I will here outline the major points of the theoretical debate over social representations from the publication of Serge Moscovici's *La Psychanalyse – Son Image et Son Public* in 1961 (Moscovici, 2008 [original edition Moscovici, 1961]) to the present. As explained by Moscovici, the theory of social representations was born in reaction to two philosophical positions that shared a view of common sense as "infectious and wrong" (Moscovici & Markovà, 1998, p.375), the Marxist-Leninist, and the position of Enlightenment. Moscovici's aim was to restore the value of common sense and emphasize the capacity of people to construct and share valuable knowledge of reality in everyday life and interaction. In that sense, despite some reluctance towards the association (see Moscovici & Markovà, 1998), the theory shares several elements with social constructionism in sociology (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). Perhaps the best way to start describing this theory is to give a definition of social representation. However, Moscovici himself does not offer a clear-cut definition of the term (Billig, 1991). Quite vaguely, social representations are described as "a kind of symbolic organization of knowledge and language" (Moscovici and Markovà, 1998, p. 378). Despite the vagueness, this definition points out two important features of social representations, that is their connection with language and knowledge. Social representations are social means for understanding and constructing reality. People are born in a social world filled with social representations, and these representations are the filter through which people's knowledge and opinions about the world are derived. At the same time, social representations are continuously reproduced and modified through social interaction (Moscovici, 1984). Their function is to conventionalize the world by situating new concepts and unfamiliar objects into a set of known categories, confronting them with prototypes and inserting them into a structure. As a social and cultural product, social representations exist beyond the individual, and individuals are born in societies that share specific social representations. New

representations and changes in the existing ones are the result of development and conflict of these shared social representations (Moscovici and Markovà, 1998, p. 383).

Social representations occupy the space between percepts (what is perceived by human senses) and concepts: they constitute the framework in which perceptions are transformed into knowledge. This task, according to Moscovici, coincides with that of "making something unfamiliar […], familiar" (Moscovici, 1984, p. 24), thus creating *consensual universes* that people can share and that become the background for the construction of knowledge. In their first conceptualization, social representations are described in opposition to scientific procedures, since the latter aim at challenging common sense, and discover new categories through the exercise of "mak[ing] the familiar unfamiliar" (Moscovici, 1984, p. 28).

The mechanisms described by Moscovici to explain the process of making the unknown understandable are two: anchoring and objectifying. Anchoring is the process of categorizing something, giving it a name and classifying it by confronting it with a prototype: thus, the object of anchoring is inserted into a pre-existing conceptual structure and becomes familiar. Anchoring is never a neutral action; categorizing means choosing to focus on some features of the object to the detriment of others. In this respect, the process of anchoring is a reminder of Entman's explanation of how frames are constructed through selection and repetition of specific framing devices (Entman, 1993).

Objectifying, on the other hand, is the process of creating a new category and inserting it in the shared social reality, thus allowing it to become part of common sense. Moscovici (1984, pp. 39-40) brings the example of the term "complex" (p. 39-40), a concept born in the context of psychoanalysis, later incorporated into common sense and now part of shared knowledge. Through anchoring and objectifying, social representations are "a means of re-creating reality" (Moscovici, 1984, p. 53).

Billig (1991) offers a critical review of the theory of social representations through the perspective of rhetorical social psychology. His approach puts public debate and the argumentative nature of dialogue and thinking at the centre of the evolution of knowledge and common sense. He emphasizes the importance, in the development of Moscovici's theory, of introducing mechanisms that could give account of the dynamism of social representations. These mechanisms are identified in the possibility of negation and in the variability of common sense, which defines the importance of arguments about the evolution of social representations (Billig, 1991). This critical review of the theory has the fundamental merit of bringing the question

of the dynamism of social representations to the core of the theoretical debate. While this dynamism had been expressed by Moscovici's previous work (see, for instance, Moscovici, 1988), Billig clarifies its theoretical importance, later recognized again by Moscovici (Moscovici & Markovà, 1998) and others. For instance, Bauer and Gaskell (1999, p. 169) write that the stability of social representations "is precarious, permanently open to challenge", and that "[i]n this sense representations are social, evolving as a result of challenges posed by others and from coping with the 'brute facts' of the world". This important clarification allows the underlining of the dialogical nature of social representations (Markovà, 2003), which sets "the unit of analysis of social representations" in "the Ego-Alter unit of communicating people, taking each other into account, and being coordinated by we-intentions" (Bauer & Gaskell, 2008, p.343). In this sense, communication becomes not only the action that is made possible by the existence of social representations (as theorized by Moscovici, 1973), but the action through which social representations are created and re-created. The theory, that is, becomes a "theory of social representations and communication", interested in the study of "those social phenomena that have become, for one reason or other, the subject of public concern" (Markovà, 2003, p.143).

From this conceptualization of the theory is derived a stream of research interested not only in the formation of common sense, but in the critical exploration of social representations, and in how the interaction between individuals, groups and societies are mediated by power in the negotiation of common sense and knowledge (see Howarth, 2006).

2.5. FRAMING THEORY AND SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS THEORY: WHAT DO THEY HAVE IN COMMON?

The reason why framing theory could benefit from concepts derived from social representations theory is that they have similarities both in their conceptualization of knowledge and meaning-making as products of social interaction and communication, and in their objects of analysis. In this section, I summarize the main similarities between the two theories.

***Definition**:* Reese (2001, p.11) defines frames as "organizing principles that are socially shared and persistent over time, that work symbolically to meaningfully structure the social world". Previously, Gamson & Modigliani (1987) had defined a frame as "a central organizing idea or

story line that provides meaning to an unfolding strip of events". These two definitions share what could be considered the core notions behind the idea of framing: frames *organize* concepts and events with the purpose of giving them a structure and therefore *create meaning*. Reese, moreover, underlines in his definition the idea of frames as *socially shared* entities.

The notion of frame shares all these three features with the notion of social representation. In social representations theory, the social nature of representations is embedded in their name. Wagner and Hayes (2005, p.122) underline that ideas "should be considered social representations only if they are predominantly but not necessarily entirely shared by the members of a group that is culturally distinct in a society". In his seminal essay, moreover, Moscovici points out that "the purpose of all representations is to make something unfamiliar, […] familiar" (Moscovici, 1984). That is, the purpose is to create structure and meaning (Wagner & Hayes, 2005), as further underlined by Jodelet's definition of social representations as "knowledge structures orchestrating the totality of significations relative to the known object" (Jodelet, 1991, p. 13).

The double focus on society and individuals: rooted in social psychology, the theory of social representations has from the very beginning been interested in the importance of representations both for the society and the individuals. Bauer and Gaskell, in proposing a paradigm for research, suggested that social representations are to be found "at the crossroad between the individual and society", as "a space in-between, a medium linking objects, subjects and activities", and that representations "are embodied in communication *and* individual minds" (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999, p.167). Some research (e.g. Sibley, Liu & Kirkwood, 2006) has investigated the role of social representations in mediating individual attitudes.

Similarly, some framing theorists, such as Entman (1993), have suggested that frames are to be found both at the level of societies and individual cognition. The importance of frames in affecting individual cognition and emotional responses has been at the centre of a stream of research on media framing effects (see, for instance, Iyengar, 1987; Scheufele, 1999; Gross, 2008).

The study of objects and processes: it has been noted that both frames and social representations are treated as objects of study, and as such, their features and content are investigated in order to know them. However, both theories also give relevance to the processes

behind the formation of these objects. Critical approaches to both theories have investigated the role of politics, social movements and other powerful actors in the construction of social representations and the framing contest (Howarth, 2006; Lewis & Reese, 2009).

The dynamics of persistence and change: Reese's definition (Reese, 2001) states that frames are characterized by persistence, a concept that is further developed through the suggestion that powerful frames can be embedded in culture and come to be seen as natural and normal (Lewis & Reese, 2009). However, Reese also underlines "their dynamic quality, their ability to project knowledge ahead as they guide the structure of incoming experience" (Reese, 2007, p.150). Similarly, Van Gorp (2007) underlines that frames have a persistent character, but that they can gradually change over time, and that they live in a dynamic context of contestation. Both persistence and change are, in a way, dynamic qualities. While the dynamism of change is self-evident, the dynamism of persistence consists in the solidification of a particular frame through continuous reproduction and reinforcement. This is a quality that also belongs to social representations, some of which are described by Moscovici as so deep-rooted in society as to have become prescriptive, and being continually "re-thought, re-cited and re-presented" (Moscovici, 1984, p. 9). Like frames, though, social representations are prone to change (Moscovici & Markovà, 1998), especially in times when their object becomes the centre of public debate (see Billig, 1991; Markovà, 2003).

The importance of language and communication: developed mainly in the field of communication and media studies, framing theory is particularly interested in the analysis of language. Frames are considered as clusters of linguistic (and visual) devices (such as lexicon, metaphors and other tropes, narratives, catchphrases, images) by most scholars (e.g. Entman, 1993; Pan & Kosicki, 1993).

Language and communication are at the core of social representations theory as well. According to Markovà (2003), the theory of social representations should also be considered a theory of communication, and this is confirmed by Moscovici's statement that "communication is the most important process in the study of social representations" (Moscovici & Markovà, 1998, p.394). Drawing another similarity with framing analysis, scholars of social representations theory suggest that the two processes of anchoring and objectification are expressed through images,

metaphors, personifications, tropes and antinomies (Bauer & Gaskell, 1999; Wagner & Hayes, 2005; Höijer, 2011).

The objects of research: commonalities in the social conception of the theories and the role they assign to communication and language result in similarities in the objects of investigation. Both framing analysis and research on social representations have focused strongly on media content, production and consumption, and the dynamics of power in the production and contestation of frames/representations. Moscovici's first study on psychoanalysis (Moscovici, 2008) involved both the analysis of individuals' representations, and representations in media content. Analysis of media content has been at the centre of social representations theory throughout the years (see Farr, 1993; Wagner & Hayes, 2005), and the introduction of social representations theory as a theory for media research has been suggested by Höijer (2011), along with several examples of such research.

All these similarities, and in particular the importance given by social representations theory to the study of communication and media, suggest that the two theories might benefit from a comparative analysis. In the next section, it is suggested how some of the ideas developed in the theory of social representations can help to develop a clearer and more structured framing theory.

2.6. FROM LOCATION TO NATURE OF FRAMES: FRAMES AS SOCIAL CONSTRUCTS

As argued by Reese (2010, p. 21), the debate over the location of frames has often been confusing, which poses the risk of misunderstandings in framing theory. In his seminal paper on framing theory, Entman (1993) argues that frames are to be found in at least four locations: the communication process, the text, the receiver and culture. He added that "culture might be defined as the empirically demonstrable set of common frames exhibited in the discourse and thinking of most people in a social grouping" (Entman, 1993, p.53). Earlier, Entman (1991) had argued that frames existed at the level of individual cognition and the level of news texts, a view shared, for example, by Scheufele (1999). This shift from a double location of frames (media content and individual cognition) to the broader location of frames in the cultural realm seems to have dominated the debate over framing theory in the following years. Even before Entman's paper, Gamson and Modigliani (1989) had situated frames in the domain of public discourse, and, more

largely, in culture. Reese himself answers the “confusing question” by giving frames a cultural origin, and therefore locating them in what he calls a “web of culture” (Reese, 2010, p.18-21). Following Goffman (1974), Van Gorp (2007, 2010) not only considers frames a part of culture, but also underlines that, while they can affect individual cognition, they are “situated largely externally of the individual” (Van Gorp, 2007, p.62). In this conceptualization, frames constitute a cultural repertoire that links news production and consumption, by becoming part of media content and interacting with the individual schemata of journalists and audience.

While some common points can be found in the different positions around the debate over the location of frames, some theoretical disagreement exists over whether frames are to be found only in media content and individual cognition, or rather in both these locations, and in culture at large, or perhaps exclusively in culture, while individuals adopt other cognitive mechanisms to interpret these purely cultural frames. Moreover, even single attempts often struggle in establishing a precise location. Van Gorp’s conceptualization of frames as situated “largely externally to the individual”, for instance (Van Gorp, 2007, p. 62), logically implies that they might partially be inside the individual. Moreover, locating frames at multiple levels may create contradictions and, consequently, confusion. Locating an object implies assigning it a physical, concrete nature. If frames are found somewhere, then it is assumed that they are objects. And a specific object cannot have two or more physical natures. A frame, for instance, is either an element of cognition, or an element of a media text. Saying that a frame is found in media text and human cognition means one of two things: either the same label (frame) is being assigned to two different objects, or the same object is being assigned two different physical natures. The second option is impossible, while the first one would require the creation of two different labels to distinguish two different objects. Reese has underlined this point by noticing that “[f]rames, as a semantic equivalency, refer to structures in various locations (cultural, symbolic, and psychological)”, and that a frame should always be considered “an abstraction” that “finds its manifestation in various locations” (Reese, 2010, p. 21).

So, are frames to be found at the level of society (culture), in individual minds (cognition), or in social products such as media content? The impossibility of drawing a satisfactory answer suggests that the question might be wrong or misleading. Frames are not objects, but abstract concepts/ideas which are expressed in different locations. What is found in media texts and human cognition are not the frames themselves, but *expressions* of frames. The text (or the framing device) that expresses a certain frame should not be confused with the frame itself.

Human cognition, media texts and culture are the places where framing processes happen, where frames are expressed, generated and reproduced.

So, the important question is not *where* frames are to be found, but *what is the nature* of frames? The answer to this question can be drawn from the theory of social representations.

In social representations theory, the debate over the location of social representations (at the level of societies, of individuals, or both) plays a certain relevance. Bauer and Gaskell (1999) situate social representations in social interaction *and* individual cognition. However, as argued by Wagner and Hayes (2005, p.125), "if […] we speak of social representations as being simultaneously individual knowledge contents and social discourse models, then we mean to understand this separation more as an analytical than an actual duality". Somehow, the nature of social representations could never be put in doubt, if anything because it is embedded in the name of the theory itself. Social representations, by definition, are *social*. This means that social representations are created and re-created in social interaction, and therefore must be considered social products, or, in a social constructionist perspective (Berger & Luckmann, 1967), social constructs. This is well outlined by Bauer and Gaskell (2008, p.343), when they state that "the unit of analysis of social representations is not an isolated organism, but the Ego-Alter unit of communicating people", or by the assertion that "representations have to be seen as alive and dynamic – existing only in the relational encounter, in the in-between space we create in dialogue and negotiation with others" (Howarth, 2006, p.68).

Similarly, frames should be seen as products of social interaction, which are *expressed* whenever social interaction happens. Most importantly, frames are *processed* (that is, socially constructed, re-constructed, challenged and reproduced) in all arenas of social interaction[5]. Frames are s*ocial products always in process.* By clearly defining the social nature of frames, therefore, not only it is possible to locate them (better, to locate their manifestations), but the scope of framing analysis can be expanded and clarified, and the dynamic nature of framing can be better conceptualized. Moreover, the question over their location becomes an analytical, rather than ontological, problem. Hereafter, the most important consequences of defining the social nature of frames are outlined.

[5] Forms and arenas of social interaction are potentially endless, and therefore difficult to isolate, as they range from dinner conversation over the latest news, to media content and political speeches. While this is a fundamental feature of a social perspective on framing, it might seem to create a too wide and entangled research domain. However, it should not be forgotten that not all forms of social interaction have the same relevance. The study of frames becomes the study of frames in the dominant forms of social interaction, and how these relationships of dominance can change in space and time.

2.6.1. Clarifying the argumentative nature of framing

Defining the social nature of frames means emphasizing the importance of language and communication in the framing process. Communication is an interactive process, and language is its main vehicle of expression. In his critical review of social representations theory, Billig (1991) argues that at the core of social representations is an argumentative dimension that accounts for the development and evolution of the representations themselves, and of the public debate in general. While he initially did not specify this dimension in detail, Moscovici later agreed with it, for instance by stating that "in the process of formation of a representation there is always both conflict and cooperation, in other words, there is a drama involved in that process" (Moscovici & Markovà, 1998, p.377). The argumentative nature of social interaction through language presupposes that different actors bring into the debate their own representations. These representations challenge each other, deny each other, conflict or cooperate, and in this entangled, multi-directional and dynamic relationship, change is made possible.

In communication studies, the formation and change of frames through social interaction has often been theorized, and the active role of the public in the process of framing underlined (see for example Scheufele, 1999; Van Gorp, 2010; Pan & Kosicki, 1993). However, at the moment of operationalizing such an interaction, its complexity and multi-directional nature is in many cases simplified, and the analysis of framing tends to focus on a "transmission model" (Nisbet, 2010, p.75) in which the framing contest happens at the level of media production, with influences from powerful agents, such as political actors/groups and PR specialists, while individuals are viewed as receivers whose active role is limited to interpretation. The focus, that is, is in the public's interpretive action, and much less in its potential to contribute to the framing contest. A notable exception to this operationalization is framing analysis in the field of social movements studies, where the potential of social movements to influence the framing of issues has on several occasions been investigated (see Carragee & Roefs, 2004). Similarly, in their schematization of the framing process, Pan & Kosicki (1993) have outlined a circular process, where the public can influence institutions through collective actions. Critical approaches, instead, have mostly focused on the influence of politics and journalism practices in the framing of relevant issues (see Reese & Lewis, 2009; Lewis & Reese, 2009). Entman (2003) suggests a "cascading activation" scheme in which frames are created by politics and elites, transmitted to the media, elaborated, and

retransmitted to the public, who interprets them. While this scheme allows a form of circularity, the feedback from the public to the media and the elites is not described as an active process of framing on the part of the public. Instead, Entman explains, public opinion can influence the framing of issues mainly indirectly, by affecting leaders' behaviours when "the news creates the impression that the idea is held widely and intensively by large swaths of the public" (Entman, 2003, p. 420). However, all these approaches disregard the potential of single individuals, non-organized movements and daily social interaction in the processes of framing.

In the current, complex media environment, this "passive activity" of individuals (whose action is largely limited, theoretically, to interpretation of framed messages, and potential framing through organized action) needs to be reviewed. The possibilities offered by digital and social media in terms of direct interaction between members of the public, politicians, and journalists (and any other relevant social actor), or the chance for individual audiences' members to comment on media content, show that even a single person can have a very active role in the framing processes, and that this role might have been disregarded due to a lack of power or visibility in the past. It clarifies, moreover, that the framing contest is not simply a confrontational encounter of widely shared frames, but a continuous, dialogical evolution through every single step of social interaction.

The importance of common people (defined, here, in opposition to powerful actors and the media) has been, from the very beginning, at the centre of social representations theory, born as an attempt to re-legitimize common sense in front of the growing importance of scientific knowledge (Moscovici & Markovà, 1998).

Today, the influence of communication in digital environments does not allow framing theory to ignore the potential of individuals, whose role shifts from that of interpreting audience to that of participant audience (see Livingstone, 2013) or "produsers" (Bird, 2011) in the framing processes. While this role is now evident more than ever (with examples of contents created by members of the public that become "viral" and influence media content and political responses, or direct interaction of citizens and politics on social media), it is by no means new. A study by Montali, Camussi and Colucci (2008), for instance, investigated social representations of politics in an interactive environment (the Italian radio programme *Prima Pagina*) in which the media and the audience actively engaged in dialogue through the reading of print media news, and its discussion between radio journalists and members of the public on telephone. While top-down influences in the framing contest do not lose their central role, they must be flanked by bottom-up models in

which “lay citizens become active contributors, creators, commentators, sorters, and archivers” (Nisbet, 2010, p. 75). This way, the circularity and multi-directionality of framing are fully restored.

All these considerations – the social and interactive nature of frames, and the changes in communication and media environments – push us to clarify that the framing processes have a dialogical, multi-directional and circular nature, and that all social actors (individuals or groups) have the potential to influence the framing processes. This complexity is well portrayed in the words of Wagner and Hayes (2005, p.276) when they say that “[t]he public sphere […]is the cooking pot in which common sense, everyday knowledge and representations are created, resulting in the many shades of reflexive groups and their particular social realities in modern societies”. Locating frames becomes an analytical issue, and while different approaches may focus on different locations or directions of influence, multi-directionality and circularity should remain central to the theory.

2.6.2. Introducing the notion of “argumentative thinking”

Part of the ambiguity caused by different answers to the question of where frames are located is related to the disagreements over whether frames are cultural, cognitive, or mixed constructs. By defining the social nature of frames, thus considering them products of social interaction, the ambiguity is solved, as the cognitive nature is eliminated. As it did for social representations theory, Billig’s approach of a rhetorical psychology might offer valid help in the clarification of the social nature of frames and “the essentially rhetoric and argumentative dimensions of thinking” (Billig, 1991, p.17). It has been noted that most framing theorists place frames also at the level of the individual. However, this does not necessarily mean attributing to frames the features of cognitive processes (that is, inserting frames in a cognitive paradigm). As explained by Billig (1991, p.17), “[t]o deliberate upon an issue is to argue with oneself, even to persuade oneself”. In this perspective, frames at the individual level can be seen as a continuation of the argumentative, interactive and, therefore, social process which is framing. To be clear, this shifting perspective does not undermine the importance of studies into the cognitive, attitudinal or emotional *effects* or framing, nor the relevance of investigations into the potential cognitive *mediators* of framing. As underlined by Moscovici in regard to attitudes, for instance, “I can have an attitude towards an object if I have a representation associated with that object” (Moscovici & Markovà, 1998, p.380).

Similarly, we might say that a person needs to frame an object (that is, create an organizing principle that allows giving meaning to that object) before developing an attitude towards it.

Iyengar's seminal study on framing effects over causal attribution (Iyengar, 1987) can be taken as an example of how an argumentative approach to thinking (that is, an approach where frames are always considered social, and not cognitive constructs) is not incompatible with studies on the cognitive effects of framing. In that study (conducted in an experimental context) the author finds that causal attributions for issues, such as terrorism and poverty, were significantly influenced by presenting media content framed differently (episodic or thematic frames). However, the same results could not be replicated for the issue of unemployment. In particular, regardless of the framing condition, people tended to attribute the causes of unemployment to systemic features rather than single individuals. Iyengar (1987, p. 829) hypothesizes that "the sustained prominence of economic problems in the nation's political rhetoric and policy agenda during the past decade may have served to alert individuals to *the economy* as a catchall cause for unemployment". This suggests that individuals are not directly influenced by the frames presented to them, but that they somehow confront them with pre-existing frames. This act of comparing frames, elsewhere characterized as a moderator of framing effects (Cacciatore, Scheufele & Iyengar, 2016), or as "unintended effects, […] when members of the audience associate additional thoughts with the message that are not congruent with the frame the journalist wanted to apply" (Van Gorp, 2007), may well take the form of Billig's "argumentative thinking". Chong and Druckman, for instance, argue that individuals can "weigh competing considerations", and that "either personal motivation or the competitive context will stimulate individuals to deliberate over alternatives in order to reconcile conflicting considerations" (Chong & Druckman, 2007, p. 110). Moreover, research has shown that framing effects are moderated by access to deliberations prior to exposure to a frame, and conversations after exposure to a frame (Druckman & Nelson, 2003; Druckman, 2001). This primacy of the argumentative nature of frames over their cognitive effects is implicit in Gitlin's definition of frames' function. Gitlin (1980, p.6) states that "we frame reality in order to negotiate it, manage it, comprehend it, and choose appropriate repertoires of cognition and action".

As a result, the study of cognitive framing effects does not lose legitimacy, but is forced out of its relative isolation, and integrated with the study of how frames are socially constructed and interact with cognitive structures, attitudes, emotions and behaviours.

2.6.3. Expanding and clarifying the scope of framing analysis

Despite recent arguments in favour of a narrower scope of framing analysis focused on efforts towards the understanding of framing effects of the so-called equivalence-based frames (Cacciatore, Scheufele & Iyengar, 2016), the definition of the social nature of frames offered here concludes that framing analysis would benefit from expanding and clarifying its scope. While the study of media framing should maintain a focus on the double role of media as actors and arenas of the framing processes (see Gamson & Modigliani, 1989), framing theory could expand its area of research to the whole society in interaction. The multi-directionality of influences should be kept account of, at least theoretically, especially if one wants to investigate the contemporary panorama of communication, and the modifications in the models of influence that digital means have brought about. More than ever, framing analysis needs to become the study of the relationships of dominance in the framing contest, of their connections with power relationships in societies, of the contextual peculiarities of diverse environments, of the potential effects of framing, and of the possibilities of intervention in the struggle for framing.

2.7. THE DOUBLE DYNAMISM OF FRAMES: INTERNAL AND INTERACTIVE

Frames and social representations are characterised by a certain degree of dynamism that is linked to their social nature; as seen earlier, oppositional forces drive this dynamism. Specifically, frames and social representations tend to be reproduced and reinforced, thus becoming widespread and deep-rooted in societies (Moscovici, 1984; Lewis & Reese, 2009, Van Gorp, 2007), or to be challenged and contested, with modifications in their characteristics and relations of dominance (Billig, 1991; Moscovici & Markovà, 1998; Entman, 2003; Van Gorp, 2007). However, as will be shown in the following paragraph, there is a need for clarification over how the dynamics of change are conceptualized in framing theory.

Drawing from both theories, it is argued that dynamism and change are expressed in two ways (both in regard to frames and social representations): an *interactive* way, that is, different frames or social representations challenging and contesting each other, and modifying their relationships of dominance and their relevance in societies; and an *internal* way, which includes all those changes inside the same frame or social representation. While framing theory has well developed

(arguably better than social representations theory[6]) the *interactive dynamism*, the same cannot be said in regard to the *internal dynamism*, which lacks a clear explanation of its mechanisms and is sometimes contradicted in the conceptualization of the framing processes.

2.7.1 Interactive dynamism

Entman (2003) has well-characterized framing as a contest, and schematized this contest as a continuum between a situation of frame dominance (one frame dominates the discourse around an issue) to one of frame parity (two or more frames all have the same power of influence). Along this continuum, different levels of contestation can happen. This schematization explains perfectly the interactive dynamism of the framing processes, where the co-presence of different frames and the emergence of new frames lead to a struggle for dominance. Frames are continuously challenged, and their relative power is modified over time. This interactive dynamism is recognized by Van Gorp, who explains that the "application of frames is subject to negotiation; frames are contested by journalists and the audience, new ones are selected and others may disappear without the frames themselves undergoing any change" (Van Gorp, 2007, p.64). It is, moreover, at the core of critical approaches to framing, where power is investigated as the most important means of pursuing frame dominance. The same idea of persistence of a frame (Reese, 2001; Van Gorp, 2007), its reinforcement to the point of becoming embedded in culture, is part of the interactive dynamism. Rooting a frame into a culture, making it "normal and natural" (Lewis & Reese, 2009, p.87), is the result of a dynamic struggle for the dominance of a particular frame. Interactive dynamism, as seen, is at the very basis of the concept of framing.

2.7.2. Internal dynamism

However, while interactive dynamism has been put at the core of framing theory, there has been more reluctance in underlining and explaining the *internal dynamism* of frames. The possibility of a frame undergoing changes has not been openly denied, but it lacks clarification about the nature and mechanisms of these changes. Van Gorp, for instance, has argued that frames are "rather stable", and that they "change very little or gradually over time" (Van Gorp, 2007, p.63). This statement, and a lack of a clear conceptualization of this kind of change, seems

[6] The existence of different frames for the same object, and the idea of framing contest, address the issues posed by Billig (1991) about change in social representations, and the argumentative nature of discourse.

to suggest that framing analysis should focus on interactive dynamism, rather than on changes within the frames themselves. Entman's model, as well, does not account for changes within frames, and it focuses exclusively on classifying different degrees of frame contestation (Entman, 2003).

However, internal dynamism is a fundamental feature of frames, and should be considered at the core of framing theory as much as interactive dynamism. As social constructs, frames are created in social interaction. If frames are created, it is logical that they also change. The process of frame construction implies modifications, as elements are added to compose the final frame. If this process happens in social interaction, then it must be recognised that every time frames are processed in social interaction, they can undergo change. Internal dynamism, therefore, is the fundamental process at the core of frame building. Rather than little and gradual (as in Van Gorp, 2007), this change is more likely to be abrupt and stronger when a particular issue comes at the centre of public debate.

This internal dynamism is perhaps better explained in social representations theory. Social representations, after all, were conceived by Moscovici as "always in the making, in the context of inter-relations and actions" (Moscovici & Markovà, 1998, p.219). In order to clarify this notion of internal dynamism, perhaps it is necessary to remind that a frame is *defined* as an organizing principle for meaning-making (Reese, 2001), but it is *composed* of specific framing devices such as lexical choices, tropes and narratives. In the public debate, these devices function as arguments in support of a frame, and against contrasting frames. Therefore, in the course of a debate, new arguments may be developed to challenge counter-arguments, or old arguments may be modified to better stand the discursive challenge. This way, the interactive dynamism *between* frames contributes to the internal dynamism *of* frames. Moreover, in light of emerging knowledge, contradictory elements of frames may need to be changed to fit the new environment. As an example, the "Frankenstein frame" identified by Van Gorp and van der Goot (2012) includes a series of framing devices that are used to make sense of the role of scientific development in mediating sustainability in food production. While the myth at the core of this frame (Frankenstein) is deep-rooted in culture and may be used for different issues, this particular narrative will have to develop its specificities to adapt to the emergence of new technologies in the field of food production.

Operationally speaking, if we consider valid Entman's definition of frames (Entman, 1993; Matthes & Kohring, 2008) as performers of four functions (defining a problem, its causes, its moral

judgment and its potential solutions), internal dynamism consists in the variability of framing devices that define and express the same four functions (see also Hertog & McLeod, 2001).

2.7.3. Dynamic frames in process

In conclusion, while different studies may need to focus on only one of these two types of change, and while some frames may be more prone than others to substantial modifications, it is important, for framing theory, to recognise and clearly define both interactive and internal dynamism. Both, in fact, are strictly linked to the social, argumentative nature of framing. Moreover, the recognition of the importance of change (in the form of modifications within frames, movements along the frame contestation continuum, and growing persistence of widely shared frames) leads to another conclusion. That is, frames are never expressed in texts and discourses in isolation. While the experimental study of framing effects can control the frames that are presented to participants, frames in a natural (that is, social) context are never isolated. Elements from different frames are co-present, and arguments take place continuously. Researchers should be aware, therefore, that isolating frames is an analytical shortcut, useful to obtain meaningful results, but nonetheless artificial. The study of frames, in a way, is always the study of *frames in process*, and their ever-changing relationships of dominance and contestation.

2.8. ANCHORING AND OBJECTIFYING: POTENTIAL EXPLANATORY PROCESSES OF FRAME CONSTRUCTION

Framing theory offers both valid operational conceptualizations of frames, and thorough descriptions of framing devices. The most widely accepted operational definition attributes to frames the four functions of defining issues, their causal interpretations, moral evaluations, and potential solutions (Entman, 1993). Frames are expressed through the use of framing devices, such as keywords, stock phrases, images, symbols, selection of sources and facts, metaphors, catchphrases, lexical choices and specific causal statements (Entman, 1991, 1993; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Van Gorp, 2007). Moreover, the mechanism through which frame elements exert their power in the framing contest is *salience*, which is given by placement and repetition (Entman, 1991, 1993).

However, there seems to be a lack of conceptualization of the processes through which framing devices are connected to a particular issue to generate a frame of that issue. For instance, how and why is a certain metaphor connected to an issue to generate a specific frame?

Once again, social representations theory might help to explain this process of linking framing devices to the issues they are meant to make sense of. It has already been explained that at the basis of social representations formation are the processes of anchoring and objectifying (Moscovici, 1984; Jodelet, 2008). In particular, anchoring is the process of reducing ideas to "ordinary categories and images, to set them in a familiar context", while objectifying is the process of turning "something abstract into something almost concrete, to transfer what is in the mind to something existing in the physical world" (Moscovici, 1984, p. 29). In particular, as well-conceptualized by Höijer (2011), anchoring can be done by naming things, linking them to emotions, defining them through metaphors or antinomies. Objectification, instead, links an abstract concept to the concrete world, and can function for instance through personification.

As will be seen more in depth in Chapter 6 of this thesis, some results from the comparative analysis of media framing of corruption in New Zealand and Italy might help to exemplify how the two processes of anchoring and objectifying can be applied to framing theory. For example, important framing devices of the "systemic corruption" frame were metaphors (see Chapter 5). As just seen, metaphor is an anchoring device that allows making sense of an issue by linking it to familiar concepts (Lakoff & Johson, 1980). In the Italian media, corruption is framed as systemic and widespread by *anchoring* it to diseases such as cancer and plague, or to creatures such as octopuses and spiders. Different anchors, of course, have different implications for how an issue is framed and understood. The same can be said of objectification. While in the case of Italy, corruption is embodied (that is, objectified) in the political and institutional system (and in a few cases, in the society), in New Zealand it is objectified as a characteristic of individuals. Without delving now into the implications of these differences, suffice here to notice that different anchors and objectifications of issues lead to the emergence of different frames.

The introduction of the two processes of anchoring and objectifying are not simply meant to add some theoretical elegance to framing. Frames are formed by framing devices, and it is important to understand how these devices work in making sense of contested issues. The empirical part of this thesis clearly shows that the power of frames does not simply reside in the selection and salience of specific framing devices, but in the strength and subtle implications that these devices have. While contributing to frame the same issue, for instance, different metaphors

lead to different meanings for a society. Moreover, as underlined by Van Gorp (2007, 2010), the use of particularly deep-rooted devices such as myths and archetypes might offer additional strength to certain frames. It could be added that the introduction of the processes of anchoring and objectifying in framing theory can help to explain how change within frames (what has been called here internal dynamism) functions. The emergence of new anchors or objectifications brings the features of these categories and objects inside the dominion of a frame, modifying it.

2.9. ACTION AND PRACTICE: SUGGESTIONS FROM SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS THEORY

Framing scholars have often suggested the potential of frames to influence the development of specific public policies (e.g. Lewis & Reese, 2009; Pan & Kosicki, 2001). Research on framing effects has shown that presenting different frames affects attitudes, and, consequently, can modify behaviours such as voting (see, for instance, Iyengar, 1987). The stream of research interested in the relationship between framing and social movements has investigated how collective action can actively influence framing (see Carragee & Roefs, 2004). However, most framing analysis in the field of media studies has been focused on how frames are transmitted through the media and interpreted by the public. There is, therefore, the need to clarify the important link between framing and social (and political) action/practices.

In social representations theory, social practices are considered an expression of social representations (see Howarth, 2006). In a seminal study on social representations of madness, Jodelet (1991) shows how “the social practices of eating, washing, and bodily contact are regulated through the social re-presentation of madness as contagion” (Howarth, 2006, p.74). In framing theory, the idea of “madness as contagion” could be described as a specific frame to make sense of madness, and Jodelet’s work demonstrates that in a situation of frame dominance, there are specific behavioural consequences.

The need to consider (and therefore investigate) the potential consequences of framing in terms of social behaviour and action promises to further expand and complicate the scope of framing theory. However, complexity is not a good reason to avoid the issue. As a social process, framing happens anywhere there is some form of social interaction. As its role is to organize reality so as to make sense of it, we can assume that, like social representations, frames also

guide behaviours. This does not simply include individual behaviours (which are already studied in the domain of framing effects), but entire sets of social conventions shared by groups (such as in Jodelet's example), and, in the study of the relationship between politics, media and citizens, political behaviours and policy choices. While potentially impossible to reduce to widely generalizable conclusions, this needs to be a clear object of interest in framing theory.

2.10. CONCLUSIONS

After introducing social constructionism and the importance of language in the social construction of reality, this chapter was dedicated to the discussion of current debates in framing theory, and to the search for solutions to some ambiguities and missing concepts in the theoretical system of framing. It is argued that many of these issues (and in particular, the integration of different paradigms of research) could be solved by adopting a social constructionist perspective to framing.

In particular, framing theory is compared with social representations theory, and, by using concepts drawn from the latter, doubts and ambiguities of the first are clarified. The processes of anchoring and objectification are introduced to explain how framing devices are linked to specific issues, and the importance of framing theory as to its implications in terms of social practices and political consequences are underlined.

Most importantly, it is suggested a shift from the question of where frames are located, to the more fundamental question of what is their nature. Once the social nature of frames is established, the issue of location can be reduced to an analytical choice. As social constructs, frames have an inherently dynamic nature, both internal and interactive, which is developed in all moments and places of social interaction. Another implication of the social nature of frames is that all actors (individuals or groups) involved in social interaction have the potential of influencing the framing contest, directly or indirectly. This suggests the need to consider framing not only in terms of media effects (Scheufele, 1999; de Vreese, 2005) or top-down models of influence in which the active role of citizens is largely limited to the interpretation of presented frames, but also in terms of the potential of bottom-up framing, and, more largely, multi-directionality and circularity of the framing processes. This is a fundamental step if framing wants to answer the challenges posed by new media environments and new patterns of communication.

The hope, in reformulating these features of framing theory, is to give strength to D'Angelo's concept of framing as a multi-paradigmatic research programme (D'Angelo, 2002). In the light of the present suggestions, the scope of framing analysis can be summarized in three different research objectives, each linked to a specific perspective on framing, and each dominated by, but not the exclusive dominion of, a particular paradigm of research:

- *Frames as objects (of study)*: framing analysis should investigate the content of frames, the range of frames that make sense of a topic, their evolution in space and time, and their relationships of dominance. Examples of such research include studies, such as that of Gamson and Modigliani (1989) on the framing of nuclear power, or that of Van Gorp and Vercruysse (2012) on the framing of dementia. This stream of research is dominated by the social constructionist perspective on framing (D'Angelo, 2002).
- *Framing as a process*: framing analysis should moreover investigate the processes through which frames are produced and reproduced, challenged, strengthened or weakened. This includes the study of the forces that drive these actions, and their relative power in the framing contest. Examples of such research (dominated by a critical approach to framing as in D'Angelo, 2002), are the analysis of the "war on terror" frame in relation to journalism practice conducted by Reese and Lewis (2009; see also Lewis & Reese, 2009), or that of the framing contest around the "9/11" event conducted by Entman (2003). The process of framing, however, should also be analysed in terms of dialogical interaction and argumentative thinking, by giving more consideration to how individuals or groups of individuals actively engage in the framing contest.
- *Framing effects*: finally, framing should be investigated in relation to its effects. This includes individual effects (such as cognitive effects, effects on attitudes or emotional responses), as theorized by Scheufele (1999), and seen for example in Iyengar (1987) and Gross (2008); and effects in terms of social practices, policy development, and political action. The latter is an area that needs to be further developed and investigated in framing analysis.

The varied scope demands not only the existence of different paradigms (constructionist, critical and cognitive), but their mutual recognition and the integration of their results to build a growing body of knowledge.

The empirical part of this thesis adopts the constructionist and critical paradigms of research. Chapter 5 (constructionist paradigm) investigates how corruption is framed in the print media of New Zealand and Italy, and how these representations persist (or change) over time. Chapter 6 explores how concepts of anchoring and objectification can be introduced in framing theory to account for the use of specific framing devices, in this particular case, conceptual and ontological metaphors (see Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) and narratives in the social construction of abstract concepts such as corruption.

Chapter 7 (critical paradigm) is more focused on the role and the power of news media in framing contested issues and influencing political action.

Before empirically investigating the role of media framing in the social construction of a social phenomenon such as corruption, it is necessary to introduce the object of study and the scholarly debate that surrounds it. The following chapter outlines in depth the main points of corruption studies, from the multiple definitions of corruption, to the analysis of its causes, consequences and mechanisms, and the relationship (fundamental for this thesis) between media, citizens, and levels of corruption.

CHAPTER 3: A LITERATURE REVIEW ON CORRUPTION

In the introduction of this thesis, I have pointed out how the concept of corruption is a highly contested issue, and that different perspectives of corruption can be adopted. The social construction of corruption, therefore, takes place both at the academic level and at the level of public debate. While the object of research in this thesis is at the level of public debate, and in particular the news media, it is nonetheless important to outline in detail the development of the academic debate on corruption. I have already noted that the first problem arises at the moment of attempting to define corruption. While corruption has been given broad, all-encompassing definitions (such as that given by Transparency International, namely the "abuse of entrusted power for private gain"[7]), or more specific definitions based on legal, ethical, social, cultural or economic principles, full agreement on a single definition has not yet been reached. Some have argued that this agreement is perhaps unlikely to ever be reached (see Kurer, 2015; Heywood, 1997).

Given the complexities of the debate over the definition of corruption, and the multidisciplinary nature of corruption studies, a full discussion of the topic is warranted. Corruption can be more fruitfully defined by describing its causes, consequences, mechanisms, and potential solutions, and by investigating its relationship with institutions and the law. This chapter, therefore, offers an overview of the debate over corruption, composed by a review of studies about the economic, political and socio-cultural causes, consequences and mechanisms of corruption. It outlines the link between corruption, democracy, and international law. Moreover, it offers an in-depth review of the debate over measures of corruption, with a particular focus on the Corruption Perceptions Index which is at the basis of the choice of New Zealand and Italy as case studies. The issue of measuring corruption is important for at least two reasons. First, it shows the difficulties of measuring a hidden phenomenon with precision (della Porta & Vannucci, 2012b). Second, it shows that corruption can be measured not only with objective measures, but also through its perceptions by different sectors of societies, and that these two different types of measures are often highly correlated. This last point highlights the fact that corruption is a mainly social phenomenon, and that its socio-cultural aspects are fundamental to its understanding.

[7] https://www.transparency.org./what-is-corruption#define. Accessed on 12 April 2018.

Starting from this premise, the rest of the chapter is dedicated to a review of academic literature over the relationship between the media and corruption. In particular, the focus is on the link between the free press and levels of corruption, on media representations of corruption, and on the relationship between corruption and citizenry.

3.1. THE DEFINITIONAL DILEMMA: FINDING COMMON ELEMENTS FROM DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

To introduce the issue of corruption in the first chapter of this thesis, I have listed some definitions of corruption based on different perspectives. Corruption has been defined, for instance, as a misuse of public power in which legal or moral boundaries are broken (Kunicovà, 2006). This definition frames corruption in terms of legal and social norms. Other definitions (e.g. Bicchieri & Duffy, 1997) claim that an act should be defined as corrupt only according to its deviation from the law, regardless of moral principles. Other definitions are based on the concept of public accountability and democracy, and it has been suggested, too, that an act should be considered corrupt as long as it is perceived so by the public (Heywood, 1997). Each definition, however, has its merits and its flaws. For instance, definitions by legal norms are sometimes unable to describe situations in which no laws are violated, and yet the public interest is damaged or moral rules are broken (this topic will be further explored in Chapter 7 of this thesis); economic definitions are helpful to describe the costs of corruption in terms of public expenditure, but cannot give a complete description of the features of corrupt actions; cultural-based definitions, finally, are extremely variable, since they can be based on moral and ethical values that are specific to different social groups and contexts (e.g. countries, ethnic groups).

Many definitions, despite important variations and different underlying models, share some common elements. For instance, they suggest that all corrupt acts see the interaction of at least three actors: one whose interest is damaged by the act of corruption, one who obtains a private benefit from the corrupt act and simultaneously damages the first actor, and one that obtains a benefit by offering a reward (bribe) to the second actor. In the public sector, the damage is to the public, while corrupt public officers and bribers (e.g. companies, private citizens) share the advantages brought by the illegal action. As Vannucci (2012, p. 22) underlines, in this tripartite

game, the trust relationship between the principal (the public) and its agent (the public officer) is broken (see also della Porta & Vannucci, 1999a, 2012).

However, not everyone agrees that corruption necessarily involves at least three actors. Warren's definition of corrupt action (Warren, 2004, p. 332), for instance, includes everything that complies with four specific propositions: 1) one or more individuals are entrusted with collective decisions or actions; 2) this power is regulated by common norms; 3) these norms are not respected; and 4) those who break the norms are rewarded with a benefit, while the public is damaged. Such a definition would include, for example, the case of a public official's misappropriation of public money, which is an act involving a single individual (and, indirectly, the public is damaged). This framework is applied by Gregory (2002) in his description of public sector corruption in New Zealand.

Such a perspective calls for a somewhat broader definition of corruption, while, as seen above, the majority of scholars focus on a narrower definition that includes at least a corruptor and a "corruptee" carrying out some sort of exchange (della Porta & Vannucci, 1999a).

All these definitions share the common element of power. The agent who damages the principal must hold some sort of power (often discretionary) that should be used for the principal's benefit, but is instead used at his damage and in favour of a third party (and/or of himself).

One distinction that is often taken into consideration is between "grand corruption" and "petty corruption". The former involves politicians and individuals with high institutional positions (such as ministers, parliamentarians, heads of state) using their position of power to extract bribes, and the latter represented by low-level public officials accepting or soliciting bribes to speed up or complete a bureaucratic task (Doig and Theobald, 2000).

Commonly, when talking about corruption, the focus tends to be on the public sector. The reasons for this specific focus are various. To name a few, corruption in the public sector damages the public interest and often diverts public money, and a corrupt public sector is unlikely to be helpful in curbing corruption in general, including the private sector. However, it is important to acknowledge that corruption does not exclusively involve the public sector. As Moran (2000, p.108) states, "many corruption cases occur at the interface of the private and public sectors" (see also Mény, 1996, p. 112, "corruption is […] found extensively where there is an interface between public and private interests"). The necessity of targeting the private sector in the fight against corruption is therefore critical. Warren (2004, p. 331) underlines this point, stating that today democracies' "public purposes are more and more farmed out to non-governmental

organizations and profit-seeking businesses", for example, hospitals. When corruption contaminates these entities, public interest is put at risk.

A final issue concerns the debate over the possibility of including nepotism, cronyism, favouritism, patronage, conflict of interest and gift-giving in the range of corrupt actions. Even though there is a general agreement that such activities are detrimental to the public interest and mostly unethical, different definitional frames tend to include or exclude them from the range of corrupt acts. For instance, some of them are not illegal in several law systems. Therefore they should not be considered "corruption" when a legal frame is applied. Actions such as gift-giving are typical of some cultures (see, for instance, Pharr, 2005, about gift-giving culture and corruption in Japan; see also Chapter 6 of this thesis, for gift-giving practices in Samoan and Māori cultures). If corruption is defined in a cultural frame, a bribe could be reframed as a gift and therefore escape accusations of corruption. A moral frame can also be problematic with other activities. For example, nepotism in countries like India is considered perfectly acceptable by some segments of the population who refuse to consider it immoral (Pavarala, 1993).

Since this "definitional dilemma" (Heywood, 1997, p. 5) is unlikely to be solved any time soon, an attempt towards a better understanding of corruption can be made through the analysis of its determinants and consequences.

Defining determinants and consequences of corruption is once again not an easy task. They can be confused, and it is often the case in which something that is caused by corruption becomes itself a catalyst, creating a vicious circle in which everything is at the same time a consequence of a previous event, and a feature or a cause of a new one. However, there is some agreement on what the main determinants and consequences of corruption are, and, as it will be pointed out, describing them will help to reach a better understanding of what corruption is and what it means for political systems, markets, public interest and, ultimately, citizens and democracy.

3.2. CONSEQUENCES OF CORRUPTION

Some scholars have claimed that corruption can have positive effects for the economy of a country, especially in those cases where an elaborate bureaucratic system and an excess of rules would otherwise discourage private investments (Anechiarico & Jacobs, 1996). However, these strictly economic theories have often been challenged, leading to a better understanding of how a corrupt environment can severely damage a country's economy in several ways. Using a cross-

country data set, Mauro (1995) has found that corruption lowers investments and the rate of economic growth. The same author has studied how corrupt governments tend to divert the allocation of public money in exchange for bribes, causing, for example, a reduction in the public expenditure for education (Mauro, 1998; Lambsdorff, 2006). Such effects are particularly catastrophic in developing countries, where the level of corruption is often high while the economic growth and education levels would need a boost.

The fallacy of the assumption that corruption might help investments by supplying a way to overcome bureaucratic obstacles is well explained in an essay that describes the "perverse effects of political corruption" (della Porta and Vannucci, 1997, p. 100; see also della Porta, 2000). Complex bureaucratic systems open the door to corruption, causing an elevation of public costs due to a general productive inefficiency. When the bureaucratic obstacles are overcome through bribes, there is a general lack of control of the projects, which are chosen not according to market rules (high quality, low costs), but according to the private gain of the corrupt public officer(s). In such an environment, honest companies that invest in research are usually discouraged from participating, while corrupt companies that invest in bonding with corrupt officers are encouraged, resulting in a general drop of quality that damages the public interest. Nevertheless, in these systems, there is an interest in the corrupt actors maintaining a complex bureaucracy, to increase the chances of obtaining a bribe in exchange for a favour. Systemic corruption, moreover, creates a general feeling of mistrust in the public sector. This perception will, in turn, discourage honest actors from entering the public market, while encouraging the others to offer bribes in exchange for favours, further increasing the levels of corruption (della Porta, 2000). These results are also examined in Vannucci (2012, p. 198), who notes how after the Italian scandal of "Tangentopoli" (Bribesville) in the early nineties, the public costs of the infrastructure for the underground lines in Milan decreased by about 40-50 percent, due to a lower expenditure of public money in bribes and illegal rents.

Moreover, there is evidence that corruption is strongly correlated with a country's GDP (Lambsdorff, 2003; Vannucci, 2012). A decrease of 1 point in the national Corruption Perception Index[8] is associated with a yearly decrease of 0.39 percent in the national GDP, of 0.41 percent

[8] The Corruption Perception Index (CPI), produced yearly by Transparency International, will be described later in this chapter. It measures levels of public sector corruption (according to perception) in a wide range of countries, that are consequently ranked.

in the income per head and of 4 percent in the productivity (Gyimah-Brempong, 2002; Vannucci, 2012).

Corruption also has political costs. For instance, electoral corruption (which includes vote-buying) and illicit campaign financing can cause distortions in the political systems, favouring corrupt candidates to the disadvantage of those who compete honestly (Kunicovà, 2006; Vannucci, 2012). This may foster systemic corruption through the establishment of a corrupt political class, generating a vicious circle in which the consequence of corruption becomes a cause itself.

The double direction of the causal arrow is underlined by Lambsdorff (2006) in his review of the main consequences of corruption. The author points out, among others, the lower quality of the public sector, the negative distortion of international trade, the higher levels of tax evasion and the emergence of underground economies as consequences of systemic corruption.

Finally, a study found a strong positive correlation between higher levels of corruption (measured through the Corruption Perception Index) and a higher childhood mortality rate in developing countries (Hanf et al., 2011). The explanation plausibly lies in the misuse (and therefore diversion) of funds that should be allocated to national health programmes (Vannucci, 2012).

3.3. "CAUSES" (OR FACILITATORS) OF CORRUPTION

The primary target of reforms is to eliminate or at least reduce the causes of a negative situation. So, understanding the causes of corruption is an essential step towards a set of efficient solutions.

Firstly, it is important to underline what is indicated as a "cause" of corruption could often better be considered a facilitator. Very few of the factors described here are direct causes of corruption, but they all can contribute to create an environment in which corruption can flourish more easily.

Despite pointing out how the underlying mechanisms are often not clear, as well as the causal direction, Lambsdorff (2006) lists several possible causes of corruption. According to his review, corruption could be positively correlated with the size of the public sector, while negatively with the regulatory quality and the level of economic competition of a state. Although democracy seems to be the best form of government to keep corruption levels low, presidentialism is related to higher levels of corruption than parliamentarianism. Decentralisation is also presented as a

possible (even though very unclear) cause of corruption, along with culture and values (these last two play an important role in determining a country's corruption, as will be seen later). Finally, gender too is presented as a possible cause of corruption, with lower levels of corruption in female-dominated environments (see also Fiorino and Galli, 2013).

Some of these factors are referred to in Kunicovà (2006), who analyses in particular the electoral rules, concluding that in proportional representation systems there might be more space for corruption, especially in those who apply the "closed lists" rule (that lowers the accountability of politicians). Kunicovà also suggests the possibility of higher levels of corruption at the local level in multiple-tier federal states (Kunicovà, 2006; Rose-Ackerman, 1999). Similar features are listed by Heywood (1997), such as weak state tradition, poor administration, clientelism, strong state intervention and loose rules of party funding, all associated with higher levels of corruption.

The influence of all these factors has not always been proved, and it has often been challenged by other models that suggest different levels or directions of influence.

Other factors can be quite easily recognised as catalysts of corruption. A weak judiciary system, for instance, cannot control corruption properly, encouraging more actors to engage in corruption with the perspective of impunity. The judiciary can be weakened by different factors, such as incompetent and untrained judges, weak and unclear laws open to too much interpretation, or an excess of laws that makes trials difficult and long (Rose-Ackerman, 1999). A corrupt judiciary system opens the way to systemic, widespread corruption.

Low transparency in the public sector is another facilitator of corruption. Public accountability is certainly an essential trait of democracy, and a lack of transparency prevents the public from monitoring the conduct of public officers (Lindstedt & Naurin, 2010).

Although it may be difficult to prove the causal links of many elements with levels of corruption, there is some agreement on culture and values as important and direct promoters of corruption (or, on the other hand, as promoters of a low-corruption environment). In considering it as a mainly cultural problem, Rose-Ackerman reminds how several authors "claim that deep cultural, historical and social factors are the fundamental determinants of corruption and also can explain the impact of corruption on economic growth and other variables" (Rose-Ackerman, 2006, p. XX). Similarly, Heywood (1997) brings the Italian "arrangiarsi" (to make do) as an example of a cultural trait of a society that opens the doors to corrupt practices. On the other hand, Vannucci (2012) points out how Scandinavian countries, despite having structural features that are usually correlated with high levels of corruption (such as strong state intervention and high autonomy of

public officers), score very high in the CPI (indicating low levels of corruption). The explanation may lie in the strong civic sense and ethical values of these countries. Other cultural traits that have been associated with corruption are religion (Catholic and Orthodox Christianity, and Islam are often associated with higher levels of corruption) and “familismo amorale” (amoral familism, Vannucci, 2012, p. 130), a set of unspoken rules aimed at maximising the advantages of one’s own family, group or party, without care for the common good. Nepotism, clientelism and organised crime, although not often considered traits of corruption, are often co-present along with high levels of corruption.

The importance of cultural factors in the development of systemic corruption may raise the suspicion that government reform is useless unless some degree of cultural change is also achieved. Culture and deep-rooted values might appear quite invariable (Lambsdorff, 2006), yet some evidence of the possibility of substantial cultural changes in a short time and through strong reforms is available. Singapore and Hong Kong, where corruption was systemic and widespread till the 1970s, have undergone strong reform and are now among the least corrupt governments in the world. This was achieved through a set of reforms that included strict and severe punishment for corrupt officers, resulting in a cultural change that wiped out the previous system based on personal exchange and reciprocal favours (Vannucci, 2012).

Once the various elements that might cause higher levels of corruption in a country are identified, reforms are a necessary step towards an increase in integrity, transparency and public accountability, and therefore towards a stronger defence of the public interest.

3.4. MECHANISMS OF CORRUPTION

Beyond the definitions and debate on causes and consequences, another way to better understand corruption is through the description of its mechanisms. Corrupt activities take place in secret, and this is one of the main reasons for the difficulty of giving a complete definition and description of corruption. However, there is some knowledge of the main mechanisms that stand behind corruption, as they tend to be similar in different environments and situations.

Cartier-Bresson (1997) makes a distinction between limited, non-structured corruption, and regular and organised corruption. While the former seems to work through economic and more rational rules, the latter follows the laws of social exchange, making it more intricate and therefore difficult to disentangle. The main features of organised corruption are the creation of social

networks (aimed at illegal activities, and based on a range of values, such as financial interests, hierarchy, solidarity and sometimes violence, as could be the case when organised crime is involved) and the institutionalisation of procedures of corruption. The creation of “corruption networks” (Cartier-Bresson, 1997, p. 54) helps to construct a friendly environment for corrupt actors.

Other authors refer to widespread corruption as “systemic corruption” (della Porta and Vannucci, 1997) or “entrenched corruption” (Johnston and Doig, 1999, p. 14). In environments characterised by systemic corruption, exchanges of bribes and favours are sustained by mechanisms such as trust (among the members of the corrupt group), reciprocal obligations, and reputation (Rose-Ackerman, 1999). Such traits are usually distinctive of criminal organisations in general. When corruption reaches certain levels of pervasiveness, other political and bureaucratic alternatives become impracticable and the choice is between engaging in corruption or being cut off from the system. The resulting network shares the rewards of corruption and its risks, and protects the corrupt system from external enemies (Johnston and Doig, 1999, p. 14-15).

The practice of illegal assignment of driver licenses in exchange for bribes in the north of Italy is an example offered by Vannucci (2012), who shows how corruption can grow such deep roots as to become a sort of natural procedure inside a public institution. The bribes are delivered directly to the officers, who in exchange produce a driver license without the necessary requirements, in broad daylight, in the same public office where the legal assignments of the licenses normally take place. Actions like the one described, repeatedly recorded on video by the security forces, show how the public officers involved act without hesitation, as if they were performing a perfectly regular procedure. Such activities provide insights into what level of institutionalisation of corruption can be achieved. Vannucci (2012, p. 155) calls this perverse mechanism “effetto valanga” (avalanche effect). When corruption is systemic, entering the corruption network requires high start-up costs, acquisition of competences and knowledge of the unspoken rules of corruption, coordination between the parties involved and, last but not least, the right mindset (namely, the belief that acting through corruption is the best way to be successful in a particular environment). Therefore, only the actors who are willing to engage in such illegal activities will make the initial investment, while the others will move to different environments. Once involved in corruption, the actors will have little incentive to go back to legality, since this would bring only disadvantages. The vicious loop of corruption feeds itself through these selective mechanisms.

Quite interestingly, it is also suggested the existence of a "natural selection of corrupt people"[9] (Vannucci, 2012, p. 172). Where corruption is widespread, trials and scandals, instead of clearing the environment from dishonest players, only wipe out those who are not "good enough" to stay in the game, leaving untouched the more fitting and making corruption even harder to eradicate. After every scandal, those actors who "survive" will refine their techniques in order to make them more difficult to be uncovered.

While single instances of corruption may adopt different forms depending on context and conditions, these are the main mechanisms of corruption.

3.5. SOLUTIONS AND REFORMS

Many countries have signed and ratified anti-corruption protocols such as the *United Nations Convention against Corruption* or the OECD *Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions.* The objective of these treaties is to push countries to implement reforms aimed at strengthening the anti-corruption regulations, promoting cultural changes, removing corrupt actors from their public roles and encouraging honest actors to enter the scene.

Efficient reforms need to be country-specific, so as to aim at solving country-specific issues. For instance, the possible solutions to widespread corruption will be substantially different in a western democracy and in a developing country under a different regime. However, some reform suggestions that can be applied in different environments and that target specific issues have been suggested.

Rose-Ackerman (1999) identifies the foundations of low levels of political corruption in democracies as a strong legal system, an informed public and the quest for re-election of politicians. A strong legal system is the prerequisite for a strong judiciary, and can be obtained through clear laws that do not allow space for too much interpretation and accelerate the trials. A more efficient judiciary helps to uncover and punish corruption, and at the same time is less likely to be infected by corruption itself. Prepared and well-paid judges are also important to strengthen the judiciary system.

[9] Translation from the Italian "selezione naturale dei corrotti".

Another, tested way to prevent corruption through legal action is represented by independent anti-corruption agencies, such as the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) instituted in Hong Kong in 1974. Through actions of prevention, education and punishment, the ICAC allowed the levels of corruption to drop drastically in a few decades, bringing Hong Kong towards the top of current rankings (de Speville, 1999; Moran, 2000; Chan, 2005; Rose-Ackerman, 1999; Vannucci, 2012). A similar experience took place in Singapore, where the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB), established in the 1950s, was gradually given more power, while its action was accompanied by law reinforcements and administrative measures (Leak, 1999). Singapore's public sector, once afflicted by widespread corruption, ranks 7th in the 2014 Corruption Perception Index and is considered one of the least corrupt in the world.

In Australia, following a series of scandals in New South Wales, an Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) was formed in 1988, and only four years later Premier Nick Greiner was accused of corruption and driven from office by the same commission his government had created (Williams, 2000; Philp, 1997).

The importance of an informed public is underlined by Lambsdorff (2006), who considers an independent and free press a particularly important feature of countries with low levels of corruption. A free press must be accompanied by a transparent public sector, which discloses budgets and information about public expenditure and decisions (Rose-Ackerman, 1999).

The need to seek re-election is also an important feature in controlling corruption, as political competition pushes opposite parties to monitor each other, and uncovering corrupt acts of the opponents is strongly encouraged as an instrument of electoral campaigning.

Since electoral funding is particularly susceptible to corruption, some suggest (Rose-Ackerman, 1999) that rules can be applied to fund raising, such as strong disclosure rules, legal limits to individual donations or candidate's spending, public funding or other ways to keep the campaign costs down (e.g. time limits).

Some, instead, focus on the importance of a light bureaucracy, accompanied by transparent procedures and respect for the deadlines (Vannucci, 2012). An increase in salaries in the public sector has been suggested as a way to discourage public officers engaging in corruption, but evidence demonstrates that this is not a valid solution in all cases (Fiorino and Galli, 2013).

3.6. MEASURING CORRUPTION: SUBJECTIVE AND OBJECTIVE MEASURES

At the core of this empirical study is a comparison between two countries with very different levels of corruption. However, the challenge of measuring corruption is by no means an easy one. The veil of secrecy that usually covers corruption makes it unrealistic to try to measure it directly and precisely. It is virtually impossible to determine with certainty the total amount of corrupt actions or money spent in corruption in a specific context, since the majority of corruption events remains secret and invisible to enquirers.

In an attempt to find valid measures of something that cannot be measured with precision, several instruments have been developed that consistently produce similar results, suggesting that they are able to measure corruption, if not precisely, at least with a good approximation.

Measures of corruption can be divided into *subjective measures*, usually based on the perception of corruption in a specific environment by different groups of individuals, and *objective measures*, based on sets of hard data that either try to measure corruption directly (such as the number of charges of corruption in a specific time frame) or through factors that are influenced by levels of corruption ("proxies" of corruption, Fiorino and Galli, 2013, p. 26).

The most well-known indicators of levels of corruption, such as Transparency International's "Corruption Perceptions Index" (CPI) and the "Global Corruption Barometer" (GCB), are perception-based (subjective) measures. Perception-based indicators differ from each other, mainly by the population group's opinion on which they are based. For instance, while the CPI is based on the opinion of managers, experts, and political and financial analysts, the GCB records citizens' perception of corruption in their country (Fiorino and Galli, 2013; Transparency International, 2007). Similarly, the "Eurobarometer", produced by the European Union, provides data on the attitudes of Europeans towards corruption over the years (Vannucci, 2012). Another index produced by Transparency International, the "Bribe Payers Index", is based on businessmen's and investors' opinions of which countries are more likely to ask for bribes (Sequeira, 2012).

Such indicators face several problems, mainly methodological, because they are based on perceptions. They are vulnerable to several biases, such as reporting and sampling bias, bandwagon effect, and halo effect (Sequeira, 2012); these are susceptible to abrupt changes of perceptions due, for example, to political scandals (Fiorino & Galli, 2013). They may as well suffer from voluntary misreporting (Sequeira, 2012). Despite these limits, perception-based measures

can be valid and useful indicators of levels of corruption. Vannucci (2012) shows that results of the CPI and the Eurobarometer for 2009 and 2011 are highly correlated, suggesting consistency between citizens' and experts' perceptions of corruption. Evidence of positive correlations between perception-based measures and some objective measures are found by Fisman and Miguel (2007), although Olken (2009) shows how a high variation in actual levels of corruption may result in a little variation in the perception of corruption, suggesting that perception-based measures of corruption should be used with caution.

Objective measures, despite being based on sets of hard data, are also not direct and precise measures of levels of corruption. Such a measure, as previously underlined, is impossible to obtain due to the obscure and secret nature of corruption (Kaufmann, Kraay & Mastruzzi, 2007). Therefore, an objective measure does not necessarily face fewer challenges than a subjective one, and it does not necessarily constitute a better indicator. Recently, a wide range of objective measures have been proposed, often based on the evaluation of factors that are (or are assumed to be) deeply correlated with corruption[10].

Corruption can be measured using the number of crimes related to corruption, but this index only captures corruption partially, and tends to be invalid in countries with a dysfunctional judiciary system (Vannucci, 2012). Similar problems are faced by indicators that measure corruption through official governmental statistics (Sequeira, 2012) or the amount of related news on the media (such as the one described in Vannucci, 2012, p. 99). In this last case, the filter is double, given that what appears in the news is a selection of the judicial material, which is already partial. Moreover, to reflect the reality of corruption, media systems need to be free and independent. These conditions are often missing in countries with widespread corruption (Vannucci, 2012; Rose-Ackerman, 1999).

Other objective measures use surveys as a main source of data. Several indicators (such as the World Bank Enterprise Surveys) strongly rely on firms' self-reported bribe payments (Sequeira, 2012). Potential issues in these indexes are the quality and wording of the questions, intentional misreporting of the respondents, social desirability bias and unintentional mistakes in the answers (Sequeira, 2012).

[10] The aim of this section is to offer an overview of the different types of measures of corruption, pointing out their strengths and weaknesses. Therefore, only a limited number of objective measures will be listed in this paragraph as examples of different ways of measuring corruption with objective data. For a more complete list of different objective measures, see, for example, Sequeira (2012).

Some relatively new methods use the gap between two distinct sets of data as a way to measure corruption. The bigger the gap, the higher the levels of corruption. This approach is based on the assumption that a gap between two sets of data is indicative of corrupt practices (Sequeira, 2012). Golden and Picci (2005; 2006), for example, aim to evaluate the differences in levels of corruption in the 20 Italian regions by measuring the gap between regional public expenditure on infrastructure and actual number of projects. The gap, they argue, represents how much public money has been wasted in bribes and other corrupt behaviour. However, the assumption that the gap is entirely due to corruption might not be true. For instance, part of the gap could be the result of bureaucratic inefficiencies (Sequeira, 2012). Moreover, tracing such data is often complicated (Fiorino & Galli, 2013) and could make cross-country comparisons extremely difficult if not impossible.

Finally, corruption can be estimated by “direct measures” or “direct observations” (Sequeira, 2012, p. 147, 161). Examples of this kind of measure are the collection of documents on bribe payments of firms, obtained for instance by Tran and Cole (2011), or the shadowing of bribe payers. Despite the promising ability to unveil the micro-dynamics of corruption and to possibly test some theories of corruption, these methods are not free of problems. Such data is extremely rare and difficult to obtain. Moreover, shadowing bribers may strongly influence their behaviour in the field (Sequeira, 2012). Finally, direct observation can be carried out only in limited contexts, making it difficult to measure corruption at a country level and therefore making it essentially impossible to produce country assessments and cross-country comparisons.

3.7. THE CORRUPTION PERCEPTIONS INDEX

Since 1995, the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) has been produced yearly by Transparency International, a global non-governmental organisation (NGO) active in fighting corruption. The purpose of the CPI is to quantify the perception of corruption in the public sector in different countries on the same scale, allowing rankings and cross-country comparisons, as well as monitoring changes over time. Countries are assigned a score from 0 to 100 (0 being the highest level of perceived corruption, 100 the lowest), and then put in a rank in order to simplify comparisons. The index is based on the perceptions of experts in the field of corruption, including businesspeople and economic analysts, whose opinion is registered through surveys by several

independent and verified sources in the different countries. In 2014, the CPI included 174 countries, but the number of the countries considered changes over time.

Since 2012, the methodology consists of four basic steps [11]. Initially the data sources are selected, then the different sets of data are rescaled to fit the same scaling system; they are aggregated and finally a measure of uncertainty is reported. The selected data sources must meet some stringent criteria, such as being credible institutions and using reliable data collected through clear and verified methodologies. Data must be focused on corruption in the public sector and must have "quantitative granularity", which is the ability of the used scale to produce sufficient differentiation in the data. Since the aim of the CPI is to compare corruption levels between countries, it is important that data is not country-specific, and that the sources collect data regularly, so as to allow comparisons over time.

Once the data is collected, it is rescaled to meet the CPI's point system, which assigns to every country a score from 0 to 100, 0 being the highest level of perceived corruption and 100 the lowest level of perceived corruption[12].

The rescaled scores are then averaged for every country, resulting in the final score that will be inserted in the CPI ranking. Every country must have scores from at least three different data sources, but the number of sources may differ from country to country. Finally, a standard error is calculated for every single score, allowing assessment of the uncertainty level of the data.

Since its first appearance in 1995, the importance of the CPI has grown constantly and the index produced by Transparency International is now one of the most quoted sources of information about levels of corruption, both in the media and academia. However, despite its fame, the CPI is not free from problems. Like all measures of corruption, the CPI is imperfect. Transparency International itself has emphasised that the methodology behind the CPI is in constant evolution to offer a more and more "helpful contribution to the understanding of real levels of corruption" (Lambsdorff, 2007, p. 325), implying the imprecision of the CPI. The fact that methodologies were modified over the years makes over-time comparisons more difficult and perhaps not particularly reliable. The variability of the sources of data (in nature, number, methods and scales) complicates the evaluation of reliability of the CPI ranking. Furthermore, as underlined

[11] The description of the CPI methodology has been drawn from the "Technical Methodology Note" produced by Transparency International and updated at 2014, available at http://www.transparency.org/cpi2014/in_detail. Accessed on 15 May 2015.
[12] For a more detailed description of the rescaling method, see the source mentioned in the previous note.

by Vannucci (2012), the CPI overestimates the opinions of experts, while it ignores citizens' opinions. Finally, as a perception-based indicator, it involves all the risks of such measures.

However, being aware of all the approximations and risks, the CPI is considered to be a useful instrument to analyse corruption at country-level (Vannucci, 2012) and a solid foundation for cross-country comparisons (Lambsdorff, 2007).

3.8. CORRUPTION, DEMOCRACY, AND INTERNATIONAL LAW

A range of contrasting claims have been made over the years in relation to the question of what is the role of democracy in controlling corruption. While some argue that democracy has positive effects on the levels of corruption (Kunicovà, 2006; Shen & Williamson, 2005), others draw the conclusion that there is no positive effect of democracy on corruption (Ades and Di Tella, 1999, p. 987), or that the process through which democracy decreases the levels of corruption is "painfully slow" (Treisman, 2000, p. 439). It has been claimed, as well, that some forms of corruption may help the efficiency of democracies by offering a relatively simple way to overcome the obstacles of heavy bureaucracies (Anechiarico & Jacobs, 1996). On the other hand, many scholars argue that corruption is symptomatic of a dysfunctional democracy (Rose-Ackerman, 1999; Kunicovà, 2006) and that it undermines democracies by breaking its fundamental rules (Warren, 2004). All these different approaches make it difficult to outline a scheme of the interaction between corruption and democracy. Is democracy a good deterrent of corruption or are democratic institutions to be considered ineffective in lowering a country's level of corruption; if not, in some particular cases, even promoting higher corruption levels?

In an attempt to link corruption, democracy and economic growth, Drury, Krieckhaus and Lusztig (2006) find that democracy has indirect positive effects on economic growth thanks to its ability to mitigate the negative effects of corruption. The authors argue that their results are explained by the electorate's ability, in democracies, to remove politicians through elections, minimising the economic damage caused by corruption. This view is shared by Rose-Ackerman (1996, p. 84-85), who argues that a certain level of insecurity of politicians about their re-election is fundamental to reduce the incentives for corruption. Insecurity, however, must be moderate, so as to avoid politicians, aware of the unlikelihood of re-election, to engage in corrupt behaviour that maximises short-term gain.

Quantitative studies show that democracy (operationalised as a composition of electoral competition and participation) can significantly lower levels of corruption (Chowdury, 2004). A positive impact on levels of corruption is also determined by institutionalised political rights, civil liberties, and a free press.

Research, however, has demonstrated that time is a relevant factor, and that newly established democracies need longer timeframes to allow democratic features to significantly impact levels of corruption (Treisman, 2000; Rock, 2009; Mohtadi & Roe, 2003, Sung, 2004).

Despite its power in curbing corruption, however, democracy is not immune to it. Rose-Ackerman (1999) and Kunicovà (2006) have shown how democracies can be afflicted by corruption especially in the shape of illicit campaign financing and vote buying. They, therefore, suggest that reducing corruption means reinforcing democracy, and that this can be obtained for instance through transparency and public accountability, a strong judicial system, and strict rules for campaign financing. The real issue, as advanced by Warren (2004), lies in the functioning of democracy. Corruption finds its space in the flaws of democratic systems, and the more democracy is imperfect, the more corruption levels will grow. According to this perspective, democracy is actually the very solution to corruption, and when corruption grows in a democracy, questions should be raised about where the process of democratisation failed, and what obstacles need to be overcome to make democracy work (Warren, 2004).

Corruption, moreover, is not just a local problem of countries or regions where it is widespread. It is a global issue that can afflict international relations and global commerce, and as such it has been faced in past decades by international organisations and institutions.

A first step towards the development of international laws against corruption was the entry into force, in 1977, of the “Foreign Corrupt Practices Act” (FCPA) in the United States, with the double aim of prohibiting payments to foreign officials and imposing specific accounting and record-keeping requirements on domestic and foreign operations for publicly held companies (Deming, 2005). However, it was only in 1997 that a further, substantial step was taken towards international agreements to combat corruption, with the adoption of the “Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions” by the member States of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD). The OECD Convention, ratified in 2015 by the 34 OECD member countries and seven non-members

countries[13], and reinforced by documents such as the "2009 Anti-Bribery Recommendation", requires signatories "to criminalize the bribery of foreign public officials and impose sanctions on a comparable basis to domestic bribery" (Deming, 2005, p. 96). Any attempt to bribe a public official that takes place, entirely or partly, in the national territory of a signatory country becomes therefore illegal, regardless of the citizenship of the briber (Pieth, Low and Cullen, 2007).

In 2003, as a result of a global negotiation to develop a comprehensive document against corruption in international business, the United Nations produced the "United Nations Convention Against Corruption" (UNCAC), which contained several mandatory and optional provisions aimed at criminalising corruption and offering guidelines for its prevention and the development of mechanisms to attenuate its negative effects (Deming, 2005). In 2015, there were 140 signatories, over a total of 176 states parties[14]. The UNCAC addresses both the public and private sectors and is broader in scope than the OECD's Convention. It includes instruments for asset recovery and guidelines for international cooperation between countries for prevention, investigations and prosecution of offenders.

The UNCAC and the OECD's Convention are the most important, and, despite some fragilities, such as the non-mandatory nature of some provisions or the fact that not every country has ratified them yet, they are the most useful instruments for combating corruption at the international level. The issues addressed are, however, those of high-level corruption in single countries, and the adoption of these conventions is, therefore, an indication of increasing attention towards the problem of corruption and, perhaps a hint of the ever-present necessity of contrasting the multi-level damage that corrupt practices can cause.

3.9. CORRUPTION AND THE MEDIA

The link between corruption and the media has been studied mostly along two dimensions. The first investigates the link between levels of press freedom and corruption, and it mainly takes the form of quantitative studies and statistical analysis. The second investigates how the media represent corruption, and the roles that the media can play when reporting about corruption. The two dimensions of research, as will be seen in this section, are sometimes deeply connected.

[13] http://www.oecd.org/corruption/oecdantibriberyconvention.htm. Accessed on 1 June 2015.
[14] https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/treaties/CAC/. Accessed on 1 June 2015. New Zealand, despite being one of the first signatories of the UNCAC and constantly at the top of Transparency International's "Corruption Perception Index", ratified the United Nations Convention Against Corruption only in December 2015.

3.9.1. Press freedom and corruption

The importance of journalism in curbing corruption is not to be underestimated. There is abundant evidence of an association between a free and independent press and low levels of corruption, and the causal arrow seems to go in the direction from free press to reduced corruption (Brunetti & Weder, 2003; Chowdhury, 2004; Shen & Williamson, 2005).

The "Global Corruption Report 2003"[15] produced by Transparency International focuses on the role of the media in combating corruption. The assumption is that "media can shape the climate of democratic debate and help the establishment and maintenance of good governance" and that "freedom of the press […] is fundamental to open, democratic society" (Peters, 2003, p. 44). Press freedom can, therefore, be considered an important and necessary feature of democracy, as reaffirmed in the work of Shen and Williamson (2005), and in several international laws and documents (such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights).

Stapenhurst (2000) lists a series of ways, some tangible, some more subtle, in which a free press can help to fight corruption. Media reporting can go hand in hand with the judicial system of a country and its anti-corruption agencies. A media report can be the starting point of a formal investigation. On the other hand, an anti-corruption investigation or trial can be publicised in the media, resulting in a reinforcement of the legitimacy of anti-corruption bodies[16]. Finally, reporting can draw attention to flaws in the anti-corruption bodies, functioning as a way to encourage improvements. By reporting on corruption, the news media can enhance the public's awareness about the topic, causing reactions that affect, for instance, voting behaviour. The simple possibility of a certain action or event being covered by the media acts as a deterrent for politicians and public officers in engaging in corruption (or, as well, in legislating in such a way as to facilitate corruption). Information is an important check on what politicians do. Furthermore, free media that include several points of view and complete information foster public debate and increase public participation. Participation, in turn, is considered an important feature of democracy and, as Chowdury (2004) shows, the factor that correlates the most with corruption (higher levels of participation are correlated with lower levels of corruption).

[15] http://issuu.com/transparencyinternational/docs/2003_gcr_accessinfo_en?mode=window&backgroundColor=%23222222. Accessed on 12 January 2018.

[16] For instance, during the Italian scandal of Tangentopoli in the early '90s, the magistrate leading the investigations, Antonio Di Pietro, was constantly under media attention, and became a sort of national hero and symbol of the country's reaction to a corrupt political system (see, for instance, Giglioli, 1996; Colaprico, 1996, p. 25).

The importance of press freedom in combating corruption is confirmed by several works carried out with different methods and using different measures of corruption and press freedom, resulting in robust evidence that countries with more freedom of the press have in general lower levels of corruption. Brunetti and Weder (2003), using a sample of 125 countries, find a strong association between levels of press freedom and levels of corruption and argue that the causal arrow is in the direction of more press freedom to less corruption. These findings are confirmed by Chowdhury (2004) and by Freille, Haque and Kneller (2007). In this last work, economic and political influences on the press are found to be strongly associated with higher levels of corruption, suggesting that corruption levels may be decreased through a reduction in the political parties' and firms' influence on the media. Negative influences of politics, businesses and even secret services in the media reporting of corruption have been investigated, as well, by Gerli, Mazzoni and Mincigrucci (2018). Using a panel dataset that follows the evolution of corruption levels and press freedom in 130 countries during a period of 12 years, Ahrend (2002) finds no evidence of corruption leading to less freedom of press, but strong evidence in the other direction, that is, more freedom of press leads towards lower levels of corruption.

Camaj (2012) tests the correlation between media freedom and corruption accounting for several factors (electoral competitiveness, civil society, voter turnout, judicial independence and political system). The results confirm the causal direction from a higher press freedom to lower corruption levels, and suggests that parliamentary systems (as opposed to presidential systems), and an independent judiciary strengthen this effect.

Kalenborn and Lessmann (2013), using two datasets of over 170 countries, find that a certain level of press freedom is a necessary condition for democratic elections to effectively keep corruption levels under control. Their explanation is that press freedom is fundamental to reveal corruption, allowing citizens to punish corrupt politicians through elections. The complementary role of democratic rules and freedom of press in controlling corruption is confirmed by Bhattacharyya and Hodler (2015), whose results are based on a dataset of 129 countries over a period of 27 years (1980 – 2007).

Suphachalasai (2005) constructs a model to analyse the interplay between mass media, bureaucracy and corruption, searching for media effects on low-level corruption. This model suggests that, despite press freedom having a role in curbing corruption, media competition has an even stronger effect. The combined effect of press freedom and media competition is described here as fundamental for controlling bureaucratic corruption.

On the other hand, using a mathematical model based on a sequential-move game, Vaidya (2005) claims that the watchdog role of the media is far from obvious. Several factors may interfere with this role, such as the possibility of the media itself exploiting its power to bargain with corrupt actors and share the profits of corruption, or to raise false allegations, or again the difficulties for the public to recognise the truth of allegations when governments face media accusations with self-defensive campaigns or publicity aimed at discrediting the media.

However, the general evidence seems to suggest the importance of freedom of press as a strong and generally effective barrier to widespread corruption. Therefore, many suggest that it is important to support a free press in every possible way; for instance, by legislation in favour of information accessibility, protection of journalists who report on corruption, a lower level control of governments on media content (resulting in more independence of the media system) and the suppression of repressive laws that punish journalists for doing their job (Stapenhurst, 2000; Peters, 2003).

3.9.2. Media representations of corruption

Given the importance of media in controlling corruption, the question could be asked: how do the media deal with corruption and represent it? In general, media representations of corruption can vary depending on a range of factors, including, among others, cultures, media systems, media ownership (private media versus state-owned media, for instance), level of political involvement, and level of press freedom.

Literature about media representations of corruption is not particularly vast. Often the focus is on the more general issue of representing scandals (see, for instance, Tiffen, 1999; Thompson, 2000; Entman, 2012), which includes corruption, but also sex scandals, abuse of power and other situations.

Several authors address the issue of why scandals have become a constant of journalism in a wide range of countries all over the world (Tumber & Waisbord, 2004a and 2004b; Rønning, 2009; Ekström & Johansson, 2008; Jiménez, 2004; Sanders & Canel, 2006).

Tumber and Waisbord argue that scandals can be defined as cases of corruption that are revealed to the public (Tumber & Waisbord, 2004a, p. 1032). An increase in scandal news, therefore, does not necessarily reflect an increase in the levels of corruption, but “should be considered mainly as a signal of the spread of scandal politics” (Tumber & Waisbord, 2004a, p.

1034). This increasing attention of journalism to corruption scandals turns news media into an "arena for battling out political confrontations and […] a means of promoting government accountability" (Tumber & Waisbord, 2004a, p. 1034).

The increased attention of the media towards corruption scandals should push researchers to investigate further how corruption is constructed and represented in the media. Some attempts in this direction have been made.

In his work about the relationships among media, politics and corruption scandals in Australia, Tiffen (1999, p. 206-239) outlines five models that describe how the media can relate to political corruption. The "watchdog" model sees the media as watchmen of the public sector, with the task of keeping an eye on public officers' behaviour and promptly exposing power abuses and wrong-doing; the "muzzled watchdog" model suggests the media's watchdog role may sometimes be limited by external factors such as restrictive laws; the "lapdog" model includes those media manipulated by power and incapable of offering proper coverage of scandals; the "wolf" model depicts media as too market-oriented, inaccurate and often misleading; the last model, the "yapping pack", describes those media that "move in packs" (Tiffen, 1999, p. 207) and are unable to seriously dig for original stories, restraining their focus on those stories that are most appealing at a certain moment and often getting lost in petty details. These models, according to the author, may all be true in different times and different contexts, and describe a quite heterogeneous system that may lead to very different outcomes in representing corruption.

In an attempt to offer a more detailed picture of how media can treat corruption, Breit (2010) uses critical discourse analysis to engage with the way in which Norwegian newspapers describe the development of a trial against Atle Torbjørn Karlsvik, an admiral in the Norwegian Navy accused of corruption. Breit divides the case into four main phases, taking place between November 2005 and April 2008, and uses content analysis and identification of dominant discourses to uncover the dynamics of the media representation of a corruption case in a specific context. According to his results, the different phases of the trial see the alternation and interplay of four dominant discourses: "transgression", "political", "public scapegoating" and "individualistic" (Breit, 2010, p. 619). Starting with a dramatic tone aimed at identifying the admiral's misbehaviour and creating public interest in the case, with a focus on morality and law (transgression frame), stories change after Karlsvik is acquitted. In an attempt to restore the admiral's public image by reframing his activities as legal and by offering personal portrayals of Karlsvik, the media create a "public scapegoating discourse" (Breit, 2010, p. 626) that frames the whole story as an attempt

of the defence forces to offer the public a scapegoat to hide more substantial and widespread problems. The two discourses co-occur during appeals (made by the public prosecution) and the second trial, engaging in a framing contest with no winners, until Karlsvik is finally acquitted and the restoration frame dominates. The author concludes that the analysis of this case study offers some insight about media construction of discourses about corruption. The media "need to provide concrete and simplified representations of acts of misbehaviour that audiences can easily follow" and "need to elucidate identifiable transgressors" (Breit, 2010, p. 630). Moreover, the author adds that media representation of the Karlsvik case was constantly evolving through reformulations and reconstructions in order to fit new information, creating contradictions in its course of evolution. Attention is drawn to the fact that the media might often create a simplified and partial truth, and might ignore part of the available information or even its own internal contradictions.

In another study on media representation of corruption in Indonesia, Kramer (2013) explores how the Indonesian media portray corruption and how these specific representations may affect the way citizens deal with this central issue in the country's political life. Kramer identifies three main forms of reporting corruption in the Indonesian media: "scandalisation", "soap-operafication" and "reporting of banalities". Moreover, she argues that these modes can be integrated into the bigger frame of "politics-as-entertainment" (Kramer, 2013, p. 61). The author relates the tendency towards scandal news to three categories of reasons, ethical, political and profit-driven (Kramer, 2013, p. 63), arguing that the Indonesian media respond mainly to the third type. "Scandalisation" is a direct consequence of a "desire to increase audience numbers and therefore profits", but this influences the quality of the news by prioritising drama over "fact-checking, unbiased reporting and an overall commitment to quality journalism" (Kramer, 2013, p. 64). Moreover, the need for a continuous flow of news leads to the "reporting of banalities", that is the creation of news based on petty details that do not offer any kind of valuable information. Kramer brings attention to three case studies extensively covered by the Indonesian media between 2011 and 2012: the "Centurygate", a case of suspicious approval by the government of a consistent bailout package for Bank Century; the "Wisma Atlet scandal" in which some members of the House of Representatives were accused of favouring contractors in the appointment of construction contracts in exchange for bribes; and the "Cek Pelawat scandal", involving bribes in exchange for the appointment of a woman as deputy chairperson of the Bank of Indonesia. All these scandals were, according to the author, reported by newspapers, magazines and television through

sensationalism (for instance, by offering unnecessary details about the lifestyles of the people involved), dramatisation and a pervasive focus on details irrelevant to the understanding of the cases, such as the "in-depth coverage of trivial aspects of the corruptors' lives that are unrelated to the charges" (Kramer, 2013, p. 67).

While the coverage of corruption cases is certainly helpful in increasing citizens' awareness about corruption in their country, such a trivial representation may divert the attention from the political importance of the issue towards petty and often insignificant details, and "undermine optimism in the anti-corruption cause" (Kramer, 2013, p. 70).

An earlier attempt to delve into the media representations of corruption through a case study is that of Giglioli (1996), whose analysis of the "Tangentopoli" (Bribesville) scandal in Italy offers some insights about how the media react to the emergence of a case of a high-level, widespread corruption network that involves the whole country.

The "Tangentopoli" case emerged for the first time in February 1992, with the arrest of Mario Chiesa, a member of the Socialist Party caught in the act of accepting a bribe in exchange for the assignment of a cleaning service contract. Through him, the magistrates unveiled a corruption network that involved politicians from all major political parties, and several businessmen, leading to hundreds of trials and arrests, and determining the end of the so-called "First Republic" in Italy.

According to Giglioli's analysis, both print media and television initially neglected the arising scandal, but dedicated relentless coverage to its developments at a later stage. The first peak of news was in May, June and July 1992, when several politicians and businessmen were arrested in Milan and it became evident national political figures were involved. After a quiet summer, the case re-emerged during the first half of 1993 and its coverage increased in July of the same year after the suicides of Gabriele Cagliari and Raul Gardini, two managers of Enimont, accused of having paid bribes to political parties. From May 1992 to December 1993, with a few exceptions, the "Tangentopoli" case was prominent in newspapers and television (news and talk shows) every single day, a novelty in Italy, where previous corruption scandals had been given comparatively little attention. Giglioli attributes this growing attention to political scandals to the increasing freedom of the press in Italy. A more market-oriented press and the pressures of private television (with the introduction of the private channels owned by Silvio Berlusconi's company Fininvest) allowed the media to gain some freedom from the political parties that controlled most of the media system in the previous decades.

Levels of coverage aside, Giglioli (1996, p. 388) focuses on how the Tangentopoli affair was described by the media. He identifies two main frames: one “technical”, drawing on “scientific concepts and vocabulary of political science”, and the other “moral”, allowing to read the scandal as “a symptom of profound degeneration in political life which threatened the essence of democracy”. This last frame includes the accusations of a corrupt political class and praise of judges as national heroes and “representatives of public morality” (Giglioli, 1996, p. 388). Destined to become a typical feature of representations of politics in Italy, the idea of politicians being part of “an arrogant caste, dishonest and incapable, isolated from and mistrusted by the people” (Giglioli, 1996, p. 388-389) emerged strongly in media speeches.

The attempt of Gupta (1995) to delve into social representations of the state through the analysis of newspaper articles about corruption, during his fieldwork in North India in the late 1980s, offers another set of interesting results. Arguing that newspapers are “cultural texts that give us important clues to the political culture of the period”, Gupta analyses articles from two national newspapers (*India Today* and *Times of India*) and six local Hindi newspapers. The picture given by newspapers is that of a state where corruption is becoming widespread because politicians are driven by the desire to obtain more power. Local newspapers focused their attention particularly on petty corruption cases, and, similar to what is pointed out by Giglioli (1996) about the Italian “Tangentopoli” affair, they draw a line that separates the “citizens” from those corrupt officials who exploit them (Gupta, 1995, p. 387).

A comparison of the results of these studies shows some quite relevant differences in how corruption is represented in the media in different social contexts. While in Norway the focus is on individuals involved in corruption (the “identifiable transgressor” described in Breit, 2010), the Italian and Indian cases describe news media interested in generalising corruption to the entire political system, and opposing “dishonest politicians” to “honest citizenry” in a game of power that is usually dominated by the former. Finally, the Indonesian media trivialise corruption, partially transforming it into gossip. These differences can be linked to differences in the media system (especially in the case of Indonesia, as noted by Kramer, 2013), and differences related to the degree of corruption (Norway has low levels of corruption, while India and Italy both have widespread corruption. The Italian case of “Tangentopoli”, moreover, was unique in the history of the country for the number of people and political parties involved).

These aspects demonstrate that media representations and framing of corruption are variable, depending on contexts and specific cases, and that corruption is continuously debated,

constructed and re-constructed in the media. This debate defines the terms in which the issue is discussed, the topic of discussion, and the social construction of the relationship between corruption, politics, public institutions and citizenry. The outcomes may be manifold, and this is one more reason to investigate how corruption is socially constructed in the media. Corruption is a complex, often unknown issue, which emerges in the public debate mainly through the coverage of scandal by the media. It is through the media, therefore, that citizens come to know corruption, and it is in the media that the social construction of corruption begins.

Recently, some studies have investigated media representations of corruption in a range of European countries. Mancini, Mazzoni, Cornia and Marchetti (2017), and Hajdu, Pápay, Szántó and Tóth (2018) have shown that while in the United Kingdom and France (countries with relatively low levels of corruption, according to the CPI), there is a tendency to focus on international scandals, and corruption involving private businesses; in countries such as Italy, Hungary, Latvia, Romania and Slovakia, the focus is stronger on national cases involving politicians. This has been linked, by the same authors, to a politicisation of the media, and a tendency to instrumentally use corruption scandals to undermine the reputation of political adversaries.

Two studies have investigated how media metaphorically construct corruption (and other related issues such as nepotism and clientelism), finding that in seven European countries (United Kingdom, France, Italy, Latvia, Slovakia, Romania and Hungary) the most common metaphors belong to the domains of food, plants, animals, disease and medicine, war, and entertainment (Bratu & Kažoka, 2016, 2018).

3.10. CORRUPTION AND CITIZENS: A REVIEW OF STUDIES ON SOCIAL PERCEPTIONS AND REPRESENTATIONS OF CORRUPTION

Much scholarship has attempted to define corruption and has devised instruments to measure levels of corruption. But beyond definitions, indexes and numbers, how is corruption socially constructed? How do citizens describe, judge and relate to corruption? In the attempt to assess, as objectively as possible, the levels of corruption on a large scale, even most of the perception-based indexes have preferred experts' and businesspeople's opinion to public opinion, assuming that the former would reflect better the real size of the problem. But even assuming that public

opinion is not precise enough to be used as a basis for a measurement index, its importance cannot be ignored. What people perceive as a problem will in effect influence their judgments and reactions to events, and ultimately their behaviour (including, for instance, vote behaviour).

Several studies deal with the social perception of corruption, and offer an instrument to understand how citizens see corruption in different countries and cultural contexts, and how their perceptions influence their political identity and behaviour. Most of them engage in the subject using a quantitative approach, basing their results mostly on surveys and statistical analysis, while others use a qualitative approach that makes intense use of conversational data. Chibnall and Saunders (1977) use a case study to carry out an analysis of corruption with a social constructionist approach. They use conversational data from a 1973 trial held in Great Britain against John Poulson and George Pottinger, both accused of corruption (the former as the corruptor and the latter as the corruptee). Although their study is focused on the differences between the legal definition of corruption and the concept of corruption common in a business environment, it points out many important concepts dealing with citizens' perceptions. When enquiring about social perceptions[17] of corruption, scholars must be aware that corruption should "be regarded as a negotiated classification of behaviour rather than as an inherent quality of behaviour". This classification reflects "the values, experiences and practical purposes of the collectivity, providing a framework of meaning" that "form[s] the basis of reality-construction within the group" (Chibnall and Saunders, 1977, p. 139). The acknowledgement of the social nature of the concept of corruption in public opinion carries some important consequences. For instance, it is not possible to assume that the social perception of corruption coincides with the legal definition, or otherwise with the definitions given by academics or by experts in the field. It is possible, of course, that they coincide, but it is more likely that they share some features and differ in others. Whatever the case, nothing can be said without being sustained by some research in the area of public perception of corruption. The work of Chibnall and Saunders, for instance, describes very well the two conflicting realities of tribunals (with their law-based concept of corruption) and of the corrupt actors, who do not see themselves as corrupt but, on the contrary, as "generous on a ridiculous scale" (Chibnall & Saunders, 1977, p. 146).

The problematic relationship between corruption and gift-giving emerges in the work of Pharr (2000, 2005) carried out in Japan. Japan finds itself in the quite uncommon situation of being a

[17] The authors refer to social perceptions as "sub-universes of meaning" (Chibnall and Saunders, 1977), drawing on Berger and Luckmann's "The social contruction of reality" (1967).

developed and rich country with a serious issue of widespread corruption. Conducting focus groups in the country, Pharr found that 76% of the interviewees consider it perfectly acceptable for a businessman to give politicians expensive gifts. The normality of gift-giving practices, therefore, makes it difficult to establish what is corrupt and what is not, at least on a cultural level (Pharr, 2005). However, results from another study in Japan show that a rise in reports of misconduct of public officials is strongly associated with a long-lasting drop in the levels of dissatisfaction with politics (Pharr, 2000). Similar results are obtained by della Porta (2000), whose assessment of the relationship between corruption and political satisfaction in Italy, Germany and France shows a clear inverse correlation between levels of corruption and trust in government.

Pavarala (1993) investigates elite representations of corruption in Andhra Pradesh, a state in the south of India. The assumption of his work is that corruption is not clearly definable, but is instead a "site for contested meaning" (Pavarala, 1993, p. 408) subject to continuous negotiations and reformulations. The five elites considered,[18] politicians, bureaucrats, people in business, judges and journalists, have quite different ideas about corruption, recognising its ambiguous nature and the evolution of its definition in time and space. Although bribery is generally recognised as corruption by all the interviewees, other issues such as gift-giving and nepotism raise different reactions. A businessperson considers gift-giving acceptable, while a bureaucrat argues that nepotism is perfectly plausible in Indian society. In general, two kinds of definitions are identified: the "narrow/legalistic" and the "broad/moralistic" (Pavarala, 1993, p. 410). While the majority of bureaucrats, industrialists and politicians interviewed offer definitions of the first type, most of the judges and journalists consider corruption a moral, rather than a legal issue. There is no agreement, as well, about the "functionalist" thesis that sees corruption as possibly beneficial to the economy. Pavarala records a wide range of reactions, with most of the bureaucrats and people in business admitting some positive consequences of corruption, and journalists, judges and politicians mostly rejecting the idea. Finally, there is little agreement between the elite on the role of culture in promoting or curbing corruption. While many bureaucrats, judges and people in business partly blame the Indian culture for favouring widespread corruption, several politicians and journalists are more defensive, and tend to accuse western influences instead.

[18] The study was conducted through 60 interviews of about two hours each, conducted in Andhra Pradesh in 1991.

Narratives of corruption in India are also addressed by Gupta (1995, 2005), during his ethnographic research in a small village in North India in 1984, 1989 and 1992. Discourses on corruption are apparently extremely common in the everyday conversations of Indian villagers, and Gupta brings several examples of how corruption can become part of daily life, and, in areas where it is widespread, a central part of the definition of "state" (Gupta, 1995, p. 385). This mechanism is further exemplified in Lazar's ethnographic work in the village of Rosas Pampas, in Bolivia (Lazar, 2005). Here "corruption is used via rumour to articulate political allegiances or struggles, and to manoeuvre for positions of power; as well as to resist such manoeuvres. Accusations of corruption serve both to highlight the moral integrity of the accuser, as well as to throw some mud […] at the accused" (Lazar, 2005, p. 216). In this small village where corruption is widespread at all levels, people use discourses on corruption to build a sense of what public service is supposed to be, and build their own identity as citizens in opposition to a state permeated with corruption and in servitude to dishonest politicians. However, social representations of corruption show here their typical variable and often contradictory character (Billig, 1991). Although, for example, corrupt politicians are publicly condemned in everyday conversations, there is some level of tolerance (perhaps driven by disillusionment) for those politicians who are "corrupt, but at least […] keep their promises" (Lazar, 2005, p. 222) and complete some *"obras"* (public works).

Similarly, de Sousa (2008) illustrates how social representations of corruption in Portugal have a fluid nature, where a general consensus in officially condemning corruption is often concurrent with a certain grade of tolerance and engagement in small influence peddling. De Sousa attempts to measure people's tolerance of corruption through a five-dimensional index, finding that over half (54%) of the respondents to the questionnaire "hold a somewhat permissive definition of corruption" and "a high degree of tolerance for a whole series of practices that are unregulated or difficult to regulate such as conflicts of interest, political patronage, favouritism, nepotism, pulling strings" (De Sousa, 2008, p. 15). Another 11.3% consider as corrupt only those actions that are against the law. While a strong sense of what is corrupt and what is not seems to be present, people show a certain degree of tolerance for some kind of actions. Over 40% of the respondents consider it fine that the act of a person asking his sister, who is a nurse in a hospital, to talk with doctors to have his visit brought forward in the waiting list, while 20% are fine with the regional Labour Inspectors receiving Christmas gifts from local businesses (De Sousa, 2008. p. 16). These results are explained through "the coexistence of modern/rational and pre-modern/family-based

relations between citizens and the public administration" (De Sousa, 2008, p. 8) in Portugal paired with a complex, rigid and inefficient bureaucracy with which citizens must cope. A similar study on social representations of corruption in France (Lascoumes & Tomescu-Hatto, 2008) shows that the lines between corrupt and acceptable are often blurred in French citizens' definitions of what is corrupt, with variations in the degrees of tolerance and a tendency to judge whistleblowing negatively.

Other works delve into the social perceptions of corruption with similar results. Collecting data from 241 telephone surveys in Pittsburgh, Johnston (1986) tries to establish what Americans consider corrupt. His first finding is about the concern of American citizens with corruption. A total of 61.8% of the respondents consider corruption an "extremely serious problem" while another 35.3% considers it "somewhat serious" (Johnston, 1986, p. 376). Moreover, almost the totality of respondents declare a certain feeling of anger towards corruption. A number of hypotheses are confirmed by Johnston's results. The harshness of the judgment depends on the size of the take (larger bribes, that is, are condemned more harshly than smaller ones); corrupt public officials are judged more harshly than corrupt private citizens; justifications such as the use of bribes for paying a sick child's cures are likely to reduce the severity of the judgment; finally, the judgment depends on the social role of the actors involved, with the worst judgments given to important people taking from organisations or ordinary citizens, and milder judgments for citizens taking from organisations. Johnston's findings are important at least at two different levels. First, they show how social factors that have little to do with the corrupt act itself can influence citizens' judgment on corruption. Second, Johnston speculates on the possibility that people's perception of high levels of corruption induces lower trust in politicians and institutions. This hypothesis is supported by numerous other works (including the already quoted works of Lazar, 2005; de Sousa, 2008; della Porta, 2000). Moreover, Johnston's study was replicated in Great Britain a few years later, in 1984 and 1987, with similar results (Malec, 1993, p. 19).

A first confirmation of Johnston's hypotheses that perception of high levels of corruption induces lower trust in politicians is offered by two studies that investigate the effect of charges of corruption on voting behaviour in the United States (Peters and Welch, 1980; Welch and Hibbing, 1997). These two studies, covering the Congressional elections from 1968 to 1990, show that politicians charged with corruption were punished with a decline in vote share of 6% to 11% (in the first study, covering from 1968 to 1978) and an average of 9% (in the second study, covering from 1982 to 1990).

Even more substantial evidence of the negative effects of corruption on citizens' trust in politics is found in Morris (1991) and Seligson (2002). The former, using data from 700 surveys conducted in Mexico, finds a strong relationship between citizens' perception of bureaucratic corruption and trust in government. The latter, using over 9000 interviews from four different Latin American countries (El Salvador, Nicaragua, Bolivia and Paraguay), measures the link between direct experience with corruption and perception of legitimacy of the government. Results show that high corruption appears to be significantly and constantly associated with lower levels of support of the political system. Moreover, high corruption correlates with low levels of interpersonal trust, which the author considers a possible precursor of low support of the government (Seligson, 2002, p. 427-429).

Another study by Canache and Allison (2005) analyses social perceptions of corruption in Latin American democracies in several steps. First of all, mass perception (measured through an item of the World Values Survey, a project aimed at investigating social, cultural and political attitudes throughout the world) is compared to the CPI results of Latin American countries, showing a strong correspondence between experts' evaluations (CPI) and citizens' judgments. The most interesting conclusion that can be drawn from this result is that, assuming the CPI reflects quite effectively the real levels of corruption of a country, public perception of corruption is quite accurate, at least in the considered countries. In the set of countries analysed in this work, citizens seem to be aware of the levels of corruption. This awareness seems to be mediated by interest in politics, with people who are interested in the political life of their countries being more precise in the assessment of levels of corruption. In the second step of the study, the authors test the possible effects of political corruption awareness on public support for democracy as a form of government. Results suggest that even in countries with high levels of corruption, support for democracy is not undermined. This allows the authors to conclude that what is undermined by a high perception of corruption is the level of trust in current politicians, parties and institutions, and not the form of government itself.

In another attempt to define what Americans recognise as "corruption", Redlawsk and McCann (2005) use exit polls during the 2000 presidential elections carried out in six cities (three metropolitan areas and three small cities). Participants are asked to judge how corrupt (on a five-point scale) some actions are. The set of examples include a range of situations, such as a police officer accepting money not to give a ticket to a speeding driver, voters supporting a candidate in exchange for a promise to fix pot-holes in their street, or a public official offering a contract to a

contributor without considering other contractors. Results suggest the conclusion that public perception of corruption (at least in the United States) is formed by two dimensions, one about lawbreaking (what is against the law is corrupt), and the other one about favouritism (that is, for a significant share of the public acts of favouritism are considered corrupt as well). The authors also test for possible moderators of these factors. Results suggest that favouritism is considered more corrupt by people with lower education, and that people who perceive favouritism as corrupt tend to perceive higher general levels of corruption.

Finally, some works use data from large sets of countries, in the attempt to obtain more generalisable results. Anderson and Tverdova (2003) use surveys from 16 democracies (including new democracies, and older and deep-rooted ones) to demonstrate that where corruption levels are higher, people's evaluation of the government and the political system is more negative. The authors find that the evaluations are moderated by political allegiances, with individuals that support the major parties evaluate the political system less harshly. However, the overall results suggest that "corruption is likely to be an important component of government performance people use to judge political institutions" (Tverdova, 2003, p.104), and that the negative effects of high levels of corruption on system legitimacy are similar in culturally different countries.

Clausen, Kraay and Nyiri (2011), using data from the Gallup World Poll (a cross-country survey that includes over 150 countries and uses in-depth interviews), confirm the negative correlation between perception of corruption and confidence in public institutions. Furthermore, they argue (with the support of statistical data) that "reduced confidence in public institutions leads to a reduction in political participation, raises support for violent means of political expression, and increases the desire of respondents to vote with their feet through emigration" (Clausen, Kraay & Nyiri, 2011, p. 240).

One last work by Tverdova (2011) tests a variety of hypotheses. The study confirms that mass perceptions of corruption are similar to those of experts and elites, suggesting that "if we accept that the CPI is a reliable indicator of the corruption level in a certain country, we may also infer that public evaluations of corruption are quite accurate" (Tverdova, 2011, p.17). Secondly, results show that people's evaluation of corruption levels is moderated by income (low-income citizens perceive higher levels of corruption) and support of the government (with people who voted for the government in charge assessing lower levels of corruption).

3.11. CONCLUSIONS

Functioning as an overview of corruption studies, this chapter has shown the complexities involved in the definition of corruption, its causes, consequences, and solutions. Corruption is intrinsically complex for two main reasons. First, because of its hidden nature (della Porta & Vannucci, 2012a), which makes it difficult to study. Second, because of its social and cultural components. Understanding corruption is largely a social construction, and, as such, has a dynamic nature. This is true both in common sense knowledge and in academia.

It has been pointed out that corruption is often differently framed in accordance with the discipline involved. It can be defined in legal, economic, or social terms, according to the analytical needs of a particular study. The same can be said about its causes and consequences, which are often difficult to disentangle and to prove definitively using statistical analysis. Measuring corruption is also a difficult task, and so is curbing it. However, some general conclusions can be drawn. There are proven negative effects of corruption that involve a country's economy (mostly caused by diversion of public money, and the tendency to have low quality public services and infrastructure). Damages to the economy are linked to damage to the society, which is deprived of public funds diverted towards corruption. Socio-political effects of high levels of corruption include a decline in citizens' trust in politicians, which (as noted earlier) is not to be confused with trust in politics and democracy.

Despite the inevitable inaccuracies, several measures of corruption (and in particular the CPI) are able to offer a quite accurate picture of corruption levels in many countries and regions. The CPI, moreover, has the advantage of being consistent with most measurements of citizens' perception of corruption.

Less obvious, however, appears the universality and usefulness of certain solutions to corruption, and of international treaties to combat corruption (such as the UNCAC and the OECD's Convention). Signatories of these treaties are often heterogeneous in levels of corruption (the cases of New Zealand and Italy, described in the next chapters, are exemplary of this situation), and it appears that having ratified one of these treaties does not automatically help lower levels of corruption. Since the ratification of the UNCAC, in 2009, Italy's levels of corruption have not decreased significantly. On the other hand, New Zealand only ratified the UNCAC in late 2015, and this does not appear to have affected negatively its corruption levels.

A major problem with solutions to corruption is the political will and ability to implement them. In highly corrupt environments, reform can find major resistance when it is aimed at dismantling vast and deep-rooted corruption networks, as described for instance in the case of Italy (della Porta & Vannucci, 1999b, 2007). This resistance is harder to defeat if, as seen, it is accompanied by a general distrust in politics, or in more extreme (although, as seen in this chapter, not rare) cases where a certain degree of corruption is considered socially acceptable.

It appears that success in curbing corruption is linked, at least partially, to cultural factors relative to how corruption is perceived and socially constructed in particular contexts. Press freedom is demonstrably important in curbing corruption, but this relationship is necessarily mediated by how the media construct corruption (see, for instance, Gerli, Mazzoni & Mincigrucci, 2018). Instrumentally under-reporting or hiding corruption cases, focusing on petty details about corruption scandals, or functioning as an aggressive watchdog of power are all different ways in which media deal with corruption. Moreover, as seen, corruption is characterised by variability and sometimes contradictions in its social construction and definition. De Sousa (2008), Lazar (2005), and Lascoumes and Tomescu-Hatto (2008), for instance, have shown that societies can be characterised by a certain degree of acceptability of corruption. People can condemn a certain action in theory, and yet accept its practice in specific conditions.

In their judgement of corruption, people and the media can focus on individuals (as in Breit, 2010), or have a tendency to generalise the issue (as in Pavarala, 1993). All these differences are linked to the histories and features of societies, and show that framing involves far broader processes than just media effects on individuals. Frames are rooted in cultures, and they contribute to social process, and the continuous creation and re-creation of cultural elements. Culture is a central element in the definition of corruption, and its study should be central to the search for causes, mechanisms, and potential solutions. While laws, institutions and political systems all have a relevance in the struggle against corruption, they alone cannot explain its deep nature and the specificities of its expression in different context.

New Zealand and Italy, for instance, are both parliamentary democracies; they both signed and ratified the UNCAC (although New Zealand ratified it six years later), and they both have an independent agency against corruption (although the Italian one was established quite late, as seen in the next chapter). Despite these similarities, they have very different levels of corruption, which several scholars studying both countries have linked to cultural features of the two societies.

Part of this cultural aspect of corruption deals with how it is socially constructed. Given that corruption is mostly known through media reporting (Stapenhurst, 2000), and that media are powerful shapers of the public debate about corruption (Peters, 2003), the empirical part of this thesis will focus on how corruption is framed in the media in these two countries.

The next chapter will delve into the methodological tools used for this investigation, and offer a thorough justification for a comparative study of New Zealand and Italy, by outlining the main differences (legal, historical and cultural) between the two countries.

CHAPTER 4 – METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

So far, I have introduced the issue of the social construction of corruption, and underlined its relevance to corruption studies. Moreover, I have argued that the news media, in their double role as an arena for public debate (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989) and as a watchdog against corruption (Stapenhurst, 2000) have a central function in the development of a public understanding of corruption. I have shown how this issue has remained relatively under-explored, and suggested the need to investigate it in a comparative perspective, in particular through a look at significantly different cases. I have, moreover, argued that such a research objective requires a social constructionist perspective, and that a particularly suitable methodological tool would be framing analysis.

This chapter describes the methodological criteria and tools used for the empirical part of this thesis. First, it justifies the methodological choice of a comparative study of most different cases, and the decision to investigate news media content. The choice of comparing media framing of corruption in New Zealand and Italy is further explained by outlining the main historical, social and legal features of corruption in the two countries, with a particular focus on differences and contrasts.

Subsequently, the chapter delves into the single steps of the method used to conduct the framing analysis. Integrating elements from different approaches to framing analysis, this method adopts several strategies to enhance the reliability and validity of the results. Frames are operationalised according to Entman's definition of frame functions (Entman, 1993; Matthes & Köhring, 2008), while Van Gorp's inductive approach (Van Gorp, 2010) is used to generate categories and coding of the full sample for analysis. The relevance for increasing reliability is discussed. Moreover, a second phase, consisting of a qualitative analysis of framing devices and excerpts of news texts, is introduced to increase the validity of the results.

In the last part of the chapter, the two case studies under analysis are described in detail, together with a thorough description of the sample and the data collection methods. The last section justifies and describes the analysis of a small sample of articles covering the yearly CPI in both countries over a period of 20 years (1996-2016).

4.1. RATIONALE FOR A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NEW ZEALAND AND ITALY

At the base of the empirical part of this thesis is the broad aim of exploring the media construction of corruption in two contexts characterised by contrasting levels of corruption (according to Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index). Such a research question needs at least two justifications: first, for the choice of a comparative study of contrasting countries, and second for the choice of looking at media content to investigate the social construction of corruption.

The choice of a comparative study between contrasting countries is justified by the ability of such an approach to allow unique features of each case to emerge by means of contrast, which increases the visibility of specific structures (Skocpol & Somers, 1980). In terms of the differential of levels of corruption (as measured by the CPI), other countries would qualify as most different cases in a comparison with New Zealand. However, it should be kept in mind that "no comparison is possible unless there are both analogies and contrasts" (Dogan & Pelassy, 1990, P. 144). A comparison is meaningful when it investigates differences in the light of existing similarities, uncovering possible reasons and mechanisms behind the development of such differences. New Zealand and Italy have a maximum contrast regarding levels of corruption, among those countries with maximum similarity in their being liberal democracies. In investigating the media construction of corruption, this similarity is arguably important. In the context of democracy, policies cannot be imposed by force. Therefore, public debate becomes fundamental, as it is a space in which not only public policies can be developed and publicised, but in which the (often conflicting) interests of different powers can be expressed and participate in a contest of ideas. Participation in the framing contest, therefore, is at the core of political debate and action.

The second question is, how to justify the choice of an analysis of media content. The media have a fundamental role in the construction of a public debate. This is even more relevant in relation to complex issues, such as corruption, which are known and understood by citizens mostly through the news media. As seen in Chapter 3, moreover, the press has a particular potential of influence on levels of corruption in a given country. The relevance of the role of the media in the social construction of corruption emerges with clarity in Chapter 6 of this thesis, when its importance is investigated in establishing rules and creating a space for the development of policies around a contested issue (the cultural gift-giving practices of *lafo* and *koha* in the context of New Zealand politics). It is well shown, moreover, in other studies that investigate the role of

journalism in reproducing or contesting frames that support specific policies and political actions (see, for instance, Entman, 2003; Reese & Lewis, 2009). Media construction of relevant issues, therefore, plays a fundamental role in determining the paths taken in response to them.

Corruption studies have already identified several potential reforms, issues to address, and possibilities of success in the struggle against corruption (see Chapter 3). However, levels of corruption have been constantly low in New Zealand, and constantly high in Italy. Why has reform been generally unsuccessful in the Italian context? Della Porta and Vannucci (1999; 2007) explain this with a mix of reluctance on the side of politics, and distrust and disinterest (that is, fatalism) on the side of citizenry. What is the role of the media in the development of the dominant Italian representations of corruption? Do media in New Zealand construct and frame corruption differently? These are the questions that the empirical part of this thesis addresses.

Before presenting the tools of analysis, however, it is necessary to offer a more detailed account of what corruption is in the two countries under investigation, historically, culturally, institutionally and legally.

4.2. CORRUPTION IN NEW ZEALAND

This section offers a general picture of the issue of corruption in New Zealand. In particular, it outlines its historical and social features, delves into the evolution of laws and anti-corruption policies, and describes the main cases of corruption in the recent history of the country.

4.2.1. Historical and social features of corruption in New Zealand

New Zealand has long had a reputation for low levels of corruption. Since the first year of Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index, it has stayed in the top four positions, and has been ranked first eleven times. However, its fame for a nearly corruption-free government dates back to earlier times (Gregory, 2006). It is, therefore, considered one of the least corrupt countries in the world (Gregory, Zirker & Scrimgeour, 2012).

Some of the reasons that could explain New Zealand's low levels of corruption have been identified in its strong egalitarian culture, rigid bureaucracy that acts as a "safeguard against any temptation to indulge in corrupt activity" (Gregory, 2002), its Calvinist tradition, and a deep-rooted social and political conformism (Gregory & Zirker, 2013).

While the roots of these values date back to the 19th century and were strengthened during the 1950s and 1960s, and despite the challenges and social changes experienced during the last 25 years of the 20th century and still ongoing (Gregory, 2006), the country still maintains a high reputation of honesty and a strong performance in the evaluation of its national integrity system[19].

However, this does not mean that corruption is completely absent in New Zealand, nor that New Zealand is not at risk of growing levels of corruption. Gregory (2002, 2006) has argued that the country's society has undergone radical changes starting in the 1970s (due mainly to the growing uncertainty of markets for its primary produce and the oil shocks) and continued in the 1990s, when "New Zealand experienced what is arguably the largest growth in income inequality in the western world, which has fractured the older egalitarian ethos" (Gregory, 2002, p. 20). This, of course, does not necessarily mean that corruption in New Zealand is rapidly growing, but suggests that there are now more risk factors and that therefore ethical standards must be strongly defended. An assessment of New Zealand's national integrity system completed in 2013[20] suggests that despite its strengths, the country is facing increasing challenges, especially when it comes to issues, such as transparency in political party financing and the relationships between Parliament and Executive, Executive and public officials, central government and local government. The report concludes with some recommendations, including the development of a national anti-corruption strategy and a general reinforcement of the already existing anti-corruption policies and bodies.

A first reaction to these recommendations came from the Government with the long-awaited ratification of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) in December 2015, after signing it in 2003[21]. The ratification followed the approval by Parliament of the Organised Crime and Anti-corruption Legislation Bill[22], which introduced necessary changes, such as stronger rules against corruption involving foreign public officials, and private sector corruption.

[19] https://issuu.com/transparencyinternational/docs/2013_newzealandnis_en. Accessed on 28 February 2018.
[20] https://www.transparency.org/whatwedo/publication/new_zealand_national_integrity_system_assessment_2013 (Accessed on 7 May 2018).
[21] https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/nz-ratifies-un-convention-against-corruption. Accessed on 9 June 2017.
[22] https://www.parliament.nz/en/pb/bills-and-laws/bills-proposed-laws/document/00DBHOH_BILL56502_1/organised-crime-and-anti-corruption-legislation-bill. Accessed on 28 February 2018.

4.2.2. Corruption control in New Zealand

Corruption and bribery are covered in New Zealand by the Crimes Act 1961[23] and the Secret Commission Act 1910[24] (Gregory and Zirker, 2013). Part 6 of the Crimes Act 1961 establishes punishments of a maximum of 7 or 14 years for corruption involving the judiciary, the Parliament, the Minister of the Crown, law enforcement officers, officials and foreign public officials. It was amended by the Crimes Amendment Act 2015 in order to match the obligations provided for by the UNCAC. The Secret Commission Act 1910 "deals with the secret acceptance of 'valuable considerations' (commissions) by agents unknown to their principals, including such commissions received in the procuring of contracts" (Gregory and Zirker, 2013, p. 121).

In 1962, New Zealand introduced the Ombudsman (Gregory and Zirker, 2013, p. 117), an institution that, among other roles, "handles complaints and investigates the administrative conduct of state sector agencies, including in relation to official information requests"[25]. The Ombudsman has authority to investigate a large number of entities of the state sector, and its powers of investigation are strong (entering government premises, requiring information and documents, summoning witnesses and examining them on oath).

In 1990, the Serious Fraud Act established the Serious Fraud Office (SFO), an independent government agency in charge of investigating and prosecuting "serious or complex financial crimes, including bribery and corruption"[26]. The SFO was created in response to a series of financial frauds which emerged after the stock market crash of 1987 (Gregory, 2006), and has a success rate of over 90 percent (Van Peursem & Balme, 2010). Its budget has increased from the initial 4 million dollars in 1990 to 9.3 million dollars in 2015, when 47 employees worked full-time for the agency[27].

In addition, the Office of the Controller and Auditor-General, established in the 19th century, produces independent reports on how public money is spent[28] and ensures the "overall ethical probity of public sector administration in New Zealand" (Gregory and Zirker, 2013, p. 122).

[23] http://legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1961/0043/latest/DLM327382.html. Accessed on 9 June 2017.
[24] http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1910/0040/latest/DLM177643.html. Accessed on 9 June 2017.
[25] http://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz/faq-s. Accessed on 9 June 2017.
[26] https://www.sfo.govt.nz/our-purpose-and-role. Accessed on 10 June 2017.
[27] https://www.sfo.govt.nz/file/282. Accessed on 10 June 2017.
[28] http://www.oag.govt.nz/about-us. Accessed on 10 June 2017

4.2.3. Cases of corruption in New Zealand

Gregory (2002, 2006) provides two long lists of fraud and bribery cases by public officials that emerged in New Zealand between 1998 and 2006. Most of those cases involve a single public official, and constitute more specifically cases of fraud, and not of corruption in its narrow definition of "occult exchange" (della Porta & Vannucci, 1999). Important exceptions in Gregory's lists are an Immigration Department officer accepting bribes in exchange for permanent residency visas for Korean immigrants (Gregory, 2002, p. 29), and a group of 43 staff of the Ministry of Social Development committing fraud for over $700,000 between 2000 and 2003 (Gregory, 2006, p. 130).

These corruption cases should not be minimised in relation to their number and impact on public service, politics and society, and it should not be forgotten that what emerges in most cases is only a part of the real amount of corruption in a country. However, it is immediately evident how in New Zealand, as opposed to Italy, systemic corruption and organised groups engaging in corruption are nearly absent. This marks an important difference in the reality of corruption in the two countries. New Zealand was historically characterised by low levels of organised crime (Gregory and Zirker, 2013), whereas Italy has seen the presence of several deep-rooted organised crime groups, often involved in the corruption market (Vannucci, 1997). The connection between organised crime and corruption is described later in this chapter. Suffice here to underline that the importance of low levels of organised crime in New Zealand[29] in maintaining low levels of corruption has been implicitly reaffirmed by a former State Services Commissioner when he warned about the "increasing level of Asian-based international organized crime activity in the Pacific region" (Gregory and Zirker, 2013, p. 124).

In 2009, Samoan New Zealander Taito Phillip Field became the first MP in the country convicted for corruption. Before him, Donna Awatere Huata was sentenced to 33 months of prison for fraud and perverting the course of justice. She committed the offences while she was an MP (Gregory and Zirker, 2013).

In 2010, a series of scandals involving the misuse of public money were reported, which occasioned some MPs to resign from their position (one of them, Pansy Wong, was Minister of

[29] The New Zealand endemic organised crime is represented by outlawed motorcycle gangs, and Māori and Polynesian ethnic gangs (Newbold, 1997). However, they differ substantially from Italian organised crime. The Italian organised crime is often strictly linked with politics and, in some cases, functions as a parastatal organisation (see Gambetta, 1992; Vannucci, 1997).

Housing)[30]. In 2014, during a trip to China, Justice Minister Judith Collins was accused of conflict of interest for promoting the products of a company linked to her husband. However, she was never formally investigated.

At the end of 2016, an Auditor-General's report cleared Foreign Affairs Minister Murray McCully of the accusations of corruption regarding 11.5 million dollars spent on a Saudi farm (although the report underlined at the same time the inadequate transparency of the deal)[31].

In 2017, two people were jailed for bribery in what has been defined as the "country's largest bribery case"[32]. Former Auckland Transport senior manager Murray Noone was sentenced to five years for receiving bribes from Porjenz's managing director Stephen Borlase (sentenced to five years and a half), in exchange for the award of several public contracts.

In general, on a comparative scale the differences between corruption in New Zealand and Italy remain clear. In particular, the number of reported cases and the structure of corruption (predominance of corruption networks versus predominance of individual cases) offers two very different country profiles. As will be seen, these structural features of corruption are reflected in media representations of corruption.

4.3. CORRUPTION IN ITALY

In this section, corruption in Italy is investigated in its historical, social and legal aspects. Moreover, particular attention is dedicated to corruption cases in the history of the country. Cases of corruption have been a constant in Italian politics and institutions, but the most disruptive case, destined to radically modify the perception of corruption in the country, has certainly been the "Tangentopoli" scandal which emerged in 1992.

4.3.1. Cases of corruption in Italy

Relatively high levels of corruption in Italy have always existed. Shortly after the Kingdom of Italy was born in 1861, two major corruption scandals occurred. One, which emerged in 1868, involved a still unresolved mystery of bribes paid in exchange for a twenty-year concession of the

[30] http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c id=1&objectid=11580598. Accessed on 10 June 2017
[31] http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=11740591. Accessed on 10 June 2017.
[32] http://www.nzherald.co.nz/business/news/article.cfm?c_id=3&objectid=11805571. Accessed on 4 August 2017.

Regia dei Tabacchi (the state-owned tobacco monopoly) to a private society (see Turone, 1992). The second one, emerged in 1889 (the “Bank of Rome scandal”), involved several politicians in a story of high sums of money printed illegally. Several other scandals followed (for a full account, see Turone, 1992), but the event that marked a separation line in the history of corruption in Italy was the scandal usually referred to as “Tangentopoli” (Bribesville). The Tangentopoli scandal emerged in 1992, involving politicians and entrepreneurs in the thousands, strongly undermining the electoral results of the existing parties and causing the end of the so-called First Republic (Colarizi, 2007). It constituted a defining moment during which citizens became aware of the reality and depth of corruption in the political and institutional system (Giglioli, 1996; della Porta & Vannucci, 1999).

The scandal emerged on 17 February 1992, when the president of the rest home Pio Albergo Trivulzio in Milan, Mario Chiesa, was arrested while accepting a 14 million *lire* (the Italian currency at the time) bribe from an entrepreneur, in exchange for the concession of a 140 million *lire* contract for cleaning. The team of magistrates that was conducting the investigations, led by Chief Prosecutor Francesco Saverio Borrelli and Substitute Prosecutor Gerardo D’Ambrosio, and accompanied by public prosecutors Antonio Di Pietro, Gherardo Colombo and Piercamillo Davigo, uncovered a highly organised system of bribes offered to politicians and public officers from all the main parties by entrepreneurs in exchange for tenders, concessions and support of other nature. The scandal involved almost the entire political system, with the partial exceptions of the Northern League (a political party born only a few years earlier in contrast to the old party system, and claiming independence of Northern Italy from the central government) and the Italian Communist Party (see Colaprico, 1996). The scandal soon spread out of the region of Milan and involved the whole country. It was closely followed by the media and the public and created a conflictual atmosphere. On the one hand, politicians and entrepreneurs involved in the scandal tried to justify themselves not by rejecting allegations (which at that moment was impossible, as there was too much evidence of most of the bribes paid), but by affirming that the corruption system was widespread, well-known and therefore normal. The leader of the Italian Socialist Party, Bettino Craxi, during a speech at Parliament and during questioning in the tribunal, affirmed that payment of bribes to representatives of the parties, although illegal, was a normal and well-

known practice in Italian politics, as the money was necessary to face the ever-growing expenses of electoral campaigns and other politics-related issues.[33]

On the other hand, the judiciary (specifically, the team of public prosecutors that was investigating Tangentopoli, and that came to be known as "Mani Pulite", meaning *Clean Hands*), the media and the majority of citizens coalesced in condemning the corrupt politicians and entrepreneurs, creating (or perhaps taking to the extreme) an image of a corrupt politics devoted to defending its own interests, in juxtaposition to a strong, honest judiciary and a honest society robbed by politics (see Giglioli, 1996; also Colarizi, 2007). This widespread perception was exemplified in a video showing a group of citizens throwing coins at leader of PSI Bettino Craxi at his exit from the Hotel Raphael in Rome, on 30 April 1993[34].

The Tangentopoli scandal caused PSI member Sergio Moroni and entrepreneur Raul Gardini to commit suicide (the first one on 2 September 1992, the second on 23 July 1993) before being arrested for their involvement in exchange of bribes. Later, PSI leader Bettino Craxi fled to Hammamet (in Tunisia) shortly before being arrested, ending his life on the run to avoid prison[35].

As of 1998, the numbers involved in the scandal were astonishing: over four thousand people under investigation, 2970 requests of commitment for trial, 1063 commitments for trial and 460 sentences of conviction (della Porta & Vannucci, 1999).

The political consequences of Tangentopoli became clear in the national elections of 1994, when basically no trace of the old party system was left (Colarizi, 2007).

However, far from being solved, the problem of corruption immediately re-emerged when Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi and other members of his party, Forza Italia, were involved in new investigations in regard to bribes paid to the Guardia di Finanza (Italian Finance Police) in order to avoid fiscal checks (della Porta & Vannucci, 1999).

Scholars have argued that corruption in Italy was not curbed in the long term by the judicial and political turmoil of Tangentopoli, and instead paying bribes and cultivating relationships that benefit illegal exchanges has continued to be common practice in the country. In 2002, 10 years after the beginning of Tangentopoli, almost 2,000 people were charged with corruption in Italy (della Porta & Vannucci, 2007). Corruption scandals have been a constant theme in Italian news,

[33] http://www.rai.it/dl/RaiTV/programmi/media/ContentItem-71cf2715-7501-4d35-874d-0b3cc93db83b.html (Accessed on 19 January 2018); https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pcwbm2qL6k (Accessed on 19 January 2018).
[34] http://www.linkiesta.it/it/article/2011/09/17/1993-quel-giorno-al-raphael-craxi-non-usci-dal-retro/6178/ (Accessed on 19 January 2018).
[35] http://www.corriere.it/extra-per-voi/2017/02/02/invece-mario-chiesa-parlo-craxi-pietro-quei-due-anni-che-non-salvarono-l-italia-841e56be-e96c-11e6-9abf-27281e0d6da4.shtml (Accessed on 19 January 2018).

with several cases of petty and grand corruption regularly present on the first pages of newspapers. To give an idea of how corruption remains rooted in the political and public body of the country, several examples are apposite.

Looking at 2014, for example, allows an understanding of how, more than 20 years after the arrests and convictions of Tangentopoli, corruption is still rooted in Italian politics and the public sector. During this year alone, three major grand corruption cases emerged. The Expo scandal (here used as a case study and described in detail later) was characterised by a small network of politicians, former politicians, public officers and entrepreneurs involved in illegal exchanges of bribes and public contracts for some infrastructure in preparation for the international fair "Expo 2015", to be held in Milan. This scandal, significantly, involved people that had already been charged with corruption and convicted during the years of Tangentopoli (in particular, politicians Gianstefano Frigerio and Primo Greganti).

Another major scandal in 2014 involved a network of corruption around the work of MOSE, a civil engineering project in the lagoon of Venice. On 4 June 2014, 35 people (entrepreneurs, managers, local administrators and politicians) were arrested. The scandal involved Giorgio Orsoni, at the time mayor of Venice, arrested on charges of illegal party financing, and Giancarlo Galan, former Governor of Veneto, and, at the time of the arrest, a member of Parliament[36].

Finally, in December 2014, the "Mafia Capitale" scandal exploded when police arrested 37 people in Rome, revealing a Mafia-like organisation involving criminals, entrepreneurs and public officials tightly linked in a corruption network involved in a number of crimes, including corruption, extortion and criminal conspiracy[37].

The major scandals of 2014 are only an example of corruption scandals in Italy after Tangentopoli. In conjunction with data about the costs of corruption and the number of offences throughout the years, they depict a country in which corruption is still widespread, and deep-rooted in the political and public service bodies. These three scandals also show that corruption is by no means relegated to determinate areas of the countries (for instance, those regions traditionally linked to organised crime associations). Instead, these three scandals happened in

[36] https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2014/06/04/tangenti-mose-35-arresti-in-carcere-anche-sindaco-di-venezia/1012200/ (Accessed on 19 January 2018).
[37] More precisely, "associazione di tipo mafioso", a type of offence that can be translated as "Mafia-like association". Eventually, this specific allegation was dismissed.
http://www.repubblica.it/cronaca/2014/12/02/news/mafia_roma_37_arresti_appalti_comune_alemanno-101964106/ (Accessed on 19 January 2018).

some of the vital centres of the country, namely the city of Venice, the city of Milan and the capital Rome, headquarters of the central government and political power.

4.4.2. Historical and social features of corruption in Italy

Corruption in Italy has been for long characterised by a high degree of systematisation. The existence of widespread corruption networks in the political and institutional system of Italy emerged with particular strength during the Tangentopoli scandal, but despite the "Mani Pulite" investigations, corruption networks have not been eradicated. Corruption has instead remained deep-rooted in civil society, professions and businesses, finance (della Porta & Vannucci, 2007, p. 10), and, of course, politics and institutions, at the point that it has become a regulated system (Davigo & Mannozzi, 2007) and a standard praxis in some localised environments (della Porta & Vannucci, 2007). In comparison to the years before Tangentopoli, when political corruption was carried on inside the parties' system in order to raise (illegal) funds for electoral campaigns and political expenses, corruption has moved to the local and regional level, and towards the privatisation of corrupt exchanges (Sciarrone, 2016). Today, corruption is mostly carried out for private gain of individuals or small groups, instead of political parties. However, this has by no means undermined the high organisation of corrupt exchanges, nor does it seem to have lowered the levels of corruption in the country. Examples, such as the Expo scandal, analysed in this research, or other scandals, such as those described in the previous paragraphs, clearly give an idea of how corruption can still be deeply ingrained as a systemic feature of the institutional system.

Moreover, while corruption does not seem to be homogeneously distributed all over the Italian territory, it is by no means limited in its strongest expressions to the South of Italy. Corruption, instead, is particularly relevant in Lombardy (Sciarrone, 2016), in particular in the area of Milan, which could be considered the economic centre of the country, and in Lazio, the Region of Rome, political and geographical capital of Italy (Fiorino & Galli, 2013). However, data show that corruption is widely present in Campania, Sicily, Calabria and Puglia (Sciarrone, 2016), the four Regions of origin of Italy's four main criminal organisations (Mafia, Camorra, 'Ndrangheta and Sacra Corona Unita). While organised crime and corruption are "two separate industries" (Vannucci, 1997, p.51), the link between the two is regarded as particularly important in the study and understanding of corruption in Italy. Organised crime and corrupt politicians offer each other protection. Organised crime offers protection to politicians through intimidation and violence (and,

indirectly, a reputation of violence), and is able to control packages of votes to increase the power of corrupt politicians. In exchange, organised crime is guaranteed impunity, and public contracts that constitute a profitable business (della Porta, 1997).

However, while corruption certainly benefits from connivance with organised crime, it has its own networks and modes that allow it to survive. One of these modes is linked to the diffuse practice of clientelism, that creates a vicious circle in which money is collected by administrators through corruption, and reinvested in a barter vote (della Porta, 1997). This is the mode that was found in action when the Tangentopoli scandal exploded. Corruption also passes through poor administration, which leads to the search for privileged channels and can be strategically used by administrators to obtain bribes (della Porta, 1997). Poor administration, in the case of Italy, is further undermined by an excess of laws, and by their confused formulation (della Porta & Vannucci, 1999). Finally, features that have been linked by research to higher levels of corruption are present in Italy, such as a deep-rooted Christian religion tradition, and the so-called "amoral familism", a tendency to promote the interest of one's own family or group, with no interest in the public good (Vannucci, 2012).

Moreover, systemic corruption in Italy has brought the rise of the figure of "faccendiere" (fixer), who acts as a mediator between individuals (or groups) with an interest in carrying out corrupt exchanges or joining corruption networks. Fixers and mediators employ their "reputation" as a warranty for the success and secrecy of corrupt exchanges and make a profit through this role (see Vannucci, 2012).

4.4.3. Corruption control in Italy

While the events of Tangentopoli suggested the need for stronger anti-corruption policies and increasing transparency, politics reacted slowly and confusingly, producing only a few results in terms of anti-corruption measures (della Porta & Vannucci, 1999). During the last decade of the 20th century and the first one of the new millennium, however, something changed in the legal panorama of anti-corruption in Italy. In 1996, the government created the "Commissione Speciale anti-corruzione" (Special Anti-Corruption Committee) as part of the Chamber of Deputies, and an independent "Comitato di Studio", an advisory panel in charge of producing suggestions for legislative intervention to combat corruption (della Porta & Vannucci, 1999).

Later, in 2003, the Government established an "Alto Commissario per la prevenzione e il contrasto della corruzione nella pubblica amministrazione", a body in charge of monitoring and preventing corruption in public administration. This figure was to be substituted, in 2008, with the SAeT (Servizio Anticorruzione e Trasparenza), with analogue functions (Vannucci, 2009; Manca, 2016).

Moreover, in 2006, a legislative decree (d.lgs. 163/2006[38]) grouped for the first time in a single text all the legislation regarding public tenders and contracts, introducing a series of modifications aimed at contrasting corruption (Manca, 2016).

In 2009, a reform of the public administration introduced for the first time an independent agency with anti-corruption functions, called "Commissione Indipendente per la valutazione, la trasparenza e l'integrità delle amministrazioni pubbliche" (CIVIT). The CIVIT was in charge of evaluating the transparency in the public administration (Manca, 2016; Arbia et al., 2016).

However, the first structural reform of anti-corruption policies began in 2012, during the technocratic government of Mario Monti. The so-called "Severino Law"[39], from the name of Justice Minister Paola Severino, introduced several changes in anti-corruption legislation, including modifications provided for by the United Nations Convention Against Corruption. The CIVIT was given the function of national anti-corruption authority, and its functions included vigilance over activities of the public administration and approval of the National Anti-corruption Plan. It was also established that CIVIT would refer to Parliament yearly about the situation of transparency and corruption in the public administration. Moreover, the law introduced stricter rules for transparency in the public administration and assignment of public contracts, and rules for legal protection of whistleblowers (Manca, 2016). Finally, the new law introduced a series of changes in the types of offence and penalties for corruption, with a general tendency to more severe punishments.

In 2014, the CIVIT and the "Autorità per la vigilanza sui contratti pubblici di lavori, servizi e forniture" (a body in charge of monitoring transparency in the assignation of public contracts) were fused together to form the "Autorità Nazionale Anticorruzione" (ANAC – National Anti-Corruption Authority)[40]. In 2015, a new anti-corruption law was approved by Parliament. It extended the powers of the ANAC and strengthened the punishments for offences related to corruption (Arbia et al., 2016).

[38] http://www.camera.it/parlam/leggi/deleghe/06163dl.htm. Accessed on 17 October 2017.
[39] http://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2012/11/13/012G0213/sg. Accessed on 12 June 2017.
[40] http://www.anticorruzione.it/portal/public/classic/Autorita/Organizzazione. Accessed on 12 June 2017.

In this paragraph, I have shown the advantages of comparing media representations of corruption in New Zealand and Italy. In the next paragraph, I will introduce framing analysis, and outline the method used in this research.

4.4. RESEARCH METHOD: FRAMING ANALYSIS OF FRAME COMPONENTS

To investigate media representations of corruption in New Zealand and Italy, this thesis uses framing analysis. Framing in the media is about the selection of specific aspects of an issue, their salience in a text, and their repetition over time (Entman, 1993). Frames promote specific perspectives on an issue, and for this reason framing analysis is here considered the most useful tool for a comparative investigation of media representations of corruption. As outlined earlier in this chapter, a comparative perspective, in this case, is regarded as the best to let differences and similarities emerge. Framing analysis is the methodological tool to reach this aim. In particular, an analysis of frame functions (Entman, 1993) allows investigating how the issue of corruption is differently defined, and how its causes, moral judgments and potential solutions differ in the print media of the two countries.

Due to its popularity, framing analysis has been largely used in media studies in the last few decades (D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010). Approaches towards framing analysis have been varied, using qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods, manual or computer-assisted operationalisation, descriptive or more interpretive approaches. The quality of such studies, in terms of validity, reliability and accountability of the research method and process, also varies. In this research, the preference has been given to a qualitative, interpretive approach to framing. However, elements of quantification have been used to systematise the analysis and to improve its rigour and reliability. In the following paragraphs, different approaches to framing analysis are reviewed, and the method used in this research is described and justified.

4.4.1. Approaches to framing analysis

Studies based on framing analysis have been carried out with a range of different approaches. In their review of framing analysis methods, Matthes and Kohring (2008) list five common approaches, their strengths and their weaknesses. The hermeneutic approach is characterised by a qualitative descriptive approach and the absence of quantification, and raises reliability

concerns for its unsystematic approach to frame extraction. The linguistic approach, despite extrapolating frames from more tangible linguistic devices, is similar to the hermeneutic approach in its difficulties to standardise framing analysis, thus making it more suitable for in-depth analysis of small amounts of data. The manual holistic approach generates frames qualitatively and then proceeds to some form of coding. The "reliability and validity of this approach strongly depend upon the transparency in extracting frames" (Matthes & Kohring, 2008, p. 260). Finally, computer-assisted approaches and deductive methods, while providing systematic and often very reliable results, both run the risk of missing important information, thus decreasing their validity. In particular, computer-assisted studies based on word counts and clustering have a tendency to resemble thematic analysis rather than framing analysis (Matthes & Kohring, 2008, p. 261).

All these approaches have advantages and disadvantages, and can be applied successfully in the right circumstances. However, the trustworthiness of the more qualitative approaches depends on the rigour with which the research process is reported. On the other hand, computer-assisted, automatic approaches voluntarily sacrifice part of their explanatory power in exchange for high reliability and applicability.

Matthes and Kohring (2008) try to mediate between these approaches by suggesting a method for framing analysis based on the idea that frames emerge from texts as clusters of frame elements. Rooted in Entman's definition of frame functions (Entman, 1993), this method makes use of a coding system based on previous codebooks and inductive analysis to code a large amount of textual data. Later, hierarchical cluster analysis is applied to look for clusters of frame elements. These clusters become frames, and they are used to explain how the issue under investigation (biotechnology) is framed in the analysed media outlet (*New York Times*).

Alternatively, Van Gorp describes a type of manual holistic approach based on a systematic series of inductive steps aimed at identifying "frame packages" constituted of framing devices and reasoning devices (Van Gorp, 2010, p. 91). This approach is exemplified, for instance, in a study on media representations of dementia (Van Gorp & Vercruysee, 2012).

4.4.2. Method of this research

The method used here combines elements of the last two approaches described. Instead of generating and coding entire frames, it has been chosen to focus on frame elements (as suggested in Matthes & Kohring, 2008). Therefore, using the operational definition of frames

offered by Entman (1993), categories of frame functions (causes, problem definition, moral judgment, and solutions) have been generated inductively through open coding (as in Van Gorp, 2010). The decision to code frame functions, instead of more general, abstract frames, is motivated by the need to reach higher reliability of the coding process (Matthes & Kohring, 2008, p. 264), and at the same time to have a more detailed and nuanced framework to work with. Through the analysis of different categories of frame functions and their relative frequency in the news, it is possible to extract the dominant frames, but also to break them into chunks that can be analysed separately and offer a more in-depth interpretation of the data.

Moreover, the study consists of a second phase of in-depth, qualitative analysis of the texts, based on the results of coding. This phase not only plays a descriptive and interpretive role, but constitutes an important way of assessing the validity of the coding system and extracted frame functions. During this second phase, specific framing devices (such as metaphors and narratives) are identified, and excerpts and quotes from the original texts are used to describe, interpret, validate and compare the generated frames. The interpretive phase is conducted with a constant comparison of the two case studies, in the light of the previous literature on the topic. This section describes the two phases in detail.

Phase 1 – Inductive generation of categories of frame functions, and coding. The inductive generation of codes is necessary when there are no previous codebooks available, or when theory cannot inform a set of pre-determined codes. In this research, codes have been generated as nominal categories of an established set of four variables, corresponding to Entman's frame functions (Entman, 1993).

The inductive development of codes was divided into stages. A first stage, of qualitative nature, consisted of a preparation phase in which the researcher familiarised himself with the data through immersion in the texts, multiple readings and creation of notes (Elo & Kyngäs, 2007; Vaismoradi, Turunen & Bondas, 2013). This is a fundamental phase in qualitative analysis, as it allows "obtain[ing] a sense of the whole" (Hsieh & Shannon, 2005, p. 1279), developing the first hypothesis and looking for confirmation and/or deviant cases (Pope, Ziebland & Mays, 2000). This phase began, in the present case, at the moment of data collection, when news items were rapidly read in order to separate those that were relevant from those to discard. Once data collection was completed, the researcher proceeded to several readings of the texts, taking side notes and developing embryonal ideas about the coding system. Van Gorp (2010, p. 94) defines

this phase as “open coding of the texts”, a moment during which “texts are analysed without the use of a predefined coding instrument”. To develop a sound and useful coding system, the researcher had to familiarise himself with the topic under investigation and the relevant literature. During this non-linear phase, lexical choices, metaphors, keywords, specific selections of facts and judgments, catchphrases and other linguistic, narrative and rhetorical devices were identified, and their salience (indicated by their repetition and positioning in the news items) was roughly evaluated. These elements are at the heart of framing (Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Entman, 1993; Van Gorp, 2010), and are central to the development of codes and coding rules. Notes were taken, and the emerging elements were annotated in temporary inventories. While these notes did by no means constitute the final coding system, they contained ideas and nuances that could be lost at a later stage, when the complexity of the generated data would be reduced to create a manageable coding system. The importance of notes, therefore, lies not only in their role in the inductive, creative process of finding frames and frame functions; it lies, as well, in their importance during the descriptive and interpretive phase that follows coding, when nuances and details are recovered to reach an in-depth understanding of the data.Therefore, an inventory of notes is reported in Table 1 to exemplify how the inductive generation of codes proceeded. This table serves as an instrument for research accountability, and a research tool for the researcher.

CAUSES	• Individuals • Gangs (“clan”, “affaristi”, “cupola”, organised crime lexicon) • References to the past (i.e. Tangentopoli) • Politics • Corruption networks • Corruption of the “system” • False allegations
PROBLEM DEFINITION	• Epidemic and disease metaphors (plague). • Cancer (metastasis) • (Natural) disaster metaphors (“tornado”, “tsunami”, “terremoto”, “macerie”, “ciclone”) • “Decadenza”, “sciagura” • Corruption as pollution • Risks for the system integrity (“whitewash”) • Koha/Iafo
MORAL JUDGMENT	• Betrayal of trust/dishonesty • Professionalisation/business • Inverted (claims that allegations are false, the corrupt becomes the victim) • Evil (corruption as a manifestation of evil) • System co-responsible • Reframing as “Iafo”
SOLUTIONS	• Political elimination of bad apples • Emergency measures (“task force”) • Emergency laws • Judiciary • Reform/new laws

Table 1 - Annotations during the inductive phase

By confronting this inventory of notes with the final coding manual (see Appendix A), one can see how codes were formed throughout the different stages. For instance, the category "Widespread problem", under the "Problem definition" function, was created by grouping under the same conceptual label, recurrent words, such as tsunami, tornado, *terremoto* (earthquake), *macerie* (ruins), *ciclone* (cyclone), *decadenza* (decay), *sciagura* (catastrophe), *cancro* (cancer), *metastasi* (metastasis), *peste* (plague), and more general notes such as "corruption as pollution", "natural disaster metaphors", and "epidemic and disease metaphors". Many of these words and ideas have specific nuances. For instance, metaphors related to health and body functioning are different from those related to natural disasters or to the spreading of epidemics. Words such as "decay" are more linked to societies, instead of uncontrollable factors such as natural disasters or diseases. All these nuances were temporarily lost during the coding. Notes, however, allowed the researcher to bring them up again at a later stage, using them to delve into media framing of corruption in more detail.

However, after the open-coding phase, the final codes needed to be developed. To do that, all the identified linguistic, narrative, rhetorical and conceptual devices were grouped together for similarity, to reduce dimensions and increase abstraction (Van Gorp, 2010). Grouping and collapsing elements together is a way of reducing the complexity and the number of codes, allowing the creation of a relatively simple coding system that can be put into a coding sheet and described in a coding manual. While allowing the development of a manageable coding system, decreasing the complexity also reduces the richness of the data. This is why, in this case, it has been deemed important not to limit the analysis to a simple description and interpretation of the results of coding, but to extend it to the second phase of thick, qualitative analysis of the original texts.

Once the final codes were developed and notes on their elements systematised, the coding manual was prepared. The coding manual (see Appendix A) was designed to present clear, specific and complete coding rules for the identification of categories and their coding (Matthes & Kohring, 2008; Van Gorp, 2010). Instructions included the description of the single textual elements and concepts that represented a specific category/code, and rules for assessing the salience of the code in a unit of analysis. Coding, in fact, was not done by rule of mere presence, but instead by rules of salience. As "framing essentially involves selection and salience" (Entman, 1993, p. 52), and this salience is expressed by "repetition" and "placement" (Entman, 1991, p. 7); these were the two rules for coding the presence of a particular code expressing a frame function.

To be more precise, placement was operationalised by coding those categories present in the title or in the first paragraph of a unit of analysis, while repetition was operationalised by coding those categories whose elements were present throughout at least half of the unit. As a consequence of these rules, codes were not mutually exclusive. The use of these rules allowed the researcher to focus on dominant frames.

Once the coding manual was completed, a coding sheet was developed to allow the systematic coding of all units of the analysis.

Before proceeding to full coding, however, two pilot tests were conducted to test for intercoder reliability[41]. Failures in obtaining acceptable levels of intercoder reliability, and subsequent discussion of disagreements allowed the researcher to refine the codes, merge some of them, and eventually to create a better coding manual (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). Eventually, intercoder reliability was calculated for each category between two independent coders (the researcher and another doctoral student fluent in Italian and English, and familiar with the topic and the contexts of New Zealand and Italy) on a random sample of 26 articles, leading to percentage agreements of at least 0.8, and Cohen's Kappa of at least 0.6 (see Appendix A). The only exception was the category "Fatalism" that had a percent agreement of over 0.8, but a low Cohen's Kappa, due to the occasional presence of this specific category (Van Gorp, 2010, p. 100).

Once an acceptable level of intercoder reliability was reached, a full coding of the sample was carried out. An identification code was assigned to each unit of analysis (see Appendix D for a full list), and the relative news outlet, country and type of article (news piece, opinion piece or interview) were also coded.

Phase 2 – Going back to the texts. Once the coding was completed, the frequencies of the different categories of each frame function were calculated. In order to describe and interpret the results of the coding, it was then necessary to go back to the original texts. Going back to the texts was possibly the most important phase of the research, as it allowed more detailed exploration of the linguistic, narrative and rhetorical elements of frames and frame functions, the development of a more complex structure of the findings, and the use of quotes and excerpts that could help to explain and exemplify the results of coding. Coding in this research can be considered a preliminary exploration, despite its importance in offering an initial framework and

[41] Intercoder reliability was calculated using the web service ReCal (Freelon, 2010; 2013).

structure to the descriptive and interpretive job, and its relevance to address the reliability of the results. Given the ductile nature of frames, and the fact that framing can be considered a process of construction of social reality (as previously argued), the importance of frames does not simply lie in their definition, but in the nature of the elements that compose them, in the textual expression of the public discourse in which they are inserted, and in which they find their way to dominance or irrelevance. This second phase of the analysis was aimed exactly at investigating this mobile, discursive nature of frames, by delving into how general frames and specific frame functions are expressed in the texts, and what a comparative approach to framing can offer in terms of insight into how corruption is socially constructed as an issue in different environments.

In the second phase a number of framing devices were identified, described and interpreted in the light of the similarities and differences which emerged, and the results of previous research on the topic. In particular, the analysis focuses on the metaphorical and narrative construction of corruption. Moreover, a particular phase of the coverage of the New Zealand scandal was isolated and investigated in depth, to offer an example of how cultural elements can create a space for negotiating reality, and how this negotiation happens in the media.

4.4.3. Metaphors and narratives as framing devices

The second phase of the method just described was largely focused on the analysis of two particular framing devices, namely metaphors and narratives.

Scholars have repeatedly underlined the relevance of metaphors in the framing processes. Metaphors have been defined as “prototypical initiators of framing” (Krippendorff, 2017, p. 97), and they have been put at the centre of the processes of shaping public discourse (Burgers, Konijn & Steen, 2016), thanks to their ability to provide “people with a means of connecting political issues to their own experiences” (Brugman, Burgers & Steen, 2017, p. 183).

Metaphors are not just linguistic features of discourse, but instead the basis of people’s understanding and organisation of conceptual systems. Our conceptual systems, in turn, are central to the social construction of reality. As a consequence, metaphors influence people’s thoughts and actions (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 3). Conceptual metaphors work by bringing “two distant domains (or concepts) into correspondence with each other” (Kövecses, 2003, p. 4), allowing people to understand a more abstract concept in terms of another more concrete or familiar. Moreover, metaphorical discourse tends to be systematic, meaning that a concept is

usually surrounded by a system of coherent, organised metaphors that allow it to be understood. As a consequence of this system, some aspects of a concept tend to be emphasised, while others remain hidden (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980). This last aspect explains the importance of metaphors in the processes of frame building, where frames are intended as the result of selection and salience of certain aspects of an issue (Entman, 1993). When analysing metaphors and their meaning in the social construction of issues of social relevance, such as corruption, it is important to keep in mind that, since metaphors are used to structure social reality and knowledge, as a result they may also guide social behaviour. This is not limited to individual behaviour, but, as shown by Lakoff and Johnson (1980, p. 156-158), metaphorical systems can potentially determine policy choices, and political and economic action.

Rather than in its conceptualisation in journalism studies, the term narrative is used here in a social constructionist perspective drawn by social psychology (see Bruner, 1991), and especially by Janos Laszlo's attempt to link narratives to social representations (Laszlo, 1997). In journalism studies, the idea of narrative is mainly linked to the sequential presentation of the events that define a story (Franklin et al., 2005). In social psychology, and in particular where social representations theory and narrative psychology meet, a narrative is intended as a way of connecting social events by forms of causality not descending from logical reasoning or empirical proof, but by verisimilitude (Laszlo, 1997, p. 159). A narrative could, therefore, be described as a naïve theory. To exemplify this concept, I will use the narratives of corruption presented in the next chapter (see 5.3.2.). Narratives of diffusion and continuity, for instance, tend to insert a specific corruption case in a broader context in which corruption is diffuse and deep-rooted in time, thus suggesting that the event is a direct consequence of a corrupt environment. Similarly, a narrative of normality inserts a corruption scandal in a context where corruption is an unsurprising aspect of life. Part of this narrative are fatalism and the dilution of responsibility (the cause of corruption is not so much individual behaviour, but the social environment). In contrast, a narrative of integrity offers a radically different causal explanation of corruption, by depicting a corruption event as a deviation (led by individual misbehaviour) from the accepted norm of integrity. The recurrence in media discourses of similar naïve theories, or narratives, is an indication of their salience and importance. Defined like this, narratives can, therefore, be seen as relevant framing devices.

4.4.4. Case studies: the "Field scandal" in New Zealand, and the "Expo scandal" in Italy

To investigate the social construction of corruption in the media, the focus here was initially on two case studies. Using case studies allows the researcher to investigate how the discourse around corruption is constructed dialogically, through a public debate that follows the development of an event and sees the interaction of different voices negotiating the meaning(s) of the event. Using case studies, however, has limitations. Results, for instance, are not automatically generalisable. To address this issue, the analysis was expanded to a larger timeframe in the second part of the research, that will be described in detail later. Moreover, in a comparative study, cases might differ, making comparisons difficult.

To address this issue, case studies were chosen according to their being "critical cases" (Jensen, 2002, p. 239) for the countries under investigation. Namely, they were among the most prominent cases in the country in the last two decades, and therefore the most likely to have sparked a lively debate over the topic of corruption. The "Field scandal" in New Zealand, for instance, was the first case of an MP accused (and eventually convicted) for corruption. The "Expo scandal" in Italy, instead, was one among many recent cases of corruption, but it was particularly relevant because of the amount of money involved in the scandal, and especially for the involvement of contracts and work for the international event "Expo 2015". The importance of the event for the country increased the relevance of a corruption scandal involving it.

The two cases share a series of features. As said, they are both recent and can be considered among the most relevant corruption cases in the history of the two countries. They are cases of grand corruption, involving the highest institutional levels of the country[42]. Another shared feature is that they involve a limited number of people. In the New Zealand case, Taito Phillip Field was the only person formally accused and eventually convicted, although the case directly involved a Thai citizen acting as "briber", and indirectly a number of other people. In the Italian case, despite the initial impression that many people were involved, the case ended with the conviction of the initial seven accused. No one else was accused or convicted, and the case spared politicians and public officers at the national level.

[42] The New Zealand case is typically an example of grand corruption, as it involves a Member of Parliament. On the other hand, the Italian case does not involve high level politicians, and most of the convicted are figures with no leading roles in their respective parties. However, it clearly is not a case of petty corruption. Petty corruption includes those cases in which a low-level public officer receives a bribe in exchange for a relatively small favour (such as the Italian case reported in Vannucci, 2012, in which public officers sell driver licences for a fixed price). In the case of the Expo, the general manager Angelo Paris is involved and eventually convicted, and the amount of money spent in bribes and assigned in subcontracts is calculable in millions. The case is clearly relevant for the entire country, therefore it can be considered a case of grand corruption.

Certainly, however, the two cases also present differences. The Italian case, for instance, involved a much higher amount of money, and an issue of much higher national and international relevance, both for the image and the economy of the country. While in the Italian case, bribes were paid to obtain subcontracts, the New Zealand case involved matters of immigration and visas. Moreover, the "Field scandal" involved foreigners and an MP of Samoan origin, a matter that had implications in how the debate developed. In order to go beyond these differences, results were tested in the second part of the research through the analysis of the coverage of the same subject (the yearly Corruption Perception Index by Transparency International) over a 20-year period.

Following is a detailed description of the two case studies.

4.4.4.1. The "Expo scandal"

On 8th of May 2014, six people were arrested on charges of bribery, auction disturbance and criminal conspiracy. A seventh, Antonio Rognoni, was already in jail due to a previous conviction. Allegations claimed that they had interfered with the organisation of the universal exposition "Expo 2015" that was to be held in Milan the following year. In particular, Primo Greganti, Gianstefano Frigerio, Luigi Grillo, Sergio Cattozzo and Angelo Paris were accused of accepting bribes and favours in exchange for subcontracts to build infrastructure for the Expo. Entrepreneur Enrico Maltauro, instead, was accused of paying a €600,000 bribe in order to obtain a subcontract to the value of €67 million, one of the biggest of the whole project[43]. Primo Greganti and Gianstefano Frigerio were accused of accepting bribes and using their influence on high-level officers and politicians to help companies and cooperative societies to obtain subcontracts; they were also both involved in the early '90s scandal of Tangentopoli. Greganti (at the time of the Expo scandal, a member of the Democratic Party, in Italian, Partito Democratico) was the only member of the Italian Communist Party (Partito Comunista Italiano, PCI) to be arrested for corruption during the years of Tangentopoli, while Frigerio was one of the many Christian Democrats (Democrazia Cristiana, DC) involved in the illegal party financing scandal. The reappearance of some of the protagonists of Tangentopoli, together with the impression that the scandal was soon to involve more people, more contracts and more money, gave the general impression that a new scandal

[43] http://milano.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/14_maggio_08/milano-terremoto-expo-2015-arrestato-gm-angelo-paris-1edbc6f6-d67d-11e3-b1c6-d3130b63f531.shtml (Accessed on 19 January 2018).

involving major political figures was about to emerge. The news reported that several high-ranking politicians nominated in the telephone tapping records held by magistrates and public prosecutors were dealing with the case: Silvio Berlusconi, at the time, leader of the centre-right party Popolo della Libertà (Freedom's People, PDL); Roberto Maroni (Governor of Lombardy and one of the leaders of the right wing party Lega Nord,Northern League); Pierluigi Bersani, former leader of the Democratic Party (PD); and Maurizio Lupi, Minister of Infrastructures and member of "Nuovo Centro Destra" (NCD, New Centre-Right)[44]. With the exception of Maltauro, the arrested were all linked to the Italian party system. Luigi Grillo was a former senator and member of PDL; Sergio Cattozzo was a former member of the centrist party "Unione di Centro" (UDC); and Angelo Paris was the manager of the Construction and Dismantling division of the Expo 2015 Spa society, the public company that took care of the realisation of infrastructure for Expo 2015.

Eventually, however, there was no formal allegation against any other relevant politician or public officer. Beppe Sala, CEO of the Expo 2015 society, publicly apologised for the alleged crimes of Paris, declared that he was ready to quit his position if asked, but also his availability to stay in charge and face the rising challenges with gravity and professionalism. He was backed up by Giuliano Pisapia, Mayor of Milan and member of Sinistra, Ecologia e Libertà (SEL, a left wing, ecologist and progressive party), and by Roberto Maroni (Governor of Lombardy and member of the Northern League)[45].

As the investigations progressed, the government responded to the emergency of the Expo organisation by attempting (and finally succeeding) to involve the newly established "Autorità Nazionale Anti-Corruzione" (ANAC, National Anti-Corruption Authority), whose chief Raffaele Cantone, a former magistrate who led several anti-mafia investigations, asked for and eventually obtained special powers to control how funds and subcontracts were allocated.

The scandal received heavy media coverage until June, and then rapidly disappeared. It re-emerged at times when a new hearing, or a comment by some politician or institutional actor, was reported in the media.

Eventually, the work for the Expo was finished, and the international exposition took place in 2015. Six of the defendants negotiated a plea bargain, with the highest penalty being three years

[44] https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2014/05/08/expo-2015-un-caveau-in-svizzera-lultima-tangente-il-24-aprile/977683/ (Accessed on 19 January 2018).
[45] https://www.ilgazzettino.it/primopiano/cronaca/expo_arresti_milano_appalti_procura-408000.html (Accessed on 19 January 2018).

and four months of imprisonment[46]. The seventh, Antonio Rognoni, chose to undergo the entire trial.

4.4.4.2. The "Field scandal"

In October 2005, Member of Parliament, Taito Phillip Field lost his ministerial post in the Labour Government after being accused of exploiting his position to obtain a work visa for Thai immigrant, Sunan Siriwan, who had worked for free in Field's properties in Samoa. This led to a nine-month inquiry by QC Noel Ingram that cleared Field of any crime, but cast a shadow over the morality of his behaviour[47]. Soon after, at the end of August 2006, New Zealand Police announced an investigation had commenced "into allegations against Taito Phillip Field"[48]. Following this announcement, Field was put on leave from Parliament, and, in February 2007, expelled from the Parliamentary Labour Party. The investigation lasted six months, and, on 24 May 2007, it was announced that "Police have asked the Auckland Crown Solicitor to start the process to lay charges of bribery against Taito Phillip Field, M.P."[49]. The Court granted leave to prosecute Field on 5 October 2007, and, on 23 November of the same year, Field was charged with 15 counts of bribery and 25 counts of attempting to pervert justice[50]. The trial started on 20 April 2009, and, in August 2009, Field was found guilty of 11 charges of bribery and corruption, and 15 charges of wilfully attempting to obstruct or pervert the course of justice. On 6 October 2009, he was sentenced to 6 years in jail.

4.4.5. Sample for analysis

In order to look for dominant frames, news items were retrieved from those newspapers with the highest circulations in the two countries. Lower circulation outlets were excluded on the assumption that dominant frames are those present in the most widespread media.

In the case of Italy, outlets with a circulation of over 200,000 were selected: *Corriere della Sera* (397,818)*, La Repubblica* (369,857)*, Il Sole 24 Ore* (374,484) and *La Stampa* (219,799)*.* Despite its circulation of over 200,000, *La Gazzetta dello Sport* was excluded, as its focus is almost

[46] https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2014/11/27/expo-cupola-patteggia-niente-carcere-per-nuova-tangentopoli/1232751/ (Accessed on 19 January 2018).
[47] www.beehive.govt.nz/Documents/Files/Ingram Report.pdf. Retrieved on 4 August 2017.
[48] www.police.govt.nz/news/release/2613. Accessed on 4 August 2017.
[49] www.police.govt.nz/news/release/3089. Accessed on 4 August 2017.
[50] www.police.govt.nz/news/release/3515. Accessed on 4 August 2017.

exclusively on sports.[51] In the case of New Zealand, outlets with a circulation of over 50,000 were chosen: *The New Zealand Herald* (137,339), *The Dominion Post* (62,219) and *The Press* (60,171)[52].

All news items were retrieved using the LexisNexis database, the Factiva database (for *Il Sole 24 ore*, absent in LexisNexis), or the newspaper's online archive (for *La Repubblica*, which has a free-access archive). In the case of Italy, the search used the combination of words "Expo" and "corruzione" (corruption), and the periods from 8 to 21 of May 2014 (the two weeks following the arrests), and 28 of November to 11 of December 2014 (the two weeks following the announcement of the six plea bargains). Those articles that were not specifically focused on the case were excluded. A total of 134 articles were left. In the case of New Zealand, the search used the combination of words "Taito Phillip Field" and "corruption", and the periods from 18 of July to 10 of September 2006 (from the day in which the "Ingram Report" cleared Field of corruption to the ten days following the announcement by police that a formal investigation had started), and from 5 to 18 of August 2009 (the two weeks following Field's conviction). Those articles that were not focused specifically on the case were excluded. A total of 86 articles were left for analysis. The periods chosen coincided with the periods of maximum coverage of the cases. In total, 220 items were retrieved for the final analysis.

4.4.6. Extending the analysis: coverage of the CPI 1996-2016

The main framing analysis in this research is based on two case studies chosen for their relevance in the contemporary history of the two countries. However, results from case studies may be problematic to generalise to a whole country. To address this issue and partially solve it, it has been decided to conduct a second, qualitative framing analysis on a smaller sample of news items that cover a timeframe, and the issue of corruption in a broader sense. The rationale for this second analysis is that it can confirm or disprove the validity of previous results for the two countries as a whole, and it enables the researcher to extend the analysis to a more comprehensive timeframe. This may support the existence of specific frames of corruption in the media representation of Italy and New Zealand (regardless of their differences and/or similarities).

[51] Data are relative to October 2014. Retrieved from http://www.primaonline.it/2015/12/10/221297/i-nuovi-dati-ads-di-diffusione-della-stampa-di-quotidiani-e-settimanali-a-ottobre-e-dei-mensili-a-settembre-tabelle/.
[52]Data are relative to September 2015. Retrieved from http://newspaper.abc.org.nz//audit.html?org=npa&publicationid=%25&mode=embargo&npa_admin=1&publicationtype=19&memberid=%25&type=21.

Moreover, it allows a more justifiable attempt to generalise the results and, at the same time, deepen the analysis.

For this purpose, all news items (including commentaries) focused on Transparency International's yearly Corruption Perceptions Index, during the period of time 1996-2016, were analysed in a subset of the print media outlets used for previous analysis. In particular, for New Zealand, *The New Zealand Herald*, which is the outlet with the highest circulation in the country, was selected. In the case of Italy, *La Repubblica* was chosen, with the second highest circulation after *Il Corriere della Sera.* This decision was due to the particular features of these newspapers' circulation: while *Il Corriere della Sera* has the highest circulation in total numbers, *La Repubblica* is more homogenously spread in all areas of Italy (differently, *Il Corriere della Sera* is mostly read in the area of Milan and Lombardy, but it is not the most circulated in other areas).

The total sample for the analysis constituted 37 articles, 18 for Italy and 19 for New Zealand.

4.5. CONCLUSIONS

As seen in Chapter 3, a few studies have investigated media construction and representations of corruption. Some of these studies have focused on single countries (Gupta, 1995; Giglioli, 1996; Kramer, 2013) or even on single cases of corruption (Breit, 2010). Others have expanded the focus to several countries, drawing a series of similarities and differences (Bratu & Kazoka, 2016, 2018) and outlining the links between media representations of corruption and national features of journalism (Mancini, Mazzoni, Cornia & Marchetti, 2017). However, these comparative studies have not explicitly looked at the most diverse cases with the aim of making differences emerge. The study by Mancini et al. (2017) is probably the closest example to a comparative study of most different cases, but it focuses on journalism types (Hallin & Mancini, 2004) rather than levels of corruption, and several differences linked to journalism's features in three different countries (Italy, France and the UK) clearly emerge. Moreover, it is a study on a large sample of articles, carried out with computer-assisted content analysis. As stated by the authors, more depth to the understanding of how representations of corruption are constructed and transmitted by the news media can be reached through "in-depth content analysis by human coders" (Mancini et al., 2017, p. 86).

Although with different countries (Italy and New Zealand), this is the objective that drives the design of the study presented in this thesis. An in-depth framing analysis of news media

representations of corruption carried out by human coders, and based on the comparison of most different cases that, as argued earlier, allows contrasts (and similarities) to emerge more clearly.

The first section of this chapter offered a historical, social and legal comparison of corruption in New Zealand and Italy. It showed that most of the differences concern the cultural aspects of corruption. In particular, the history of Italy is full of cases of corruption, several on a large scale, while New Zealand is characterised by few cases mostly involving small numbers of individuals (or, often, a single person). This difference in levels of corruption has been linked to social traits, such as New Zealand's strong conformism and its Calvinist tradition, in opposition to Italian familism, the existence of strong criminal organisations, and a deep-rooted presence of corruption networks with sets of established norms and relationships.

Some relevant differences also concern anti-corruption policies in the two countries. While both Italy and New Zealand have ratified the UNCAC, New Zealand's ratification happened 6 years later (in 2015, whereas Italy ratified it in 2009)[53]. Both countries currently have independent agencies against corruption, and such agencies are recognised to be an effective anti-corruption measure (as seen in Chapter 3). However, while the SFO in New Zealand was established in 1990, in Italy the first independent agency (CIVIT) was created in 2009, and its powers were strengthened only in 2015 (after the change of name to ANAC).

Despite these legal differences, however, it appears clear that New Zealand and Italy are two modern democracies, with similar presence of anti-corruption bodies and legislation, that strongly differ in their historical and social traits of corruption. For this reason, these two different contexts are used here to investigate if and how media representations of corruption are linked to historical and cultural features of corruption.

To carry out the research, a specific method of framing analysis has been applied that consists of two phases aimed at offering both reliability and validity to the results. The first phase includes the coding and analysis of the frequencies of frame functions, and aims at creating reliable results. The second phase consists of an in-depth, qualitative analysis of frames and frame functions, so as to increase the validity and explanatory power of the results.

The analysis is carried out on two critical cases of corruption scandals, one for each country, and subsequently extended to the coverage of the Corruption Perception Index over a period of twenty years.

[53] https://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/corruption/ratification-status.html. Accessed on 22 January 2018.

The following chapter describes and analyses the results of the empirical investigation of the media coverage of the Field and Expo scandals, by identifying two contrasting frames (each one dominating one of the two countries) and the set of framing devices that characterises them, and a third frame that dominates in the discourses of the corruption of people directly involved in the scandals.

CHAPTER 5 – DOMINANT FRAMES OF CORRUPTION IN NEW ZEALAND AND ITALY

In considering the idea of corruption as a context-dependent social construction, the aim of this empirical research is to explore how corruption can be differently framed in diverse environments, and, in particular, how these frames are linked to the socio-historical peculiarities of corruption in different countries. This chapter presents the results of the analysis of how the news media covered the two major cases of corruption, one in New Zealand and one in Italy.

The first part of the analysis focuses on the emergence of two contrasting frames: “systemic corruption” and “corruption as individual crime”, each dominant in one of the two countries. The categories of frame functions that form these two frames are unpacked. Subsequently, a number of substantial framing devices are identified, and their role in the construction of framing of corruption is investigated. In particular, the focus is on metaphors of corruption (including ontological metaphors, such as metonymy and personification), and on narratives of corruption. Moreover, the use of a lexicon linked to organised crime to talk about corruption is analysed in the Italian case.

A third frame (the “justification frame”), linked to how people justify corrupt acts and reject allegations, is also identified and explained.

Finally, the potential consequences of deep-rooted, reiterated frames in the print media of the two countries are considered and weighted.

5.1. RESULTS OF THE CODING OF FRAME FUNCTIONS

Table 2 shows the results of the coding phase of the framing analysis of the two selected case studies. In this chapter, results from the coding phase are analysed by referencing them to the original texts, and developing a systematic, qualitative analysis of how frame functions are expressed.

Frame function	Category	Italy (freq.)	Italy (*n* of items)	New Zealand (freq.)	NZ (*n* of items)
CAUSES	Rotten apple(s)	64.18%	86	91.86%	79
	Corrupt political system	50.75%	68	3.49%	3
	Corrupt society	3.73%	5	0%	0
	Cultural feature	2.99%	4	18.60%	16
	Conspiracy	2.24%	3	6.98%	6
PROBLEM DEFINITION	Widespread problem	58.96%	79	3.49%	3
	Isolated case	36.57%	49	89.55%	77
	Victim	5.22%	7	20.93%	18
MORAL JUDGMENT	Negative/Individuals	64.93%	87	91.86%	79
	Negative/Politics and institutions	58.21%	78	33.72%	29
	Negative/Society	3.73%	5	0%	0
	Inverted	2.24%	3	3.49%	3
	Shifted	2.99%	4	22.86%	16
SOLUTIONS	Law enforcement/ Political punishment	65.67%	88	84.88%	73
	Reform	14.18%	19	6.98%	6
	Emergency measures	29.11%	39	0%	0
	Fatalism	11.94%	16	0%	0
	No need for a solution	5.22%	7	20.93%	18

Table 2 - Results of coding

Results from content analysis show substantial differences in how the two corruption scandals were covered by national media. While in both cases there is a relevant focus on individuals responsible for the corruption, this focus is much more relevant in the New Zealand case (91.86% of the articles, against 64.18% for Italy). However, there is a substantial difference in the references to corruption networks, corrupt institutions or a corrupt political system, which are made in over 50% of the Italian articles, and in only 3.49% of the New Zealand articles. Moreover, Italy has a few references (5 articles, 3.73% of the total sample) to a corrupt society as a cause of corruption, a category not present in the New Zealand sample. Important differences are present in how the problem of corruption is defined. While corruption is presented as a widespread problem in 58.96% of the Italian articles, this is true for only 3.49% of the New Zealand ones. In New Zealand, instead, the case is mainly framed as an isolated case (89.55% of the articles), while this happens in only 36.57% of the Italian units of analysis. Finally, an analysis of the distribution of the different categories of moral judgment shows that a negative moral judgment

of the individuals responsible for corruption is present in 91.86% of the New Zealand articles, and in 64.93% of the Italian news items, while in Italy the negative moral judgment of the political and institutional system dominates (58.21%, against 33.72% in New Zealand). Italy also presents a few instances of negative moral judgment of the whole society (3.73%). This general picture shows that corruption is framed mostly as a systemic, widespread problem in Italy, but as an individual crime in an otherwise generally honest system in New Zealand. The consequences of such different media representations of corruption will be further analysed. However, at this stage a few general considerations might be of use for the analysis.

5.2. CONTRASTING FRAMES: "CORRUPTION AS INDIVIDUAL CRIME" VERSUS "SYSTEMIC CORRUPTION"

In general, a close look at the data reveals that, although the general representation of corruption differs in the two cases (the "Expo scandal" in Italy, and the "Field scandal" in New Zealand), individual responsibilities and negative moral judgement are important even when corruption is framed as systemic and widespread. While a "systemic corruption" frame seems to weaken the relevance of individual responsibilities, the two categories "rotten apples" and "negative/individuals" are still present in the majority of articles in the Italian case (and in almost all the New Zealand news items). This suggests that the two frames are not necessarily incompatible. Specifically, in cases of dominance of the "systemic corruption" frame, it seems that individual responsibilities are not always disregarded, but the focus on individuals becomes secondary, and its presence and relevance diminishes. As will be seen later, the focus on individuals in cases of different frame dominance changes not only in numeric terms, but also qualitatively. Particularly, the tendency is towards a dilution of personal responsibility (by normalising corruption, or extending individual responsibilities to a broader, systemic view of corruption), or an externalisation of responsibility (through metaphors, personifications and metonymies). The difference in the relevance of individual responsibilities in the two cases can be demonstrated by a simple count of how many times one or more of the individuals responsible for corruption are mentioned in the titles. While Field is mentioned in 53 out of 86 titles (61.63%), in the Italian case the names of the seven persons accused of corruption (or a reference to them as a group) are present in only 36 titles (26.87%).

On the other hand, it is important to notice that in the New Zealand case, despite the dominance of the "individual crime" frame, the negative judgement of the political system is present in one-third of the news items (33.72%). This, together with a qualitative analysis of this category that will be developed later, seems to indicate that the corruption scandal becomes an instrument of evaluation of the political and institutional system (or of parts of it). While in Italy this negative judgement seems to be used as a confirmation of an already established situation, in New Zealand the debate over the honesty of the political system and its ability to successfully combat corruption is used as a way to reaffirm a system of values, and put pressure on political parties to maintain high standards and quality responses in complex situations.

5.3. DELVING INTO FRAME ELEMENTS: FRAME FUNCTIONS, FRAMING DEVICES, AND THEIR INFLUENCE ON MEDIA REPRESENTATIONS OF CORRUPTION

The categories generated during the inductive phase of the study and used for coding and content analysis are described by a series of elements that include textual devices such as lexical choices, recurrent words, metaphors and other tropes. Many such devices do not simply indicate how the issue of corruption is framed in a specific situation. They possess features and nuances that can have important consequences to the general representations of corruption, and the salience and repetition (Entman, 1993) of these elements suggest that they can substantially influence the social perception and representation of corruption, and consequently attitudes towards the issue. In the next sections, the most common devices that constitute the frame components of this specific category system are analysed, and their potential consequences on how corruption is represented are addressed.

The "individual crime" frame is described by the combination of the categories "Rotten apple(s)", "Isolated case" and "Negative/Individuals" (see Appendix A, coding manual, for a detailed description of these categories). On the other hand, the "Systemic corruption" frame is expressed by the categories "Corrupt political system", "Corrupt society", "Widespread problem" and "Negative/Politics or institutions". While it has already been noticed that elements conceptually pertaining to different frames can be found in the same news items, a general dominance of elements pertaining to one of these two frames allows observing what is the preferential way of framing corruption in different situations. The results of this study show that

the “Individual crime” frame dominates the New Zealand coverage of the Field scandal, while the “Systemic corruption” frame dominates the Italian coverage of the Expo scandal.

But how do these frames and their constituting elements (the categories indicating specific frame functions) express themselves in the texts?

5.3.1. A qualitative assessment of frame elements in the texts[54]

A qualitative analysis of the different categories of frame functions identified during the coding phase is useful to delve into how corruption is differently framed and constructed in the news media of the two countries. Substantial differences are evident in the dominant causal explanations, problem definitions, and solutions of corruption. Moreover, while the negative judgment of corruption prevails in both countries, the attribution of responsibility widely differs. While New Zealand strongly focuses on the immoral behaviour of individuals engaging in corruption, in Italy immorality is often described as a feature of the entire political system or even, in some cases, of the whole society.

Causes of corruption. There are substantial differences in the frequencies of the different categories forming the function “Causes of corruption” in the coverage of the two cases under analysis. In particular, the category “Rotten apple(s)” (RA) is relevant in both countries, but with a much lower presence in the Italian case, while the category “Corrupt political system” (CP) has a relevant presence only in the coverage of the Italian case. While those categories pertaining to the “justification” frame will be analysed at a later stage, it is important to focus on how the two categories RA and CP (and the rarer category “Rotten society”) are qualitatively expressed in the texts. One main difference has already been noted, and it is expressed by a significant difference in the frequency in which the corrupt actors are referred to in the titles of the article (arguably, the most relevant sections of the articles). This tendency is often reflected in the rest of the texts, which are prone to focus on the figure of Field and the specific case under investigation. The Italian case also presents several articles that focus on the individuals responsible for corruption, with a series of personal stories, short biographies and entire pieces dedicated to the analysis of the wiretappings conducted by the investigators. However, there is a more diffuse tendency to

[54] Quotes and excerpts from the articles in the sample are indicated, in this chapter, with a code (e.g. NZH 1; ST 2; …). For the full list of articles and the corresponding codes, see Appendix D.

generalise and to use the case as an example of the corruption of the political and institutional system. Several references are made to the so-called "comitati d'affari" (see, for instance, ST 15), loosely translatable as "business committees", a term used to represent the networks of corruption present in the public administration. An opinion piece in *La Stampa*, for instance, generalises the issue like this:

> *[…] most of the people are shocked at the perseverance in crime by entrepreneurs and politicians". (ST 23)*

In this same article, moreover, it is possible to find one of the rare (but not irrelevant, given their complete absence in the New Zealand case) examples of the category "Corrupt society":

> *Given the average propensity to honesty of the average Italian, it should be shocking not much the thievery, but the ease, the carelessness, the insolence – not to say the stupidity – and also that little bit of bad taste with which the people under investigation spoke on the phone. (ST 23)*

It should be noted that the "perseverance in crime by entrepreneurs and politicians" and the "average propensity to honesty of the average Italian" are not facts supported by data, but generalisations presented as truths in the context of the article. They are used strategically as framing devices aimed at offering a specific "genetic" view of corruption and dishonesty in Italy.

To exemplify the differences in the two countries, some exemplary titles are compared in Table 3.

ITALY	NEW ZEALAND
• "We will have to fight a net of lobbies, the bubo is ancient" (REP 18) • From Scajola to Luigi Grillo, double judicial tsunami. It is the twilight of the right wing (REP 6) • The broad agreements of business. The contacts between the "team" and politicians (ST 1) • Frigerio and the little-longed-for ruling class. Who goes up and who goes down (CDS 37)	• A prayer before demanding that Taito fall on his sword (NZH 39) • Taito's actions fair enough? No, we deserve better (NZH 17) • Philanthropy a Field where modesty is king (NZH 12) • Field lucky to stay in Parliament (NZH 8)

Table 3 - Examples of titles

Although these examples are chosen as some of the most representative of the two categories, in this context they do not represent a generalisation, but strings of text that exemplify

how the two categories differently express themselves. Given the results of content analysis, it is clear that the type of text representing the “Corrupt political system” (those of the type of Italy’s column) are particularly relevant in the coverage of the Italian case. While both cases present many news items with a focus on the individuals responsible for corruption, in the Italian case it is common to expand this focus, and use individuals as a starting point to generalise the issue (see REP 6 and CDS 37, where politicians Scajola and Grillo are linked to the “twilight of the right wing”, while Frigerio is considered part of an unwanted (and not better specified) “ruling class”.

Problem definition. The media in Italy framed corruption as a widespread problem, describing the Expo scandal as a symptom of a wider issue. This way of framing corruption is nearly absent in the coverage of the Field scandal, that was mainly described as an isolated case in an otherwise honest system.

The framing of corruption as a widespread problem is carried out through a wide series of strategies, including the use of metaphors in the domains of disease, war, (natural) disaster and the animal world (these will be described in detail later in this chapter). Moreover, as will be seen later, references to past scandals and the continuity of corruption throughout the years are used as framing devices. However, perhaps one of the most significant terms used in the Italian sample to frame corruption as a widespread problem is “system”. The Italian word “sistema” (system) in association with corruption appears 42 times in the sample. Following are some examples of how this word is used strategically to delineate the diffusion of corruption in the Italian political and institutional system. The first example comes from the direct voice of editor-in-chief of *La Stampa,* Mario Calabresi. The second quote is a direct quote of political leader and former magistrate, Antonio Di Pietro, while the third one is part of a dialogue between a journalist of *La Stampa* and magistrate and chief of the National Anti-Corruption Agency (ANAC), Raffaele Cantone:

> *Our distrust in a system that was never able to completely clean itself, to establish and respect standards of civilization and decency, brings us to imagine that it is better to do nothing, stay still and wait for better times. (ST 37).*
>
> *“Because the corruption system in our country is like before, worse than before, actually today it is harder to combat it. Compared to what I could do in the past, today a series of norms have been created to prevent finding corruption, not to combat it”. (REP 23).*
>
> *What strikes is the diffusion of the corruption system as an instrument [used], even by an association described as Mafia-like, to obtain public contracts, to do business. “It is true. Not only some politicians, we could say at the times of the First Republic but even later, but also the new mafias use corruption to reach their goals, substituting with it the classic instrument of organized crime, intimidation”. (ST 38).*

This characterisation of corruption is in contrast with the most common strategy in the coverage of the New Zealand case. The New Zealand media not only characterise the Field scandal as an isolated case, but use it strategically to underline the general honesty of the political system, or of the society as a whole. Here are some examples of this strategy:

> *Corruption is foreign to this country. The probity of our public officials is more apparent to foreigners than to us because we take it for granted. (NHZ 8)*
>
> *Crown Solicitor Simon Moore said the case had been important because bribery and corruption struck at the heart of "who we are as a people". "This is the first case of its kind so it is very significant. We live in a society that prides itself on the fact that we are pretty straight. We pride ourselves on our police department, which is largely free of corruption, and a public service devoid of corruption which is a wonderful model when compared with ones overseas. (NZH 57)*
>
> *"Bribery and corruption strikes very much at the heart of who we are as a people", he said after the verdict. (DP 3)*
>
> *For all the shallow cynicism that New Zealanders like to profess towards their politicians, it is undeniable that the country has possibly the least corrupt politics of anywhere in the world" (TP 16).*

Even in cases where there is a negative judgment of politics, or of parts of it, the tendency is to focus on the necessity of restoring honesty, or else the concept of integrity as something under threat. For instance:

> *Green co-leader Jeannette Fitzsimmons said her party was concerned the findings of the Ingram report […] bring into question the integrity of MPs and Parliament as a whole. (NZH 22)*
>
> *"If we want to restore the public's confidence, Parliament must be able to express its concern now and lay a platform for setting the standards expected of MPs in future". (NZH 24).*

If frames are important not only for what they make salient, but also for what they do not say or underline (Entman, 1993), it is important to stress that in the Italian case, it is extremely rare to find references to the honesty and integrity of the system, and none is in a position of prominence in news items. Instead, as seen, accounts of corruption are often accompanied by a general negative judgement of the political system, and by the idea of a widespread dishonesty that can sometimes be pervasive even at the societal level. The focus of New Zealand media on integrity even in cases in which integrity is questioned, that is, the general assumption that integrity is the norm, could be difficult to notice without a comparative approach of the most diverse cases. However, this strategy has a fundamental role in the media framing in the case of Field, and it is possible to suggest that it might have a potential role in sustaining the general perception of New

Zealand as a corruption-free country. By giving space to the contrast between an honest system and instances of corruption, the media contribute to affirm anti-corruption values and in this way partially exert their function as watchdogs against corruption (Stapenhurst, 2000). In New Zealand, these elements are matched to the absence of references to widespread corruption and dishonesty as the norm of the political system or the society, in contrast to the Italian case. On the other hand, the focus of Italian media on systemic corruption can be seen as a reflection of a real situation, in contrast to the low levels of corruption in New Zealand.

Moral Judgement. An analysis of the categories of the moral judgement function of framing is particularly interesting in this research. While the focus on negative moral judgement of the individuals under accusation is most frequent in both countries (although more present in New Zealand, see Table 2), and the negative judgement of politics and institutions is particularly frequent in Italy, and these are results that could easily be expected in the light of previous analysis, it is interesting to notice that a negative moral judgement of politics and institutions is present in about one third of the New Zealand samples. The category "negative moral judgement" includes, but does not coincide with, allegations of corruption. Instead, it represents a general negative judgement of how the issue under investigation was handled by (part of) politics and institutions.

In the coverage of the New Zealand case, the negative judgement of politics is mostly expressed as accusations against the Labour party of trying to "whitewash" the Field case. When the scandal exploded, Labour was governing with the Greens, and Taito Phillip Field was a member of the Labour Party and an Associate Cabinet Minister of Prime Minister Helen Clark's government. While he lost his position as Associate Cabinet Minister, he was not expelled from the Labour Party following the results of the Ingram enquiry that cast doubts on his ethical behaviour, and Labour was accused of not punishing Field in order to maintain the one-vote majority in Parliament. Arguably the relatively high frequency of a negative moral judgement of the Labour Party and/or the Government could partly be ascribed to the centre-right alignment of the *New Zealand Herald,* whose articles constitute the majority of the New Zealand sample. However, this particularly high focus on the potential responsibilities of politics in handling corruption, and the potential risks of a spread of corruption through the "immoral" behaviour of politics, it confirms two important aspects of the relationship between media, politics and society. The first aspect is the role of media as "watchdogs" against corruption (Stapenhurst, 2000). In

this case, through continuous questioning and underlining how political behaviour is guided by political calculations, instead of morality risks lowering the ethical standards of politics and potentially the whole of society; the media keeps the topic at the centre of the stage and affirms the prevalence of ethics over political calculations. Discursively, this is represented by titles such as “Field probe a whitewash” (NZH 20), “Shabby whitewash a low point for Labour, and it knows it” (NZH 5) and “Bad smell from Parliament in Field debacle” (NZH 25). Titles are matched to a series of editorials and articles in which the media analyse politicians’ decisions and statements, and contest their behaviour by highlighting the contrasts between those behaviours and the ethical standards expected from politics and institutions. For instance:

> *The Labour caucus showed their less than enthusiastic backing of Field in the House on Tuesday that they at least have the grace to be shamefaced about what they are trying to pull off. Yet another little piece will have been chipped out of the integrity of the system. (TP 1)*
>
> *Seldom has Parliament left itself in a worse odour than by its failure to act on the report into dubious dealings of one of its member, Taito Phillip Field […] This episode has been an abject performance on all sides. The public was wearied of the spectacle but if Parliament cares for its standards, the case cannot rest here. (NZH 25)*
>
> *Does Dame Silvia not think it is time to shed light on the gap between New Zealand’s public image overseas as a corruption-free country and the reputation this country might gain over time if scandals like the Field affair are shut down for the convenience of the reigning political party rather than investigated? Because that is exactly the reputation that New Zealand will begin to enjoy if some rigour is not introduced into the system. (NZH 27)*

This debate on the morality of politicians recalls the relationship between levels of corruption and the public’s confidence in politics (Clausen, Kraay and Nyiri, 2011). While New Zealand enjoys low levels of perceived corruption and a relatively high trust in politics (see Chapter 1), the emergence of a corruption scandal and its handling by politicians, through the mediation of the media, is capable of casting a shadow over the political world or political parties. This issue is particularly evident in the reporting of polls that show a lowering of trust in the Labour party while the handling of Field’s political destiny proceeds. For instance, the *New Zealand Herald* reports a poll about the handling of the Field affair:

> *The poll also found that 62 per cent of people believed the Government had not handled the issue well, 27 per cent said it had and the rest didn’t know. (NZH 32)*

Another article entitled, “Labour’s been dreadful over Field and voters have finally noticed” and continues explaining:

> *National clearly thinks it's on an electoral winner when it is calling the Labour Party corrupt. No one believes that, of course. But the odour around the actions to bluff it out has hit Labour hard in the polls. (NZH 46)*

In this context, it is easy to show how the worlds of politics, media and society actively interact and influence each other. Therefore, it becomes evident how the general idea of widespread, systemic corruption could have been built over time in the Italian context, through the interactive influence of political scandals involving all sides of politics (often at the same time, as in Tangentopoli or the Expo case), their media representations and reactive behaviours of citizens and the society.

Solutions. The categories included in this frame function are more heterogeneous than categories of other functions, and are more difficult to be directly linked to one of the two main frames ("systemic corruption" and "individual crime"). By far the most common solution present in the overall sample from both countries is "Law enforcement/Political punishment". This suggests a tendency to frame the solutions of corruption as an issue pertaining to the world of law and politics, despite a tendency to talk about corruption (especially in New Zealand) as a matter of ethics (corruption, that is, in contrast to integrity). In this case, it is possible to see in the public debate a reflection of the academic debate explored in Chapter 1, and evidence that the definitional dilemma is related to how corruption can be differently framed. The focus on law enforcement and political punishment, however, could also be linked to the fact that the news media are covering the investigations, trials, and political reactions connected with the two corruption scandals. These issues tend to be mentioned early in the articles, and were therefore frequently coded. However, a closer look at the data shows that these themes are differently developed in the newspapers of the two countries.

There is a focus on political reactions to corruption, and on judicial investigations, trials and convictions. However, while the categories of political punishment and law enforcement are largely present in both countries, the Italian case presents a feature that is not recognisable in New Zealand, that is the tendency, in a few cases, to frame corruption as a conflict between politics and the judiciary, with the judiciary being the sole pillar left to defend honesty and fight bribery in a society where otherwise politics would behave criminally. While this vision is not widespread, it is certainly present in several examples. For instance, in an opinion piece on *La Repubblica*, Stefano Rodotà, jurist and politician, writes:

Among all institutions only the judiciary has taken seriously the fulfilment of that duty, and the investigation into Rome's Council further demonstrates it. Here too we are not in front of unexpected news, if only we think of the most recent chronicles, from Mose in Venice to Expo in Milan. But this memory is accompanied to the memory of the intolerance of a political class that has judged illegitimate several, sacrosanct actions of the judges in defence of legality. It is right to identify the competences of politics and those of the judiciary. (REP 27)

In *Il Sole 24 Ore*, journalist Lionello Mancini comments:

The real issue is the political, economic and bureaucratic context that allows fixers to act undisturbed. Until (and if) the handcuffs appear. (SOL 2)

This could be linked to a seemingly persistent representation of the struggle against corruption as a struggle between a corrupt or conniving political system, and an honest, almost heroic judiciary, as was framed during the Tangentopoli scandal (see Giglioli, 1996, and Chapter 4 of this thesis). It also reflects the common belief, supported by academic research, that politics in Italy has been highly inefficient (if not openly reluctant) in facing corruption (della Porta & Vannucci, 1999b, 2007). Despite the changes in the social perception of the judiciary (briefly discussed in Chapter 4), the Global Corruption Barometer 2013 shows the judiciary is considered corrupt by 47% of the population. That is certainly a high percentage, but it is almost half of the percentage of people who believe that politics is corrupt (89%)[55].

As for other suggested solutions (with the exception of the category "No need for a solution", which will be analysed later as conceptually part of the "Justification" frame), New Zealand only presents a few instances (6 articles) in which a "reform" is considered. This is mainly due to a secondary debate over the possibility of creating an ethical code for Parliament for regulating the cultural practices of *lafo* and *koha* (see Chapter 7). Reform is slightly more present in the Italian case, with references made in almost one-sixth of the sample (19 articles, see Table 2). References are mainly to the new anti-corruption law that is in the process of being approved during the explosion of the Expo scandal. Lack of substantial references to reform as a solution to corruption could be seen as due to the feeling that these reforms are unnecessary given the already high standards of politics (in New Zealand) or to a lack of hope that a reform could suffice to solve the issue (in the case of Italy). While it is impossible to draw definitive conclusions from this data, it is interesting to point out that reform is arguably one of the most important policy

[55] https://www.transparency.org/gcb2013. Accessed on 28 February 2018.

suggestions towards lower levels of corruption (Rose-Ackerman, 1999; Rose-Ackerman & Palifka, 2016). However, the topic does not seem to receive much attention in the media discourses on corruption. It could be argued that in the context of a single scandal, it is more likely to focus on the judicial and political details of the case instead of the possibility of reform. While this is certainly true, it must be underlined that the Expo scandal is turned by the Italian media into an occasion to talk about corruption in general, and its relevance as a widespread problem in the country. However, this generalisation of corruption does not correspond to a focus on general solutions such as reforms. Instead, the focus remains on the solutions to the single case, through law enforcement and political punishment or as will be soon seen, the implementation of emergency measures to handle the consequences of the corruption scandal. The category "emergency measures", absent in the New Zealand case, is, in fact, present in almost one-third of the Italian articles (see Table 2), making it the second most important suggested solution in the Italian case. The emergency measures suggested in the Italian sample mostly relate to the political necessity of taking action to substitute the individuals accused of corruption and making the work towards the Expo proceed, and to the special laws and task forces of professionals that the Government, in concert with the National Anti-Corruption Authority, plans to institute to control that corruption is eradicated and/or not further infiltrated in the Expo system. Della Porta and Vannucci (1999b) have noted the diffusion in Italy of emergency reactions in political decision-making, in particular regarding corruption, and the general inefficiency of these reactions in the absence of more structural reforms. Results of this research suggest that the emergency character of responses to corruption is a feature of media discourse too, and this may be linked to a shift of public discourse towards reactive, inefficient solutions, to the detriment of a potential discussion on reforms.

Finally, a significant number of articles from the Italian sample present the category "Fatalism" (16 articles, 11.94% of the sample), which is composed by those framing devices that depict corruption as a problem impossible to solve. This category is represented by discourse constructions, such as the following:

> *So, this echo from the past is dramatically reflected on the fragile attempts to reform a restricted system. […] It is the bitter taste of a years-long failure, because a functioning political model would by itself work as a deterrent to corruption. (SOL 1)*
>
> *[…] the eternal unresolved tragedy of corruption […]. (SOL 11)*
>
> *[…] it is very hard to forecast how, and with what voter turnout, will vote a country convinced that Tangentopoli and all that is related to it is back. Is it actually like that? Not*

exactly. Perhaps it is even worse. […] If this, or mostly this, is what the Expo affair reveals to us, it is really difficult to imagine that the best judiciary and the best task force in the world could, alone, come to a solution. Much, actually very much political action would be necessary. But here the darkness becomes even thicker. (CDS 20)

The frequency of this category in Italy shows that the use of the Expo case for the purposes of generalisation by the media also occurs in the suggestion of solutions. A single case of corruption is used to draw conclusions over the impossibility of facing corruption and over the past failures to reform a system in which corruption appears to be a deep-rooted norm (della Porta & Vannucci, 1999b). Overall, the distributions of the various "Solutions" categories once again confirm the dominance of the "individual crime" frame in New Zealand (where the category "Law enforcement/political punishment" is by far the most frequent solution, and "Reform" the only other one present), and of the "Systemic corruption" frame in Italy (where "Law enforcement/Political punishment is relevant, but accompanied by relatively high frequencies of "Emergency measures" and "Fatalism", two categories conceptually linked to the idea of widespread, deep-rooted corruption).

5.3.2. Constructing systemic corruption: rhetorical figures and narratives

Of the several framing devices previously described, this research will focus on two in particular, namely metaphors and what are here defined as narratives. As I have argued in Chapter 4, together with a number of lexical and other linguistic choices that have already been described, these two framing devices play a fundamental role in how corruption is constructed in the media.

In this research, four domains of conceptual metaphors of corruption are identified and analysed (corruption as a disease; corruption as a natural disaster or environment; corruption as an animal or a plant; anti-corruption as a war, medicine or sanitiser). Moreover, two specific kinds of ontological metaphors (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) are identified: personification and metonymy. The presence of all these metaphors in the Italian case, and their general absence in the New Zealand case, are discussed.

Another important framing device is constituted by narratives of corruption. The importance of narratives for framing lies in their recurrence and repetition, and in their capacity to build a storyline that drives the discourse about corruption. As with metaphors, the use of different

narratives can generate contrasting views about, and contribute to emphasising (in some cases, even exaggerating) certain aspects of, an issue.

In this case, four narratives are identified in the Italian case (diffusion of corruption; continuity of corruption; normalisation of corruption; professionalisation of corruption), all of which contribute to the building of a "systemic corruption" frame. In contrast, the New Zealand case is characterised by a narrative of "exceptionality of corruption and diffusion of integrity", that contributes to the construction of corruption as an individual crime.

5.3.2.1. Metaphors of (widespread) corruption

A wide range of metaphors is used to describe corruption in the Italian sample. Corruption is often referred to in metaphors related to diseases, cancer, epidemics, natural disasters, and pollution. The struggle against corruption is described with metaphors of war, while the infiltration of corruption is described with images of cobwebs, tentacles and spreading diseases.

These results have several similarities with an independently developed study on metaphors of corruption (Bratu & Kažoka, 2016, 2018) carried out through human-assisted content analysis of newspaper articles in seven countries (Italy, France, Hungary, Latvia, Romania, Slovakia and United Kingdom) covering the period 2004-2014. The study shows that in all those countries, corruption is addressed through a series of metaphors associated with different domains, namely spaces, things, hostile living beings, events, institutions and individual traits, while anti-corruption is often associated with metaphors related to war, sanitisation or hunting. The focus on individual traits, however, appears to be marginal in comparison with the other domains (Bratu & Kažoka, 2016, p. 12).

The results of the present study seem to support the general structure of this metaphorical system. However, there appears to be an important difference with the studies by Bratu and Kažoka (2016; 2018). While in their studies, metaphors of the main domains were common in all the seven countries under investigation, this study shows a strong difference in the distribution of metaphors in the two countries. Metaphors of the domain of spaces, things, hostile living beings, events and institutions are quite common in the coverage of the Italian case, but completely or nearly absent in the New Zealand case. In no instance, in the New Zealand coverage of the Field scandal, metaphors associating corruption with diseases, war, hostile living beings or natural disaster were found. On the other hand, a few images are associated with Field himself, making

metaphors relative to the individual traits domain the most common (e.g. “A prayer before demanding that Taito fall on his sword”, as in NZH 39). This is quite a striking difference compared to the results of Bratu and Kažoka. Before analysing in detail the metaphors associated with corruption, some considerations are in order.

Considering all the countries analysed in this study, and Bratu and Kažoka (2016; 2018), New Zealand appears to be the only country in which the most common metaphors (disease, war, disaster, animals and plant) are absent or nearly absent. One possible explanation could be that these metaphors are associated with high or relatively high levels of perceived corruption. Six of the seven countries under investigation in the first study score much lower than New Zealand in the 2016 Corruption Perception Index, with the highest being France with 69 points (in the same index, New Zealand scores 90 points)[56]. However, many metaphors of the same domains are present in the coverage of corruption in the UK, a country that scores relatively high in the 2016 CPI (81 points, 10th place). This may look like a contradiction. One possible explanation is that many of these metaphors are used in the coverage of scandals related to other countries, and some research showed that media in the UK tend to focus on international scandals (Mazzoni, 2016; Mancini et al., 2016). In the present study, the analysis is related to two case studies, both of national relevance to the countries under investigation. Further research could investigate the metaphors used in the New Zealand coverage of corruption scandals in other countries with higher levels of perceived corruption. Results presented in a subsequent section of this chapter that analyses the coverage of the Corruption Perception Index in Italy and New Zealand suggest that, when shifting the attention to countries with high levels of corruption, some strategies and rhetorical devices suggested by Bratu and Kazoka (2016, 2018), and by this study in relation to Italy, appear in New Zealand media content as well.

The coverage of Field’s case by New Zealand media clearly shows that metaphors of corruption are not universal, at least in their distribution. Some features of the New Zealand case (being the details of the case, characteristics of New Zealand media, a general perception of corruption, or a combination of these and other elements) carry as a consequence the absence of certain metaphors that seem related to the idea of corruption as something widespread and systemic, and the presence of images related to individual responsibilities of corrupt actors. This is not a secondary finding. As will be seen in the next sections, metaphors of corruption support

[56] https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016#table. Accessed on 16 October 2017.

certain ideas and concepts, and hide others. For instance, characterising corruption as a cancer carries the idea of a spreading disease, aggressive, potentially unstoppable and ultimately deadly. Repetition and salience (Entman, 1993) of such metaphors can have important consequences on the social construction of corruption.

Corruption as a disease. Some of the most common metaphors in the Italian coverage of the Expo scandal associate corruption with some form of illness or disease. For instance, the case is described in an opinion piece as "the plague that infects Milan" (REP 8), while in an interview, Raffaele Cantone, magistrate and chief of the National Anti-Corruption Authority (ANAC), affirms that "the bubo is ancient" (REP 18) in reference to the system of corruption uncovered by investigations.

The association of corruption with plague, and with epidemics in general, carries the idea of something dangerous and virulent, easy to spread, difficult to stop, and highly damaging. Behind these images lies the idea that anti-corruption policies can only be partially effective, and that damage and the spreading of the "disease" are somehow inevitable. While the struggle against corruption is not abandoned, a certain degree of fatalism is present. Other disease-related metaphors carry similar ideas. For example, one article presents the expression "the cancer of corruption" (REP 10), while others affirm that "corruption has dug a gangrene in the heart of the Expo machine" (CDS 24) and that the Expo scandal is a "manifestation […] of a pathology […] which has been spreading for long in the political system and in the social tissue" (REP 27). The scandal is also defined as a "new metastasis of corruption" (ST 38). Sometimes corruption is associated with degenerative diseases, for instance with expressions such as "degenerative processes" (ST 15). The association with cancer and degenerative diseases carries another important idea that could influence the social representation of corruption: that of relapse, of the cyclical appearance of symptoms of a disease that can perhaps temporarily and partially be kept under control, but that will show itself regularly and have a tendency to worsen. Behind this concept is the more general idea of corruption as an unwelcome but omnipresent companion of a society, devouring it internally despite all possible attempts of eradication.

Corruption as a (natural) disaster or an environment. In their study, Bratu and Kazoka (2016, p. 11-12) show that metaphors of corruption can pertain to the domain of "events" or "spaces". According to the results of this research, it can be argued that metaphors of corruption

refer more specifically to disastrous events or dangerous spaces (or environments). Recurrent terms to describe corruption and corruption scandals in the Italian newspaper are “terremoto” (earthquake), “tornado”, “tsunami”, “ciclone” (cyclone), “sciagura” (tragedy), “cataclisma” (cataclysm), “slavina” (avalanche). Examples of associated terms found in the text are “macerie” (ruins), “decadenza” (decadence), “nebbia” (fog). Disaster metaphors share with disease metaphors the idea of widespread damage and of the uncontrollability of the event. They differ in that they underline the unpredictability of corruption and they situate corruption scandals as single events, and not manifestations of a deep-rooted situation. On the other hand, images of corruption as a swamp (“palude”) or an iceberg bear the idea of a difficult environment from which it is hard to escape or a gigantic obstacle that cannot be eliminated.

Corruption as an animal or a plant. In their work on the metaphorical construction of corruption in several European countries, Bratu and Kazoka (2016, p.10) find several corruption metaphors of living beings. One of those, found in media content in Romania and Slovakia, is that of “beings with tentacles”. As found out in this research, the metaphor of corruption’s tentacles is present in the Italian coverage of the Expo scandal too. For instance, in one article the system of exchange of bribes and contracts uncovered by the judiciary is described with these words:

> *A more tentacular system, well inserted at the highest levels of politics. At national and, obviously, regional level. (ST 25)*

More common, however, is another, similar metaphor, that of corruption as a “cobweb”. This image is found in several news items:

> *Only the warranty of maximum transparency can give back dignity to an event polluted by a corruptive cobweb extended to tenders in the health system […] (CDS 1)*
>
> *The idea of an identical corruption cobweb, coming back in the same city, and nearly with the same protagonists of twenty-years old Tangentopoli, is already working in unexpected ways on the public opinion. (ST 5)*
>
> *The cobweb of at least inappropriate contacts between Frigerio and the top managers of Lombardy’s Health System has impressive dimensions. (CDS 7)*
>
> *The cobweb was so thick that no contract could escape it. (REP 7)*

Finally, corruption is sometimes described with terms associated with the plant world, in particular linked to infestation and ramifications:

The ramifications and the schemes to divide a centuries-old capital. (CDS 9)

We have cut the ill branches as soon as we could to allow Expo a prompt restart. (SOL 4)

If there are issues regarding corruption, the judiciary will deal with it. It is best to cut the dry branches. (REP 11).

All these metaphors and images are used primarily to underline the idea of corruption as something infiltrating and growing in an uncontrolled way. Although they pertain to a different domain, they share this feature with disease metaphors such as cancer and epidemics.

The three sets of metaphors described up to now have different nuances, but they all have commonalities. They share the idea of corruption as a vast problem, with potentially devastating consequences. They also frame corruption as an external, inevitable threat, whose driving forces do not depend on human action and against which only emergency, reparative measures are viable answers. By giving salience to these aspects, they hide others. For instance, they largely ignore the idea of prevention (earthquakes, for instance, cannot be prevented), and by externalising or generalising the threat, they tend to hide the role of personal responsibility. They focus on the difficulties of fighting corruption, and on the high chances of failure (see, for instance, plague and cancer metaphors). Compared to New Zealand media's strong focus on individual responsibilities, the Italian representation of corruption shows the weaknesses of considering corruption as widely uncontrollable and substantially independent from its environment. Whether this particular framing depends on and mirrors reality is somehow a secondary matter. It would not be unfounded to suggest that such a representation of corruption, if widespread at other levels of society, would pose the risk of diffusing the idea that corruption is an unpleasant fact of life with which people have to deal as they deal with earthquakes or a diagnosis of cancer. The contrast with New Zealand's media talk on corruption is evident. New Zealand puts the issue of "integrity" at the centre of attention, and in doing so, it labels its political and social environment as honest, while underlining the threat constituted by corrupt individuals towards the integrity of the system. As a consequence, integrity and corruption are situated respectively at the level of the political system and the individuals, making it possible to control them. In an opposite fashion, Italian media tend to depict corruption as an external threat that afflicts society and the political system, with the double negative consequence of shifting the attention from individuals to an undefined external factor, and making this threat impossible to prevent and hard to fight. Not surprisingly,

this is associated (as seen in a previous paragraph) with a stronger focus on emergency measures, which are meant to limit damage or the spread of a disease, more than preventing it or addressing personal responsibilities.

Anti-corruption metaphors: war, medicine and cleaning. In their analysis of metaphors of anti-corruption, Bratu and Kazoka (2016, 2018) highlight the importance of war metaphors and sanitisation/medicine metaphors. The findings of this research confirm the presence of such metaphors in the coverage of the Italian Expo scandal. However, while Bratu and Kazoka (2016, p.19) found that war metaphors were used in all contexts of their research, these metaphors are absent in the coverage of the Field scandal in New Zealand. This constitutes further proof that something in the New Zealand case gives rise to a substantially different representation of corruption, at least in the national print media. Moreover, while the term "whitewash" is found in Bratu and Kazoka (2016) as linked to anti-corruption, in the context of New Zealand and the Field case it is widely used as a negative term to label the presumed attempt of part of the political system to avoid the attention of the media, and the public to be kept away from the allegations against Taito Phillip Field (this issue will be explored in depth later).

In the coverage of the Italian case, both war and sanitisation/medicine metaphors are common. Words associated with war and conflict are sometimes used to describe corruption itself, and not only the struggle against it (Bratu & Kazoka, 2016, p.18). For instance, in an article by *Corriere della Sera*, the actions taken by corrupt actors to gain power inside the Expo and Lombardy's Public Health System are described in these terms:

> *Health, construction sites and Expo's plots of land. This way the million-euros siege has started. (CDS 9)*
>
> *[…] it started in 2010 the immense stagecoach assault revealed by the magistrates' enquiry: plots of land, construction sites and subcontracts kept together by the experienced war machine of the regional holding created by President Formigoni to "best" oversee Pirellone's infrastructure. (CDS 9)*

But it is in the description of anti-corruption actions that war metaphors are most widely used. For instance, the word "*task force*" as a description of teams of people (mostly under the supervision of the National Anti-Corruption Authority) overseeing Expo's tender notices and contract appointments is used 28 times in the sample. The word "lotta" (fight) in relation to corruption is used 17 times, and other words such as "controffensiva" (counteroffensive), "tregua"

(truce) and “combattere” (to combat) appear throughout the sample. In one article (CDS 10), Northern League politician Matteo Salvini suggests the (metaphorical) possibility of eliminating corruption with a “bazooka”. In another, Democratic Party representative Alessandro Alfieri states:

> *“Against corruption, we are on the front line”. (REP 14)*

While the use of war metaphors somehow implies the possibility of facing (and perhaps defeating) corruption, it still shares with other metaphors the idea of corruption as a widespread, strong and highly damaging problem, to be faced with a huge deployment of forces. Strategically, using war metaphors of anti-corruption could be seen as a way for parties, governments and institutions to affirm their strength and their nature of defenders of honesty and integrity, against an external enemy. In the Italian case, the enemies actually came from inside the institutions and parties. War metaphors, however, make them appear as invaders, or traitors (that of betrayal is another common lexical choice to address corrupt actors, in both Italy and New Zealand). It is interesting to notice that war metaphors often appear (as seen in some of the quotations presented here) in the directly or indirectly reported speeches of politicians or representatives of institutions. This suggests that war metaphors can be strategically used by powerful actors in the public debate to put themselves in a position of advantage in the discourses developed around corruption cases.

In a similar fashion, metaphors related to medicine or cleaning are used to address anti-corruption strategies and actions. Words such as “pulizia” (cleaning) are used in contexts in which corruption is associated with dirt; similarly, corrupt actors are sometimes described as “mele marce” (rotten apples) or “rami malati” (ill branches), and combating corruption is described as the elimination of these. In other cases, anti-corruption is associated with the creation of enough anti-bodies (“anticorpi”) to defeat a disease. These examples, all taken from the Italian case, constitute rare cases in which corruption is seen as something limited, confined and possible to confront and avoid in its most damaging forms. It is therefore interesting to notice, once again, that these images mostly come from the reported voices of politicians or representatives of public institutions (in a few rare cases, magistrates). For instance, Chamber of Deputies’ President Laura Boldrini says that “it is necessary to throw out the dirt” and that “corruption is by no means an endemic fact” (CDS 10), while Milan’s Mayor Giuliano Pisapia comments the news of the

investigations over the Expo by stating that "what happened demonstrated that there are antibodies" (CDS 11).

While the strategical use of such metaphors by participants of politics and institutions to empower themselves in front of a possibly distrustful public opinion seems perfectly plausible, the media seem to refuse to adopt such images. Newspapers do report quotes containing such metaphors, but they do not adopt them in news reporting or editorials. When they do, they tend to underline the fact that cleansing or immunisation have been unsuccessful, as in this example from *La Stampa:*

> *Our distrust in a system that has always been unable to fully clean itself, to establish and respect standards of civilization and decency, brings us to imagine that it is best to do nothing, stand still and wait for better times (ST 37).*

In an interview with Giuliano Pisapia (Mayor of Milan), this contrast between a vision of corruption as limited to a few people, and a vision of corruption as systemic, emerges in the dialogue between the politician and the journalist. "We have activated all the available anti-bodies, and this investigation proves that if there are controls, it is possible to identify the rotten apples", says Pisapia. "Rotten apples or system?", asks the journalist. "In the case of Expo, of thousands of people working every day, only one traitor has been identified", replies Pisapia (ST 17).

The impression is that of two different, and partially in contrast, representations of the entity of the corruption threat and of the possibility of facing it successfully.

5.3.2.2. Metonyms and personification: corruption as an entity, integrity as a national feature

In the analysis of the metaphors related to the previously described domains, there is one aspect that might pass unobserved, but it is, as will be argued, of utmost importance in the media framing of corruption. Specifically, many of the previously mentioned metaphors (and a considerable part of other discourses throughout the sample, as will be seen here), imply a view of corruption built on two particular types of ontological metaphors. Ontological metaphors are rhetorical devices that allow people to "impose artificial boundaries that make physical phenomena discrete just as we are; entities bounded by a surface" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 25). They include metaphors that transform abstract concepts into concrete entities, such as in the example offered by Lakoff & Johnson (1980, p. 26) of the word "inflation".

In the Italian case, corruption is often addressed by use of “personification”, an ontological metaphor that “allows us to comprehend a wide variety of experiences with nonhuman entities in terms of human motivations, characteristics, and activities” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p.33); and “metonymy”, specifically of the kind in which actors are substituted with their action (i.e. corrupt actors are referred to as, in general terms, corruption).

This way of characterising corruption has specific practical consequences. Diseases, natural forces, living beings, invading forces are all entities capable of actions. When corruption is characterised like this, the result is that the individuals responsible for corrupt actions tend to be lost in the background. Their agency (and therefore their responsibility) loses relevance, in favour of the constructed “external” agency of other forces.

In the Italian sample, corrupt individuals are often substituted with the word “corruzione” (corruption) and its synonyms. Behind this general label, individuals disappear while corruption takes life and becomes an invisible, undefined enemy with limbs, hands, feet and instruments. For instance:

> *Corruption has already dug a gangrene in the heart of the Expo machine. (CDS 24)*
>
> *Corruption after Bribesville has not been destroyed, instead it has changed modes, shapes and activities. (CDS 32)*
>
> *The long hand of illegality always leaves a dirty track. (ST 37)*
>
> *[…] the cauldron of a country blackmailed by corruption. (REP 13)*
>
> *[…] corruption and crime devouring Italian public life. (SOL 6)*
>
> *Corruption has become, since decades, a hateful travel buddy of Italians. (SOL 27)*

Reisigl and Wodak (2001, p.58) suggest that metonyms may “enable the speakers to conjure away responsible, involved or affected actors […], or to keep them in the semantic background”. In a sort of paradox, corruption in Italy is depicted as systemic, but also as an externality. The contrast with New Zealand is evident. While the latter strongly focuses on individual responsibilities in practising (and dealing with) corruption, the discourse in Italy is built around a construction of corruption as a separate entity, with the main consequence of losing focus of the relevance of personal responsibilities and choices in the practice of corruption. Moreover, the New Zealand sample presents some different examples of metonymy, which result in the generalisation of integrity as a sort of national feature. In NZH 24 (and, similarly, NZH 22) there is a reference to the “integrity of the Parliament”, while in NZH 14 there is a discourse around the

“integrity of the political system, and in TP 1 about the “integrity of the system”. Another article says:

> *The country's political and administrative integrity will only be preserved by constant vigilance. If there is a lesson to be drawn from Field's sad case, it is that when such allegations arise they must be dealt with vigorously and promptly. (TP 16).*

In all these cases, with a metonymy that uses abstract concepts (political system; system) or places (Parliament; country) to refer to its members (politicians and citizens), integrity is constructed as a general feature of New Zealand politics and society.

5.3.2.3. Narratives of corruption in Italy and New Zealand

Metaphors and other rhetorical figures are not the only textual elements composing a frame. Looking at both cases, it is possible to identify at least four main narratives through which corruption is framed as systemic in Italy and one to frame corruption as an exception in New Zealand. In particular, the four narratives used in the Italian print media complement themselves, often appear together in texts, and have different characteristics and nuances. They are defined by their specific focus on one aspect of widespread corruption. The first narrative is that of “diffusion of corruption”, and it includes references to corruption networks and images of corruption as a tentacular creature. The second narrative, defined as “continuity of corruption”, depicts corruption as a constant in the life of the country, by using references to past scandals and the persistence and resistance of corruption. The third narrative, “normalization of corruption”, goes even further, and describes corruption as the norm, regardless of its negative moral value. Finally, the fourth narrative, “professionalization of corruption”, makes large use of business lexicon to describe corruption as a regulated, business-like activity. On the other hand, New Zealand media develop what has been here defined as a narrative of “exceptionality of corruption/Diffusion of integrity”, in which corrupt events are strategically put into contrast with the integrity of the system. Delving into these narratives helps to understand how corruption is differently conceptualised in the two public spheres.

Italy: Diffusion of corruption. Through the use of metaphors, it is possible to frame corruption as widespread and infiltrating. This perceived feature of corruption, however, is present throughout most of the Italian sample and expresses itself in other ways. In one opinion piece by

Corriere della Sera, for instance, corruption in Italy is defined as "endemic", and the journalist underlines the idea, in his opinion widespread in the public institutions, that this will never change:

> *[There is] a common and deep-rooted humanity which has preserved and exploited its know-how with the certainty, theorized even in phone conversations, and apparently well-founded, that the world – or at least the relationship between money and politics - has always been like that, and forever will. (CDS 20)*

Another article in the newspaper *La Stampa* opens like this:

> *Stealing. Stealing. And once again stealing. Seven out of ten public contracts are fixed. […] Is fraud more common in the North or in the South? "Unfortunately, the phenomenon is national. Everywhere there is business to be made, there is someone that wants to exploit it". (ST 31)*

Finally, in an interview with the newspaper *Il Sole 24 Ore*, magistrate and chief of the National Anti-Corruption Agency Raffaele Cantone uses the Expo case to suggest the presence of a much wider corruption system, described through the image of an iceberg:

> *Are the corruption events revealed about Expo only the tip of an iceberg? Unfortunately, I think so. They are the tip of an iceberg that does not only concern Expo, but the system of public contracts, which unfortunately surely includes a series of mechanisms for the presence of lobbies. (SOL 25).*

This way of depicting corruption is in clear contrast with the focus, quite common in the New Zealand case, on the integrity of the system and on corruption as a foreigner.

The idea of diffuse corruption is openly denied in extremely rare cases in the coverage of the Italian case. One of these cases is quoting, in more than one article, the words of Deputy Chamber President Laura Boldrini, who states:

> *"This is a great chance, and it is necessary to throw out what is dirty, but corruption is by no means an endemic fact". (CDS 10)*

She is backed up by Mayor of Milan, Giuliano Pisapia, who affirms:

> *What happened demonstrates that we have anti-bodies, and thanks to them we have intervened at the right moment, avoiding the failure of Expo". (CDS 11)*

However, even this strategy seems relatively uncommon among politicians. President of the Republic Giorgio Napolitano chooses a different strategy, by stating that corruption scandals "are

by no means present exclusively in our country" (ST 8). Five Stars Movement's leader, Beppe Grillo launches the accusation that "thieves are in the State" (CDS 36), and leader of extreme-left party SEL, Nichi Vendola, elaborates like this:

> *"I believe we are facing events that indicate that bribery and corruption are not a pathology anymore, but a real physiology". (CDS 29).*

This last example could also enter the category of "normalization of corruption".

As a last remark, it is interesting to notice that while in New Zealand, the discourse turns around the integrity of the system, and if and how much it is at risk; in Italy the debate, when present, is over the reality of systemic corruption, which is a nuance that has a strong significance in the analysis of frames of corruption.

Italy: Continuity of corruption. Another narrative typical of the "systemic corruption" frame has its focus on the persistence of corruption over time. The Italian case under investigation particularly adapts to this strategy, as it involves politicians linked to several parties representing the whole spectrum of right, centre and left. Moreover, some of these politicians (and entrepreneur Enrico Maltauro) were previously involved in the Tangentopoli (Bribesville) scandal. Therefore, comparisons with the Italian's most notorious corruption scandal are particularly easy to develop. However, the idea that the Expo case constitutes a new Tangentopoli is by no means obvious, and will eventually reveal itself false. As seen in a previous chapter, the Tangentopoli scandal involved thousands of people and a huge number of public officers and politicians of all parties. The Expo case, instead, saw allegations against seven people from the very beginning, and no more people were involved until the final convictions. Despite this difference in the dimension of the case, references to Tangentopoli are widespread in the media coverage of the scandal (the word "Tangentopoli" appears 68 times throughout the sample). References to Tangentopoli are often used to characterise the case as a "second Bribesville", and to underline the persistence of corruption, the dishonesty of politics and institutions, and the failures in curbing corruption over a period of more than 20 years (the Tangentopoli scandal exploded in 1992). The Expo scandal is framed as "Tangentopoli due" (Bribesville II) and "Nuova Tangentopoli" (New Bribesville). In one article, the year 2014 (during which the Expo scandal emerges) is defined as "the 23rd year of the

Clean Hands Age"[57] (ST 23), thus implicitly stating that Italy has lived in a continuous stream of corruption for at least 23 years.

While the concept of continuity brings along the related ideas of persistence, resistance and fatalism, it also serves the strategic purpose of bringing allegations against the political and institutional system, as unable (or perhaps unwilling) to eradicate or at least reduce corruption. This is perhaps the most common way the Italian media exert their role as watchdog against corruption, and once again it differs from the strategy of the New Zealand media, which tend to focus on the necessity of maintaining integrity. The strategic use of a focus on continuity is also exploited by minority parties' politicians and other institutional figures such as magistrates. For instance, Antonio Di Pietro (leader of "Italia dei Valori" and former magistrate during the Tangentopoli scandal) states in an interview that "there is more corruption than before" (REP 23). Magistrate Raffaele Cantone (chief of the National Anti-Corruption Agency) comments that "[Politics] took no action on prevention", and claims that this was partly due to the fact that "part of the ruling class did not want to be controlled" (REP 18). In an opinion piece on *Il Sole 24 Ore,* it is written:

> *Corruption is, since decades, a hateful travel buddy of Italians […] Since decades, crime news remind us that crime spreads, and for several years international agencies have been making pressure on us to fill the wide holes of our system […]. Therefore, it is impossible for a government to arrive unprepared exactly on this topic. And yet so it has been, for the last 20 years: successive governments have deliberately ignored the corruption system or, in the best cases, they have underestimated it in order to politically survive, abandoning the only guiding principle, that of responsibility. (SOL 27).*

Italy: Normalisation of corruption. The third narrative identified in the framing of systemic corruption is that of "normalization". Normalising corruption does not necessary means assigning it a positive or neutral value. While a positive evaluation of corruption is extremely rare (see Table 2), the Italian case presents many examples of texts affirming the "normality" of corruption while still maintaining a negative judgment of it. Such a concept is strictly linked to the category defined in the content analysis as "fatalism", and with the general idea that corruption is a feature of the country. For instance, an article by *Corriere della Sera* reads:

> *It is sad but reasonable to imagine that abroad no one was surprised. Italy is 69th in the international ranking of perceived corruption. It would have been surprising if it had*

[57] "Clean Hands" (*Mani Pulite*) was the name of the investigative operation conducted by the judiciary against the corrupt protagonists of *Tangentopoli*.

happened in Germany, which ranks 12th in that same ranking, but if it happens here it is considered "normal". (CDS 14)

An opinion piece in *La Repubblica* treats the topic similarly:

> *In front of the reality of Rome Council owned by a criminal organization one can be scandalised and indignant, but not surprised. This is no unforeseen news, but the further (extreme?) manifestation of a pathology that we should have already learned to recognise, that had spread since long in the political system and in the social fabric. […] We were aware of living in a perverse normality […]. (REP 27)*

This idea of the normality of corruption is at times extreme, by theorising corruption as a genetic feature of the Italian people. So, for example, one journalist writes:

> *[…]it seems that in Italy the DNA[58] of honesty is scarce. […] At the top, corruption can be a constant phenomenon only if there is a diffuse practice of it at any other level of the society. (REP 15)*

Of the narratives identified, this one is possibly the one potentially most dangerous for the framing of corruption. Normalising corruption is a statement of surrender, it is underpinned by the belief that corruption is natural and therefore, regardless of its moral value, a fact of life. Once again, it becomes evident the difference with the New Zealand case, where corruption is on one occasion said to "strike very much at the heart of who we are as a people" (DP 3). A diffuse representation of corruption as "normal", moreover, carries the risk of creating a diffuse "positive" attitude towards it (see for instance Vannucci, 2012). This can be observed here in the words of one of the protagonists of the Expo scandal, politician Gianstefano Frigerio, who is wiretapped saying:

> *"It is magistrates' fault, because one cannot destroy everything because of a little corruption… I mean, legality is not a value: it is a condition… so if you treat it as the only value a country has, you destroy everything. Illegality must be treated with normality, you cannot turn it every time into a crusade…". (CDS 4)*

Italy: Professionalisation of corruption. Lastly, the discourse around corruption in the coverage of the Italian case makes significant use of business lexicon to describe corrupt networks and interactions. The ability to organise and finalise corruption exchanges is referred to

[58] Intended as a term of genetics (deoxyribonucleic acid). This is a particularly strong, though rare, metaphor that affirms that honesty is a genetic feature, and that Italians lack it.

as “know-how”, “competenza” (skill) or “ingegnerizzazione” (engineering). Corruption exchanges are described as business operations, such as in an article by *Corriere della Sera:*

> *“This sort of service centre put in contact demand and supply” (CDS 4).*

In this analogy with economics, the “demand” is the desire of entrepreneurs to (illegally) obtain public contracts, while the “supply” is the ability of public managers to influence the appointment of these contracts. The currency for the trade is a bribe (or its non-monetary equivalent). Corruption is also defined as a “business”, or a “monopoly”. The mediators of corruption exchanges are called “facilitators”, and the corruption networks are defined as a “cordata” (consortium). Corruption uses “methods” (metodi) and “a new strategy” (nuova strategia).

The professionalisation of corruption is not new to corruption studies. Corruption has been analysed as an organised market for instance by Vannucci (2012) and della Porta and Vannucci (2007, 2012a, 2012b). Moreover, the idea of corruption as a market or a business has emerged on several occasions from the words of corrupt actors. Della Porta and Vannucci (2007, Chapter 2) report quotes from several Italian corrupt actors through which an idea of corruption as a business transpires. They also present a selection of Italian business-related words used as synonyms of a bribe, some of which can be translated into English as “bonus”, “reimbursement”, “political expenses” or “additional costs”. This language is used to neutralise the negative moral value of the illegal action (della Porta & Vannucci, 2007, p. 52-53), and it becomes a common lexicon in corrupt environments. In the sample for the present study (from the Italian media), this particular kind of language emerges in the words of some corrupt actors that defend themselves by claiming, for example, to be “American-style lobbyists”, or by the wiretapped words of someone explaining the system. For instance, in one article by C*orriere della Sera*, “factotum” Giovanni Rodighiero explains on the phone what the journalist defines as “the instruction manual of the assembly line of stacked tenders” in Lombardy’s Public Health system:

> *“The head physicians, the physicians that contend, come and go from politicians’ offices, because the Health system is managed by politicians. […] Therefore, if you have a guardian saint, […] the guardian saint acknowledges [your needs], asks for your résumé and then he goes to speak with who is in charge… If the general director guarantees that he will bring that one, he will be confirmed… he will do the competition and he will win it…”. (CDS 5)*

However, in the coverage of the Expo scandal, this language leaks out of the corruption networks and cultures, and is adopted by the media. This means that business-related language does not simply appear in direct quotes and reported speeches, but becomes part of the journalists' jargon in relation to corruption. Some examples of this have already been shown earlier in this paragraph. There are many more, such as the repeated use of the word "affari" (deals) to define corruption exchanges, or the labels "procacciatore di affari" (business broker), "mediatore" (mediator) and "faccendiere" (intermediary) assigned to corrupt actors, or again the words "benefit" and "salary" to design a bribe.

The potential consequence of the adoption of a business lexicon in the media is that the original psychological and social reasons for its use (namely, the neutralisation of the negative moral value of corruption) may spread to larger areas of society, and become part of the dominant framing of corruption.

New Zealand: Exceptionality of corruption/Normalisation of integrity. The most common narrative in New Zealand has opposite features of the most common Italian narratives. It is built around the idea that corruption is an exceptional event in society, which is instead characterised by widespread integrity. Corruption, therefore, is a threat to the core values of the society. The expression of this narrative can be seen in the following extract:

> *For all the shallow cynicism that New Zealanders like to profess towards their politicians, it is undeniable that the country has possibly the least corrupt politics of anywhere in the world. Questions have been raised in the past about some roguish characters, to be sure, but even they have been rare. There has been nothing before like the sustained, long-running swapping of services for administrative favours that Field has been found to have engaged in. (TP 16)*

In conclusion, evidence from textual analysis shows that diverging strategies were employed in the framing of two corruption scandals in Italy and New Zealand, leading to the development of two opposite frames: one of "systemic corruption", and one of "corruption as individual crime". Later in this chapter, the extension of the analysis to the coverage of the CPI over a period of 20 years will confirm this divergence between the two countries in framing corruption. The next paragraph, instead, will focus on the use of vocabulary related to organised crime to talk about corruption in Italy.

5.3.3. Corruption and organised crime: reality embedded in language

The relationship between organised crime and political corruption has been thoroughly investigated, especially in the case of Italy, and "*mafiosi*" have been shown to have an important role as guarantors and regulators of corrupt exchanges (Vannucci, 1997). This role is guaranteed to them by a strong reputation for violence (della Porta & Vannucci, 2007, 2012a, 2012b). Moreover, examples from the Italian context have been identified in the "vote of exchange", the instrument through which organised crime can offer significant amounts of votes to corrupt politicians in exchange for money and impunity, a particularly important resource for a criminal organisation (della Porta & Vannucci, 2012a). All these elements offer a picture of an intertwined relationship between corruption and powerful organised crime, rooted in the local and national territory and with several links to public institutions.

The use of terminology related to criminal groups to address corruption networks has briefly been described in Bratu and Kazoka (2016). The analysis of the coverage of the Expo case emphasises this point and shows how a mix of circumstances and cultural elements, the deep-rooted presence of criminal organisations such as Mafia, and their historical relationship with sections of politics (della Porta & Vannucci, 2012a; 2012b), can cause a transfer of vocabulary from the sphere of organised crime to that of political corruption.

While the inquiry over the Expo case was born from a wider inquiry on *camorra* (a Mafia-like criminal organisation with its roots in the region of Campania), the scandal under investigation here did not involve any of its members. However, in the inquiry documents, magistrates use the term "*cupola*" (dome) to address the corruption network under investigation. The term "*cupola*", according to the Treccani dictionary, is used in journalism to indicate the highest executive authority of the Mafia, composed of the bosses of the local families and in charge of organising all the activities in a specific area[59]. What is striking in this case is not that the term is used by the inquirers to describe a corruption network uncovered during an investigation on organised crime, but that the term is adopted by the media and becomes one of the most common words used in relation to the group accused of corruption. "*Cupola*" is used 45 times in the Italian sample. In one other case, the journalist defines the corrupt group with the word "*clan*", which in journalistic jargon indicates a member group of an organised crime association such as *Mafia* or *camorra*[60]. This choice of language has the effect of creating a conceptual link between political corruption and

[59] http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/cupola/. Accessed on 19 July 2017.
[60] http://www.treccani.it/vocabolario/clan/. Accessed on 19 July 2017.

organised crime. Even when organised crime is not involved, the use of that jargon remains, channelling the idea that political corruption resembles organised crime. This conceptual link is further underlined in other excerpts from the sample. For instance, Five Star Movement's political leader Beppe Grillo is reported as saying that "[t]he parties system manages Expo as a mafia system" (CDS 36).

In the general picture, this sort of conceptual association appears to emphasise the idea of widespread corruption, connecting it at the same time with the ideas of persistence, ruthlessness and violence commonly associated with Italian organised crime (Vannucci, 1997; della Porta, 1997; della Porta & Vannucci, 2007).

5.4. THE "JUSTIFICATION" FRAME

The system of categories used here to code the articles includes a series of nodes conceptually linked to what can be defined as a "justification" frame. While generally corruption is judged negatively, it is possible to identify situations in which corruption is reframed in a more positive or neutral light, such as a cultural feature or even an act of generosity. Such concepts and devices constitute the "justification" frame in relation to corruption.

In this research, the justification frame is composed of the following categories of frame functions (see Table 2):

- Cultural feature (frame function: Causes): It is defined by the reframing of corruption as something else, namely a cultural feature or an act of generosity (also ascribable to cultural elements in a broad sense).
- Conspiracy (frame function: Causes): it is defined by the framing of an event as a false accusation or a conspiracy. While the corrupt nature of an action is not denied, it is denied that this action was committed, and the allegations are rejected and reversed against the accuser(s).
- Victim (frame function: Problem definition): the corrupt actor is framed as a victim, of a misunderstanding or of false allegations.
- Inverted (frame function: Moral Judgment): linked to the idea of conspiracy, this category is defined by those cases in which negative moral judgment is assigned to the accusers, guilty of advancing false allegations.

- Shifted (frame function: Moral Judgment): linked to the idea of cultural feature, this category is defined by the use of positive or neutral terms to describe the allegedly “corrupt” action, eliminating the negative moral judgment from the accused.
- No need for a solution (frame function: Solutions): the justification frame is characterised by the general suggestion that no solution is necessary, as corruption never happened in the first place.

The distribution of these frame elements can be seen in Table 4.

	CULTURAL FEATURE	CONSPIRACY	VICTIM	INVERTED	SHIFTED	NO NEED FOR A SOLUTION
ITALY	2.99%	2.24%	5.22%	2.24%	2.99%	5.22%
NEW ZEALAND	18.6%	6.98%	20.93%	3.49%	22.86%	20.93%

Table 4 - Frequencies of "justification" frame functions

While these frame elements are quite rare in the coverage of the Italian case, three of them appear in about one-fifth of the New Zealand sample, making them particularly relevant in the framing of corruption. The explanation lies in the importance of a debate on culture and the alleged cultural-specificity of the Field affair, given his Samoan origins.

However, before examining the specificities of the New Zealand case, a few general considerations are important.

First, it must be noted that the justification frame is most often expressed, in both countries, through the voices of individuals involved in the corruption scandal or their relatives. In the New Zealand case, there is an involvement in the debate of other representatives of the Pacific community, and the frame emerges from the words of journalists and columnists, but mostly in the context of open contestation.

While relatively rare, the textual expressions of these frame elements are particularly interesting to get an idea of how localised cultures of corruption work. Arguably, the scarcity of these frame elements is mostly due to the infrequency with which the voices of the corrupt individuals and their relatives are heard, and the secrecy that usually covers localised corruption networks. However, the academic literature suggests that many of these elements are widely present in localised corruption environments (della Porta & Vannucci, 2007). Examples of corrupt actors framing their actions as acts of generosity are found in Chibnall and Saunders (1977) and della Porta and Vannucci (2007, 2012b). The use of neutral language as a system to frame

corruption as morally acceptable in localised corrupt systems has already been noted, together with the process of socialisation to corruption (della Porta & Vannucci, 2007). Chibnall and Saunders have pointed out how some boundaries can be blurred in local corruption cultures. For instance, the morality of an action can be defined by its being a common practice, and not by its legality (Chibnall & Saunders, 1977, p. 143). Results of this research confirm such strategies, although it seems that these find only limited space in the media representation of corruption. As an example from the Italian sample, here are reported the words of Primo Greganti's wife after her husband was arrested for bribery during the investigation into the Expo case:

> *"What can I say? Primo is a generous, he always sees the glass half full. But sometimes he trusts people too much. I warned him…". (ST 11)*

Another strategy often used in the Italian case is that of reframing corruption as "American-style lobbying", eliminating the negative moral value and, most importantly, the illegality of the action. This strategy once again presents similarities to the findings of Chibnall and Saunders (1977, p. 142), where one corrupt actor affirms that bending the rules is not a crime, but part of business, and therefore rejects all allegations. More worrying, however, are the reported words from the wiretapping of corrupt individuals that emerge in a few articles. In this case, cultures of corruption emerge in a different light, and it can be seen how these corrupt environments function through a system of immoral norms and the socialisation to corruption (della Porta & Vannucci, 2012b). Here is how Gianstefano Frigerio, one of the seven arrested on corruption allegations in the Expo investigations, talks on the phone about corruption:

> *"It is magistrates' fault, because one cannot destroy everything because of a little corruption… I mean, legality is not a value: it is a condition… so if you treat it as the only value a country has, you destroy everything. Illegality must be treated with normality, you cannot turn it every time into a crusade…". (CDS 4)*

While instances of the latter type do not appear in the New Zealand case, the reframing of corruption as "generosity" is present, though very rare. For instance, one article by the *New Zealand Herald* reports how Field, during the trial, justified Thai tiler, Sunan Siriwan, working for free in Field's house in Samoa:

> *In explaining the work done for him, Field told the court, "I did not see it as a bribe… friendship developed. It was friends helping friends". (NZH 60).*

Excerpts from the New Zealand case also help in showing how the "conspiracy" category and the "inverted" category are strategically used in defence against allegations of corruption. In a statement reported in the media, for instance, Field declares:

> *"Opponents are making more allegations, which I either reject as completely false or have no knowledge of. […] I should not, however, be expected to keep responding to unsubstantiated accusations through the media". (NZH 37).*

Another article entitled, "Field stepdaughter lashes out at 'Labour conspiracy'" (NZH 57). Although for the purposes of this research all these frame elements have been put together to form a "justification" frame, this can be seen as a simplification. A close look at the texts, in fact, reveals that while many of these elements are used strategically as public defence against allegations of corruption, they also exemplify the existence of cultures of corruption that develop immoral norms inside the institutional and political life of a country.

In general, however, the "justification" frame (with its positive or neutral reframing of corruption) is generally limited to actors involved in a corruption scandal, and it is used strategically as a form of defence against allegations.

The relevance of elements of the "justification" frame in the New Zealand case, as anticipated earlier, can be largely attributed to the development of a lively public discussion on the media surrounding the practice of *Iafo* in Samoan culture (and the similar practice of *koha* in the Māori culture of New Zealand). *Iafo* and *koha* are traditional forms of gift-giving, linked to the tribal culture and social relationships of the Polynesian geographic area. The development and importance of the debate surrounding these two practices in the context of modern New Zealand will be developed in depth in Chapter 7.

5.5. CONCLUSION: DISCOURSES OF CORRUPTION, AND THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN SOCIETY

In the introduction to this thesis, it was suggested that a particular cultural aspect of corruption, namely its public understanding, has an important role in determining the nature of corruption, level of debate, and development of good governance in a specific society (Peters, 2003). Corruption is a complex issue, and as such, it is plausible to assume that its public understanding is constructed mainly through the news media. News media content, in this case, has a double

role. It reports on corruption, and it becomes an arena for public debate around corruption (a debate that, of course, is constantly "mediated" by choices on what to report, what sources to choose, and so on). Therefore, journalism is assumed to have a major role in the social construction of a public understanding of corruption. However, given that the same journalists that produce media content are immersed in a cultural environment characterised by the existence of particular frames and their relationships of dominance (Van Gorp, 2010), the analysis of media content also becomes a mirror of more widespread representations and frames that have developed over time.

A comparison between two liberal democracies with very different levels and histories of corruption has shown that in these two countries, the media tend to represent corruption from radically different perspectives. In Italy, the dominance of a "systemic corruption" frame is expressed by a tendency to generalise corruption, locate its causes in the political and institutional system (or even the society) at large, depict it as a widespread problem, and acquire a fatalistic attitude towards its solution, by focusing on past failures, the impossibility of facing the threat, and the dominance of emergency measures. On the other hand, the New Zealand perspective is dominated by a "corruption as individual crime" frame, identified by a tendency to locate its causes in the action of corrupt individuals, and its solution in the punishment of these individuals in order to restore integrity. This frame is characterised by a strong juxtaposition of corruption and integrity, where the first is seen as a threat to the latter, which is instead assumed to be the norm.

The "systemic corruption" frame found in Italy, moreover, is characterised by the use of disease, war, disaster, animals and plants, and sanitisation metaphors, and by narratives which focus on the diffusion, continuity, normality, and professionalisation of corruption. On the other hand, these framing devices are absent in the New Zealand case, characterised by a widespread narrative of integrity.

While successful stories of countries who have drastically lowered their levels of corruption have been a common topic of corruption studies (see Chapter 3), these stories have mainly been told in terms of policy changes, reforms, and political choices. Little has been said, instead, about the social construction of corruption, especially in countries (like New Zealand) where corruption is traditionally very low. Moreover, some of the countries that have managed to lower corruption rapidly are characterised by weak democracies (see the examples of Singapore and Hong Kong). It is plausible to assume that in countries with strong democratic traditions, where public debate (of which the news media are main actors) plays a fundamental role in policy choices, strategies

to face corruption have a stronger dependence on the quality of public debate over the issue. Is it possible, therefore, in the light of the results presented here, to hypothesise a role of dominant frames in determining the overall action (or inaction) of a country to face corruption? While such a connection would need further evidence, some suggestions can be made.

The first one is linked to the diffuse fatalistic attitudes which emerged in Italy in relation to the solutions to corruption. Della Porta and Vannucci (1999, 2007) have noted how politics, despite some modest attempts to reform the system, have been generally unsuccessful in curbing corruption. Part of the failure has been attributed to an interest in politics in keeping things as they are. It is not surprising that several years of failures, accompanied by continuous corruption scandals, have led to the idea that corruption cannot be systematically tackled in Italy, and that the only answer is a mix of emergency measures, interventions of the judiciary, and general resignation. However, when such an idea becomes widespread, the risk is that action (or in this case, inaction) will follow, and attempts to curb corruption will be abandoned or lack the necessary energy. Reinforced by the widespread belief that the political and institutional system is corrupt, this may lead to a widening of the perceived gap between citizens and politics, and a lower trust in parties and institutions (as suggested and demonstrated by della Porta, 2000; Tverdova, 2003; Clausen, Kraay & Nyiri, 2011).

The press, however, is not a powerless actor in this vicious circle. The media, as seen in Chapter 3, have an important role in combating and curbing corruption. This role has been linked to the importance of press freedom (Peters, 2003), and described as operating through mechanisms such as reporting about investigations, uncovering cases of corruption, underlining flaws in the anti-corruption system, and keeping the debate alive (Stapenhurst, 2000). However, the role of the media in combating corruption is also expressed by the ways in which they contribute to the shaping of public discourses on the issue. Expressing fatalistic attitudes, focusing on surrealistic representations of corruption as a disease or a monster with tentacles, is not a neutral action. Putting individual responsibility in the background of the discussion, generalising the issue and, consequently, speaking of abstract entities such as politics (instead of politicians), may be tempting and rhetorically effective, but it also may have very real consequences.

The New Zealand press, on the other hand, plays its watchdog role not only through reporting and investigative journalism, but also by constantly highlighting the unacceptability of corruption in an honesty-based society, and by emphasising the importance of individual responsibility and a proper response from politics and institutions. The New Zealand media, moreover, strengthen

the importance of accountability by strategically underlining the risks posed to integrity when there is an improper reaction to corruption scandals, and when there is avoidance of action for the sake of political advantage.

Both views implicate and reinforce two radically different perspectives on the nature of corruption as an issue for a society. These views have been reproduced for at least twenty years in both countries, and had time to become ingrained and natural (Lewis & Reese, 2009).

These embedded frames (Van Gorp, 2010) influence the accessibility of content, the endorsement of specific causal attributions, and ultimately individual attitudes and public policy choices and changes (Iyengar, 1987; Haider-Markel & Joslyn, 2001).

It is possible to advance the hypothesis that New Zealand media play a role in maintaining low levels of corruption not only by reporting scandals, but also by treating corruption as an occasion to reinforce a discourse of integrity, and to put pressure on individuals, politics and institutions to adapt to this social perspective. This role becomes particularly evident in the next chapter.

On the other hand, while continuing to frame corruption in the most widespread terms might be tempting, Italian media could play a more relevant and positive role by shifting their attention to less rhetorically powerful, but more substantial issues, such as the need for reform, the importance of integrity, the relevance of corruption cases to individual choices and responsibilities. Moreover, there might be some space for the exploration of the potential of applying New Zealand-style frames in anti-corruption campaigns.

The next chapter is focused on two different issues. In the first part, the results of framing analysis of two case studies presented here will be expanded, by looking at the media coverage of the Corruption Perception Index, in New Zealand and Italy, over a period of twenty years (1996-2016), and by looking at how the two main anti-corruption organisations seem to adopt similar strategies in the framing of corruption.

In the second part, results from the framing analysis of corruption will be used to exemplify what has been suggested in Chapter 2, namely the introduction of the concepts of anchoring and objectification as mechanisms that link framing devices to their frames.

CHAPTER 6 – GENERALIZING RESULTS, AND INTRODUCING ANCHORING AND OBJECTIFICATION IN FRAMING THEORY

The results of the framing analysis conducted in the previous chapter show the use of radically different frames for covering corruption scandals in New Zealand and Italy. However, are these particular ways of framing corruption characteristic of the coverage of the two case studies analysed, or are they commonly used in the general coverage of corruption? In this chapter, the analysis is extended to cover a broader timeframe, by analysing how corruption is framed in the print news media coverage of the Corruption Perceptions Index in the two countries during the period 1996-2016. This second step of the analysis confirms the previous results, and offers some new insights into the connection between perceived levels of corruption and media representations. Moreover, through an analysis of the homepages of the websites of two major anti-corruption organisations, some preliminary evidence that points towards the generalisation of the dominant frames in the two countries is provided.

The rest of the chapter is dedicated to integrating results from Chapter 5 with one of the theoretical developments suggested in Chapter 2, namely the introduction of anchoring and objectification in framing theory. Metaphors (conceptual and ontological) and narratives are used here to exemplify how framing devices anchor and objectify an object (of knowledge) to particular frames, by reinforcing its functions. The exemplification of this theoretical development is aimed at filling a gap in framing theory, and offers a new operational tool for framing analysis.

6.1. EXTENDING THE ANALYSIS: MEDIA FRAMING OF CORRUPTION 1996-2016

The qualitative framing analysis of case studies was expanded to a sample of articles from the Italian newspaper, *La Repubblica,* and the New Zealand daily, *The New Zealand Herald*. News items and comments focused on Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index were selected over the period 1996-2016. This brought a total sample of 37 news items, 18 for Italy and 19 for New Zealand.

Results from textual analysis of this sample confirm the general structure of the previous findings, with a dominant "systemic corruption" frame in Italy, and a dominant "corruption as individual crime" frame in New Zealand.

The Italian sample presents several of the rhetorical devices and narratives previously listed. In particular disease, natural disaster, and war metaphors are present, with use of words and expressions such as “cyclone”, “country ill with corruption”, and “battle against corruption”. Widely present are also narratives of diffusion and continuity of corruption, with titles and subheadings containing expressions, such as “Corruption: Italy always among the worst” and “Crime permeates the public machine”. Moreover, it confirms the use of metonyms and personifications related to corruption. This can be seen, for instance, in the following two extracts, dating back to 1997 and 2014 respectively:

> *“A degree of corruption unbearable for a modern and civil country continues to infest Italy” (La Repubblica, 21 January 1997).*
>
> *“Corruption: a disease that kills every effort towards development and steals oxygen to every ethical perspective of growth” (La Repubblica, 2 December 2014).*

Furthermore, a separate strategy is used in this particular context in the Italian newspaper with a similar function of strengthening the general discourse of widespread, systemic corruption. Italy is constantly compared, throughout the years, with countries that hold similar positions in the CPI, but are associated in the collective imagination with situations of war (Rwanda), high rates of crime (El Salvador), non-democratic traditions (Kuwait), and a more general under-development (Lesotho, Botswana, Ghana, and Samoa).

The tendency to generalise the discourse around corruption is also confirmed in a comparative perspective with New Zealand. A look at the titles shows that the adjective “corrupt” (“corrotto”) appears once in the Italian sample and nine times in the New Zealand sample; on the other hand, the noun “corruption” (“corruzione”) appears thirteen times in the Italian titles and four in the New Zealand’s ones.

Regarding New Zealand, a general discourse of integrity seems intensified in comparison to the coverage of the case study, probably due to the more general nature of the topic (coverage of an international index of perception of corruption). The word “integrity” appears 28 times in the sample (although in 5 cases it is part of the titles of official reports), and corruption is constantly framed as an exceptional, individual action in contrast to the honesty of the system and the society. For instance, in 2000 an article indirectly reports the words of a judge towards a clerk of a public office convicted for corruption:

Judge Phil Gittos told Matagi that her actions struck at the heart of the public service and eroded its integrity […]. (New Zealand Herald, 16 September 2000).

However, a certain degree of contestation of the "integrity discourse" appears throughout the sample. For instance, the title of the article containing the previous extract is, "Corruption is alive and well in 'honest' New Zealand". This is arguably the most extreme challenge to the dominant discourse, and yet even this contains the integrity discourse. Several examples of this kind (although, in general, milder) can be found in the sample. While they may seem to contradict the prevalence of an integrity discourse, they actually confirm it by constantly acknowledging its dominance over the public debate. An example is found in this extract from a 2016 article:

New Zealand's reputation for low levels of corruption was hurt last month when the annual Transparency International Corruption Perception Index was published. (New Zealand Herald, 22 February 2016)

These contestations of the dominant discourse often coincide with small drops in the CPI's ranking, while in those years in which the country tops it, the idea of an honest system tends to be reinforced, and in some instances directly attributed to an honest society, as in this extract:

Next time you're pulled over by a Kiwi cop try flicking them 50 bucks to make it "all go away". You'll be down the station on a bribery charge in seconds. Kiwi cops are too Kiwi to get up to that kind of thing. (New Zealand Herald, 1 February 2016)

New Zealand's integrity discourse is also reinforced through a mechanism that works in opposition to Italy, by comparing the country with others that have widespread corruption. For instance:

"Having experienced business in Indonesia, India and Philippines I know what real corruption is, and New Zealand is largely free of that." (New Zealand Herald, 30 October 2008)

Interestingly, when countries with high levels of corruption are mentioned in the New Zealand sample, devices such as disease metaphors, narratives of normalisation, and personifications of corruption appear ("Corruption hurts the poor most", TNZ 11; "[…] societies where corruption is a more normal part of life", TNZ 13). Given the similar rhetorical and narrative devices found in Bratu and Kazoka (2016), there might be a potential for the existence of universal repertoires of images and narratives linked to a perception of widespread corruption. Further research could address this potential link more systematically.

6.2. GENERALISING THE RESULTS: PRELIMINARY EVIDENCE FROM THE HOMEPAGES OF ANTI-CORRUPTION ORGANISATIONS IN NEW ZEALAND AND ITALY

The empirical focus of this thesis is on media framing and representations of corruption. However, if the focus was moved beyond the media, would the same frames be found? That is to say, are the dominant frames in the media also the dominant frame in other areas of the public debate? Given the importance of the news media in the development of public debate over contested issues (Gamson & Modigliani, 1989), this hypothesis is plausible, and should be tested by further research.

However, what can be presented here is anecdotal evidence to sustain the plausibility of this hypothesis. Framing, as noted in Chapter 2, is not a prerogative of the media, but involves other actors such as social movements, associations and political organisations.

The case presented here involves two major non-profit anti-corruption organisations, namely "Riparte il Futuro" in Italy (sponsored, among others, by Transparency International Italia), and "Transparency International New Zealand" (TINZ) in New Zealand. A look at the homepages of their websites[61] immediately shows texts that resonate with the news media's dominant frames.

The homepage of "Riparte il Futuro" opens with this sentence:

> *Corruption is destroying our country. We are 1,168,107 Italians and we have decided not to surrender.*

In this single sentence it is possible to recognise the personification of corruption, a disaster metaphor ("destroying our country"), and a war metaphor ("to surrender").

On the other hand, TINZ's homepage states:

> *A world with trusted integrity systems in which government, politics, business, civil society and the daily lives of people are free of corruption. Transparency International New Zealand's Mission.*

It is immediately recognisable the focus on integrity which is also typical of New Zealand's media framing of corruption, and that here appears before the word "corruption" itself. As in New

[61] www.riparteilfuturo.it; www.transparency.org.nz. Accessed on 26 January 2018. As homepages tend to often be modified, a screenshot of both web pages is attached in Appendix C.

Zealand media, here too the strategy is to oppose corruption to integrity, by focusing on the preventive power against corruption of a net of “trusted integrity systems”. The opening sentence of TINZ focuses on the instruments to prevent corruption and construct integrity, and immediately locates where the risks hide (government, politics). On the other hand, the Italian sentence does not offer any solution (neither in terms of prevention nor “cure”) and does not locate corruption, but it personifies it and generalises it, concluding that the only possible solution is not to surrender (a solution that does not necessarily imply a victory on corruption, nor any form of counter-attack, but merely a defensive reaction). Obviously, the contribution of both websites and organisations is not limited to these two sentences. However, the decision to present themselves with these two texts (therefore making them particularly salient in the framing of the issue) suggests something about a general vision of corruption which resonates with the media framing of corruption described in Chapter 5.

Further research should investigate how social movements and organisations, but also political parties and citizens frame corruption. Similarities in frame dominance among groups would suggest the possibility of generalising results to a whole country, while differences could help to explain the complex relationships between groups when dealing with corruption, such as the previously mentioned distrust in politics, or modifications in voting behaviours.

6.3. DOMINANT FRAMES OF CORRUPTION IN NEW ZEALAND AND ITALY

The new evidence presented in this chapter suggests that the differences in the framing of corruption go beyond the coverage of the single cases investigated in Chapter 5. Similar frames are found in the coverage of the Corruption Perception Index over a significant timeframe, indicating that the respective frames (“systemic corruption” and “corruption as individual crime”) are deeply rooted in the two countries. Moreover, there is some anecdotal evidence supporting the hypothesis that these frames are not limited to the news media, but tend to be reproduced by other participants in the public debate (in this specific case, the two major anti-corruption organisations in the two countries). This reinforces the suggestion (brought up in the previous chapter) that there is a link between levels of (perceived) corruption and the way corruption is framed. In this regard, results from the analysis of articles covering the CPI show some interesting tendencies. Specifically, when the analysis of the media coverage of corruption is extended to content related to countries with high levels of real or perceived corruption, the framing devices

found in the case of Italy also appear in the New Zealand media (see paragraph 6.1). Moreover, already mentioned research by Bratu & Kazoka (2016; 2018) shows results similar to the Italian case for seven European countries, all characterised by relatively high levels of corruption (the exception of the UK has been discussed previously, see paragraph 5.3.2.1). This suggests that results from the New Zealand case are somehow unique (among the countries already investigated), in that New Zealand print media frame corruption differently from all the other countries analysed. Given that this difference mainly relates to the absence of framing devices linked to widespread corruption, and the presence of a discourse of integrity (and that this tendency is inverted when the New Zealand media cover corruption in countries where it is widespread), it seems plausible to hypothesise that the difference is somehow linked to New Zealand's reputation as a country with low levels of corruption. These considerations could constitute the ground for further exploration of the link between levels of corruption, perception of corruption, and framing of corruption, in the direction of a more elaborated theory that connects these three elements.

This, however, exceeds the aims of this thesis. It is important, instead, to reconnect the empirical results of this and the previous chapter, to their theoretical premise. This will be the aim of the following sections.

6.4. TWO MECHANISMS LINKING FRAMING DEVICES TO FRAMES AND FRAME FUNCTIONS: ANCHORING AND OBJECTIFICATION

In the introductory chapter, I have highlighted the social constructionist perspective that underlies an exploration of how corruption is framed in the media. In chapter 2, I have defended this argument, and added that framing in general should be considered an eminently social process. In order to clarify some doubts and missing elements, I have suggested the introduction in framing theory of elements from the theory of social representations (Moscovici, 1984). In particular, the two concepts of anchoring and objectification could fill the gap in the explanation of how framing devices are linked to the frames they represent. Using results from the empirical analysis of corruption frames, I will here exemplify how anchoring and objectification can be successfully introduced in framing theory, leading to an improved operationalisation of framing analysis in a social constructionist perspective.

On several occasions throughout this thesis (see Chapters 2 and 4), influential operationalisations of framing analysis have been described. One attributes to frames four functions, namely “problem definition, causal analysis, moral judgment, and remedy promotion” (Entman, 2007, p. 164). The second one identifies the framing devices that form a frame, namely keywords, stock phrases, images, symbols, metaphors, catchphrases, lexical choices, selection of sources, exemplars, arguments, causal statements, visual images, and similar elements of media content (Entman, 1991; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Van Gorp, 2007).

Van Gorp (2007) extends this operationalisation by describing two types of devices forming a frame. Framing devices are always explicit in the text, while reasoning devices (corresponding to causal arguments) can be latent. Burgers et al. (2016) have pointed out that some devices, such as metaphors, can function as both framing and reasoning devices, given that they have both linguistic and conceptual relevance. In particular, it is suggested that figurative framing is at the core of framing processes, and contributes to construct the four functions of a frame.

Starting from this conceptualisation of frames, frame functions and framing devices, and using results from this thesis, it is here suggested that anchoring and objectification can be fruitfully introduced to framing theory as mechanisms connecting framing devices to frames through frame functions. Specifically, framing devices anchor (by comparison to an existing concept/object) or objectify (through direct attribution of features) the issue, concept or event that is being framed.

According to their definitions, anchoring and objectification constitute two complementary processes for the social construction of reality (or, according to social representations theory, for the creation of social representations). Anchoring is the process of defining concepts through “ordinary categories and images, to set them in a familiar context” (Moscovici, 1984, p. 29). Anchoring is done by comparison, by linking abstract concepts to familiar categories. Metaphor, therefore, is to be considered a prototypical anchoring device, as its function is to link abstract, undefined concepts to more familiar ones (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980; Kövecses, 2000). Objectification, on the other hand, is described by Moscovici as the process of turning “something abstract into something almost concrete, to transfer what is in the mind to something existing in the physical world” (Moscovici, 1984, p. 29). While both mechanisms function to construct the reality of a concept, objectification does not need a comparison (that is, to anchor a new concept to another one), but directly attributes particular features (described in detail later) to the concept.

Once this distinction is made, it is possible to investigate how these two mechanisms can explain the link between framing devices, frames, and frame functions as identified in relation to corruption in New Zealand and Italy.

6.4.1. Anchoring

The idea of anchoring presupposes a comparison between the concept or issue to be defined, and already well-defined and familiar categories. Therefore, in this case, all conceptual metaphors (in opposition to ontological metaphors, see Lakoff & Johnson, 1980) constitute anchoring devices. What I have argued in this thesis is that anchoring processes attribute to abstract concepts three types of features: location in space; location in time; and concrete attributes. I base this argument on the results of analysis of metaphors. That analysis showed how linguistic and conceptual contents of metaphors add concrete features and space-temporal location to corruption. They contribute to the definition of particular frame functions, which in turn constitute the frames. So, for instance, “cancer” and “plague” metaphors contribute to the construction of corruption as a systemic and widespread problem (spatial location, expression of the frame function “problem definition”). While cancer affects the “body systems”, plague affects society intended as a “system”, and both diseases are chronic and tend to spread uncontrollably (temporal location). They also construct corruption as a mortal threat (concrete attribute), reinforcing the categories “Fatalism” and “Emergency measures” in the frame function “Solutions”. Moreover, these two metaphors “externalize” the issue, by constructing it as an invasive disease that attacks a society (plague) or a body (cancer). As a consequence, the moral judgement does not apply, and the attention is distracted from the internal causes of corruption (namely, corrupt actors and corruption networks). As seen, by anchoring corruption to specific concepts, attributes of those concepts are transferred and become features of corruption itself. Table 5 shows how different anchoring framing devices attribute particular features to corruption, and how these features contribute to reinforce particular frame functions.

Metaphors are by no means the only anchoring framing devices. All those devices that imply a comparison can be considered anchoring devices, and they function by transferring features of a familiar category to an unfamiliar or abstract concept. So, the “professionalization of corruption” narrative identified in Chapter 5 is also to be considered an anchoring device, as it attributes to corruption the features of a professional environment, therefore weakening the force of a negative

moral judgment (professional relationships are morally neutral). The use of vocabulary linked to organised crime is also an anchoring device, and attributes to corruption features, such as violence, organisation of powerful and widespread networks, and illegality, therefore reinforcing, for example, a negative moral judgement of the whole political system.

ANCHORING DEVICE	**ATTRIBUTIONS TO ISSUE (CORRUPTION)**	**FRAME FUNCTIONS INVOLVED**
Disease metaphor (cancer, plague). e.g. “New metastasis of corruption” (ST 38).	Mortality, invasiveness (concrete attributes) Systemic location, external origin (spatial location) Chronic and degenerative (temporal location)	Widespread problem (problem definition) No moral judgement (moral judgement) Emergency measures; Fatalism (solutions)
Disaster metaphor (tsunami, earthquake, etc.)	Measurable damage (concrete attribute) External origin (spatial location) Unforeseeable (temporal location)	No moral judgement (moral judgement) Emergency measures; Fatalism (solutions)
Animal/Plant metaphors e.g. “A more tentacular system” (ST 25)	Attribution of agency; limbs and branches (concrete attribute) Separate from people (spatial location)	Corrupt political system (causes) Widespread problem (problem definition)
War metaphors (fight, truce, task force, etc.)	Measurable damage; organised army (concrete attribute) External threat (spatial location) Long duration (temporal location)	Widespread problem (problem definition) Negative moral judgement (moral judgement) Emergency measures; Fatalism (solutions)
Genetic metaphors e.g. “[…] bribery and corruption are […] a real physiology” e.g. “[…]in Italy the DNA of honesty is scarce”	Corruption as a genetic/physiological trait (concrete attribute) Individual innate feature, widespread in the society [DNA]; feature of the society [physiology] (spatial location)	Corrupt society (causes) Widespread problem (problem definition) Negative moral judgement/society (moral judgement) Fatalism (solutions)
Professionalisation of corruption e.g. “This sort of service centre put in contact demand and supply” (CDS 4)	Corruption as a professional activity; practices and norms (concrete attribute) Corruption networks (spatial location)	Corrupt political system (causes) Widespread problem (problem definition) “Neutralization” of moral judgement (moral judgement)
Organised crime lexicon (*cupola, clan*)	Violence and illegality (concrete attribute) Corruption networks (spatial location)	Corrupt political system (causes) Widespread problem (problem definition) Negative moral judgement/Politics and institutions (moral judgement)

Table 5 - Anchoring devices

6.4.2. Objectification

The mechanism of anchoring has been described as based on comparison, and the consequent attribution of features of a known object/concept to an unknown object/concept. Objectification, instead, is a mechanism of attribution of features to a concept, without the use of a comparison. How does this attribution of features happen? By using examples from Chapter 5, it is argued here that, as in the case of anchoring, concepts are objectified at least through three different types of attribution of features: location in space; location in time; attribution of concrete features.

In relation to the Italian case, corruption was framed through narratives of diffusion, continuity and normalisation. The narrative of diffusion gives a specific spatial location to corruption. Whether corruption is defined as endemic in Italy (CDS 20), located at the national level (ST 31) or the level of "the system of public contracts" (SOL 25), this narrative sustains the "widespread corruption" problem definition, by giving a broad location of corruption. The narrative of continuity reinforces this particular problem definition by extending the location of corruption along a temporal continuum (e.g. "the 23rd year of the Clean Hands Age", ST 23). Continuity, moreover, contributes to the reinforcement of a category of a different frame function (Solutions), that is the "Fatalism" category, by implying that anti-corruption action has failed to produce significant results over time. Finally, the narrative of normalisation contributes to both types of location, as it describes corruption as a norm (or a habit) that is rooted (in time) and widespread (in space) in the society. The "exceptionality of corruption/diffusion of integrity" narrative found in New Zealand works similarly. It locates corruption temporally and spatially in the specific case under the lens of the media, while it locates integrity more broadly, at the level of the society (e.g. "We live in a society that prides itself on the fact that we are pretty straight", NZH 57), political institutions (e.g. "the findings of the Ingram report […] bring into question the integrity of MPs and Parliament as a whole", NZH 22), or the "system" (e.g. "the integrity of the system", TP 1).

Two other objectification devices are personification and metonymy. Differently from other metaphors, personification and metonymy have been defined as "ontological metaphors", as they "impose artificial boundaries that make physical phenomena discrete […]; entities bounded by a surface" (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 25). Instead of being based on comparison, these two types of metaphors directly attribute concrete features to abstract concepts to make them

understandable (they objectify concepts[62]). So, for instance, in the Italian print media corruption is personified, and it acquires attributes of a living or even human being. Corruption acquires agency, hands, a mouth that devours, legs to walk, and the capacity of digging, blackmailing, and changing activities (see Chapter 5, paragraph 5.3.2.2). Personification, therefore, objectifies concepts by attributing them with physical characteristics. As a consequence, however, it also attributes a specific location. In this particular case, it locates corruption externally to individuals, by constructing it as a separate entity. At a comparative level, it is interesting to show how the personification of corruption differs from the narrative of integrity developed in the New Zealand media (see also Table 6). Integrity in New Zealand is objectified as a characteristic of single individuals or groups (see earlier in this paragraph). Personification, instead, externalises a concept (in this case, corruption), which is objectified not as a characteristic, but as a separate entity. One of the consequences of this different objectification is, as already seen, a different focus on individual responsibilities in the news media content of the two countries.

As objectifying framing devices, metonymies act more specifically on the location of concepts. Both in the Italian example (the use of the word "corruption" to talk about corrupt people) and in the New Zealand case (attributing integrity to abstract concepts such as society, politics or the "system"), metonymies relocate concepts (corruption and integrity) at a broader level.

OBJECTIFYING DEVICE	**ATTRIBUTIONS TO ISSUE**	**FRAME FUNCTIONS INVOLVED**
Narratives of diffusion, continuity, normality	Corruption as widespread and long-lasting (spatial and temporal location) Corruption as a common behaviour and a regulated environment (concrete feature)	Widespread problem (problem definition) Fatalism (solutions)
Diffusion of integrity (narrative)	Integrity as a national feature (spatial location)	Rotten apples (causes) Isolated case (problem definition) Negative/Individuals (moral judgement)
Personification of corruption	Corruption as living/human being (concrete feature) Corruption as an external entity (spatial location)	Negative/Individuals (moral judgement)

Table 6 - Examples of objectifying devices

[62] The definition of ontological metaphors by Lakoff and Johnson (1980) resonates with Moscovici's explanation of objectification as the transformation of "something abstract into something almost concrete, to transfer what is in the mind to something existing in the physical world" (Moscovici, 1984, p. 29).

6.5. FILLING THE GAPS: CONNECTING FRAMING DEVICES TO FRAMES THROUGH ANCHORING AND OBJECTIFICATION

In Chapter 2, I have argued for a theory of framing as a social process, in contrast with framing as a theory of media effects. By introducing the theory of social representations (Moscovici, 1984) and comparing it with framing theory, I have outlined several similarities. This has led me to argue that suggestions and concepts from social representations theory could be adopted by and adapted to framing theory. I have therefore attempted to clarify some doubts and fill some gaps in framing theory. In particular, I have suggested that the question about the location(s) of frames could be reformulated as a question about the nature of frames, and that the nature of frames should be considered social. Frames, that is, are social constructions. Moreover, I have suggested a more detailed classification of the dynamism of frames, which includes an "internal dynamism" (single frames are susceptible of evolving over time) and "interactive dynamism" (the relationships of dominance among frames are susceptible of change over time). Finally, I have identified a gap in the operational conceptualisation of the framing processes. In framing theory, it exists as an operational definition of frames as performers of four functions (Entman, 1993), a quite detailed set of framing devices (Entman, 1991, 1993; Pan & Kosicki, 1993; Van Gorp, 2007), and an explanation of the mechanisms (salience, which is obtained by placement and repletion) of how framing devices exert their power in media content and discursive productions in general (Entman, 1991, 1993). However, there is no convincing explanation of the mechanisms through which framing devices are connected to their frames. In Chapter 2 I have suggested that two concepts taken from social representations theory, namely "anchoring" and "objectification" (Moscovici, 1984; Jodelet, 2008), could fill this gap in framing theory.

In the present chapter, I have developed this argument by using results from Chapter 5, showing that different framing devices are used to either anchor a concept (by comparison with already existing and familiar categories), or by objectifying it (by direct attribution of features). To exemplify the way anchoring and objectification work, I have used the specific framing devices identified in the empirical analysis of news media framing of corruption in New Zealand and Italy (namely, conceptual and ontological metaphors, and narratives). While the range of framing devices can certainly be expanded, the aim here was to demonstrate the utility of anchoring and

objectification not only as theoretical concepts for framing theory, but as operational tools of analysis. A fundamental step towards a social constructionist theory of framing is constituted by a full operational conceptualisation of the framing processes. The mechanisms of anchoring and objectification, in this sense, are operational tools that can help to identify framing devices, and to build an argument over how these framing devices constitute a frame. Moreover, they are linked to the previously suggested distinction between *internal* and *interactive* dynamism (see Chapter 2, section 2.7). Anchoring and objectification are, in this sense, the means for generating internal dynamism. Framing devices, by anchoring and objectifying an object of knowledge to a frame, reinforce or modify its frame functions, thus bringing to the development of the frame itself. Moreover, some framing devices may constitute arguments against contrasting frames. By weakening the frame functions of an opposing frame, they force its internal dynamism, that is the generation of stronger framing devices and/or new frame functions adapted to the new situation.

As will be further seen in Chapter 8, by introducing anchoring and objectification, a full operational framing theory, in a social constructionist perspective, is developed. Once frames are identified and their functions specified, framing devices can be recognised, and their role in the reinforcement of specific frame functions (and therefore, of frames) can be judged according to how they contribute to the temporal and spatial location, and the attribution of features, of issues and events.

However, before drawing the final conclusions and arguments for a social constructionist theory of framing, a last step is necessary. The defence of a social constructionist theory of framing, in fact, consists of two main steps: a full theoretical and operational definition of framing as a social process, and a confutation of framing as a theory of media effects. Since this theory insists on narrowing down the scope of framing analysis to the investigation of cognitive effects of media frames, a relevant argument against it is constituted by the demonstration that framing can have socio-political effects regardless of the cognitive effects on individuals.

Using once again the case study of media representations of corruption in New Zealand, the next chapter delves into how media developed a public debate over a contested issue (the Samoan gift-giving practice of *lafo* in the context of New Zealand politics), and how the public debate generated in the news media affected the social and political life of the country by generating a set of formal and informal rules.

CHAPTER 7 - *LAFO* AND *KOHA* IN THE NEWS MEDIA: AN EXAMPLE OF FRAMING CONTEST IN THE MAKING

Framing analysis of the print media coverage of the Field scandal shows that about one-fifth of the articles in the sample (18.6%, see Table 4) present issues concerning a cultural view of Field's actions. A qualitative assessment of this media content shows that in the course of the scandal, a debate emerges surrounding the practices of *lafo* and *koha* (two Polynesian practices of gift-giving), and its space in modern New Zealand politics. In the context of this research, this debate is particularly interesting, not much in relation to the nature and judgement of these practices, but in terms of the potential of public debate carried out in the media to influence political, institutional, or social change. As will be seen in this chapter, in fact, the debate over *lafo* and *koha* becomes a moment of confrontation between the media, politics and the public, in which ideas encounter, clash, and develop. That is, a vivid example of a framing contest in action (Entman, 2003), in which arguments and counter-arguments are developed in the attempt to make specific frames gain dominance over others. In this dialogical, deliberative environment, the social nature of frame building becomes evident (Billig, 1991; see also Chapter 2 of this thesis), and its motivations and consequences can be investigated. Most importantly, it is shown how a public debate which originated in the media can produce specific policy directions and suggestions (and eventually the enforcement of new rules in the Cabinet Manual regulating cultural gifts in the New Zealand Government), and force parties and political actors to express their position in the framing contest under social pressure. In this struggle for framing, the media exert their watchdog role not through reporting or investigation, but by openly contesting specific arguments and pushing political actors towards a clarification of their positioning and accountability towards citizens.

In the first part of this chapter, the origins of the debate over *iafo* and *koha* in the New Zealand media are explained, and the importance and role of these practices in Samoan and Māori culture are described. Then a qualitative analysis of the framing of these practices in the context of the Field scandal is conducted on a sample of 16 news items (8 from *The New Zealand Herald,* 5 from *The Dominion Post*, and 3 from *The Press*) collected during the most lively period of the debate (2-9 September 2006). The newspapers chosen for analysis are the same as in the

previous chapter (*The New Zealand Herald, The Dominion Post, The Press)*. To offer a complete account of the debate, news pieces, editorials, commentaries and letters to the editor are included in the sample. Letters are included to account for the strategic importance of letters' selection for newspapers (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2002). This way, the totality of the participants in the public debate over the issue is included in the analysis, offering a more precise and vivid account of its evolution.

7.1. SPARKING THE DEBATE: THE INGRAM REPORT IN JULY 2006

On 18 July 2006, the New Zealand government announced the release of the "Ingram Report", compiled by Queen's Counsel N.W. Ingram and investigating the possibility of a conflict of interest between Field's public role and his private interests[63]. The Ingram Report (that constituted later the basis for the police investigation) concluded that Field was found not guilty of any wrongdoing, but that some of his behaviours had been questionable at least from an ethical point of view. In particular, during the investigation, allegations emerged over "the acceptance by Mr Field of monetary payments by way of *lafo* in connection with his role as a Minister of the Crown, and a member of Parliament" (Ingram, 2006, p. 10). For clarity of the issue, a large extract from the Ingram Report is quoted hereby:

> **6.3 *Acceptance by Mr Field of monetary payments by way of* lafo**
>
> [445] Mrs Sylvia Taylor in her interview, related a general suggestion that some people in South Auckland had given money to Mr Field with a view to seeking a political favour from Mr Field, either on that same occasion or on some future occasion. No particulars were provided in support of the suggestion. And while Mrs Taylor was invited to have those who were voicing concerns to her in relation to this matter – something which Mrs Taylor likened to the provision of *koha* in Māori culture – write to the inquiry articulating their complaints, no such letters were received. Report to the Prime Minister upon inquiry into matters relating to Taito Phillip Field 131
>
> [446] Although Mrs Taylor's suggestion was both general and unsubstantiated, I regarded the matter as being a grave allegation which Mr Field ought to be given the opportunity to address. Mr Field's responses, while not lending any substance to the concerns raised by Mrs Taylor, did raise the issue of the perceptions which may attach to the Samoan cultural practice of *lafo* within a New Zealand context, in circumstances where the recipient of the gift is a member of Parliament. However, before embarking upon that discussion it is appropriate that I acknowledge that there is no suggestion of actual impropriety on the part of Mr Field in relation to the particular matter; rather it is the perceptions which may flow from the practice which give cause to reflect whether the practice is a matter which Parliament may wish to address.
>
> [447] I begin by referring to a brief but useful discussion upon the subject of *lafo* in the political arena contained in an article in the *New Zealand Herald* on 24 September 2005 in which the practice is expressed as "*mutual gift-giving and service*". The article continues with reference to Mr Palelei Vaialese, the founder of the newspaper *Samoana* in Auckland in 1979, stating that if anyone in Samoa wants something from a chief or a member of Parliament, the normal practice is to give a donation or *lafo*. The article quotes Mr Vaialese as follows:

[63] https://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/ingram-report-released. Accessed 29 August 2017. All extracts from the Ingram Report were retrieved from the original document available on this link.

"*I myself as an example, most of the time I'd go and see the Prime Minister or my MP [in Samoa], I said 'Okay, I've come to see you about help with my immigration papers, can you help me?' Then I said, 'Here's your lafo to have breakfast or dinner.'*

The more people who come to the office each day, the more lafo you have. By the end of the day you make almost $500, or almost $1000, all through lafo. Report to the Prime Minister upon inquiry into matters relating to Taito Phillip Field 132

[148] The article continues by stating that in Otara, where Mr Field became a member of Parliament in 1993, and in Mangere, where he moved in 1996, those customs are still so strong that a sign had to be put in Mr Field's electorate office, after a visit by Parliamentary Services in 2002, stating that services provided in the electorate office are free. On 20 September 2005, an email from Simon Collins of the *New Zealand Herald* to Parliamentary Services was provided to the Prime Minister's Office. That email referred to an allegation of Mr Field in 2002 accepting donations from people who came to the Mangere electorate office for assistance. A copy of that email was provided to me by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet on 21 September 2005.

Then the next day you come back and bring food for them. It's not really bribery. It's not like when you go and see a Palagi [European]."148

[448] It is not *lafo* in the style referred to by Mr Vaialese which has given rise to concern in this inquiry, but rather the indication made by Mrs Field that pursuant to Samoa culture, in Fa'a Samoa, at a big wedding or a funeral Mr Field, as a chief and Minister of the Crown, would be seated in the front of the ceremony and receive *lafo* which is usually placed in an envelope. Mrs Field expressly referred to her having received *lafo* in such circumstances where Mr Field was unable to attend, and the *lafo* was given to her on behalf of Mr Field. Mrs Field advised that practice occurs in New Zealand.

[449] At his second interview with me, Mr Field confirmed the practice of *lafo*. Mr Field advised that at a lesser level, on occasions elderly Samoans, as they depart from Mr Field's electorate office, may throw a $10 note or a $20 note to one of his secretaries, saying that is towards lunch or some such thing. Mr Field continued by stating that in such instances the usual response from his office is that the gift is not necessary, but that on occasions the donor will take the rejection as an insult and walk out if the money is not accepted. Mr Field explained that in the event of the *lafo* being effectively forced upon them in such circumstances, a record or receipt of the payment is made.

[450] Mr Field acknowledged that on occasions more significant gifts or donations are made; he referred to an instance of a $500 gift. Mr Field stated that in such instances his approach was to advise the donor that the payment was unacceptable but that if the donor insisted that Mr Field accept the gift, then he would donate the money to a church or charity as he did in the case of the $500 gift. Report to the Prime Minister upon inquiry into matters relating to Taito Phillip Field 133

[451] To the extent that the Cabinet Manual provides assistance upon this matter, two provisions are relevant. First, paragraph 2.68 of the Cabinet Manual provides:

"*The exchange of gifts during official government visits is an accepted practice; a refusal to accept is likely to cause offence… If Ministers wish to retain gifts received in New Zealand or overseas, they may do so if the estimated value is under NZ$500. If the estimated value is NZ$500 or more, the gift may be retained while in office but must be declared on the individual's schedule of interests.*"

Secondly, paragraph 2.69 of the *Cabinet Manual* provides:

"*To avoid the creation of appearance of an obligation, gifts in cash or kind are not to be solicited or accepted from a commercial enterprise or any other organisation. An exception to this would be the acceptance of some small unsolicited token, for example, a presentation made during a visit to a marae or a factory*."

[452] On Mr Field's own evidence, the amounts constituting *lafo* could be as little as $10 or $20 or as great as $500. Such gifts would not necessarily fall within paragraphs 2.68 and 2.69 of the Cabinet Manual.

[453] I emphasise that make no finding against Mr Field upon this matter. However, the adverse perception which may attach to the practice of *lafo* when the gift is received by a Minister of the Crown may be a matter which warrants your further consideration as Prime Minister.

Table 7 - An extract from the "Ingram Report"

The Ingram Report concludes:

"In relation to that matter identified in Section 6.3 of the report – the acceptance by Mr Field of monetary payments by way of lafo – I make no finding against Mr Field. However, given the adverse perception which may attach to the practice of lafo when a gift is received by a Minister of the Crown, I identify that practice as a matter which may warrant your consideration as Prime Minister" (Ingram, 2006, p. 150).

Findings of the Ingram Report regarding the acceptance of *lafo* on the part of Field can be summarised like this:

- Field confirms the practice of *lafo*, consisting in donations by people of his electorate. These donations took the form of small amounts of money left to Field after a visit ($10-20), or higher amounts (up to $500) left on special occasions (such as a ceremony).
- Field states that small donations were usually recorded or receipted, and bigger donations were given by Field to churches or charities. He states, moreover, that these donations were never encouraged.
- However, Field states that refusing *lafo* would have been culturally unacceptable for Samoans. He seems to consider the acceptance of *lafo* as a cultural obligation, although he is aware that might raise concern in the context of New Zealand.
- QC Ingram brings to the attention of the government, in his report, the possible concerns raised by the cultural practice of *lafo* in the political and institutional context of New Zealand. The issue, however, is described as a matter of cultural difference and perception, and not as a legal issue.
- Moreover, Ingram notices that *lafo* as it emerged in the investigation of the Field case is unregulated by the Cabinet Manual.

It is necessary to add, as well, that Field was never convicted on any charge related to the acceptance of *lafo* while in office. Therefore, at least from the point of view of law, *lafo* in the form practised by Field has not being considered a corrupt practice in New Zealand.

The issue of *lafo*, therefore, seems to constitute one of these grey areas that lack a clear legal or political definition. It is, moreover, an example of a cultural practice that, in different contexts, can carry different ethical weight. What is particularly interesting about the emergence of the issue of *lafo* in the Ingram Report, is how it sparked a debate that involved Parliament, but most of all the media. In particular, media coverage of the issue activated a public debate that situated *lafo* in the New Zealand context, asking political

actors to clarify positions and align themselves with policies, both suggested and discussed. The analysis of the public debate over *lafo* shows three important aspects:

- The fundamental role of the media as a platform for framing contested issues, in particular, issues that lack a clear legal or institutional definition;
- The ability of the media to spark public debates that force powerful actors (in this case, politicians and parties) to align themselves on clear positions;
- The ability of the media to encourage the development and discussion of new policies (in this case, as will be seen, of a code of ethics for the Parliament that regulates *lafo* and *koha*), that eventually become part of official regulations (in this case, the New Zealand Government's Cabinet Manual, as revised in 2008).

Before investigating these aspects in depth, however, it is necessary to introduce the Samoan practice of *lafo*, and the Māori practice of *koha* in New Zealand.

7.2. *LAFO* AND *KOHA*: EXPLORING A GREY AREA BETWEEN CULTURAL PRACTICE AND CORRUPTION

In the Ingram report, the practice of *lafo* is described as rooted in the Samoan tradition and defined as "mutual gift-giving and service". Accordingly, *lafo* is not a simple donation, but is a practice of mutual exchange between a person in a powerful position (a chief, in the case of Field, who has been given the Samoan title of "Taito") and someone that offers a gift in exchange for a service. Such a practice, acceptable and part of the tribal tradition of Samoa, takes different shape when inserted in the context of a parliamentary democracy and a situation where a politician receives a donation that culturally ties him to some sort of reciprocity. Under the widespread, general definition of corruption offered by Transparency International (abuse of entrusted power for private gain), it could be argued that the practice of *lafo* could be seen, in the context of Western democracies, as a form of corrupt exchange. However, the issue is more complicated, and a series of questions can be posed in relation to examining *lafo* in the context of corruption.

While traditional *lafo* took the form of goods, such as food, pigs, or mats, it has become customary in Samoa to offer these donations in the form of cash. In an ethnographic research conducted in a Samoan village, Tuimaleali'ifano (2006) argues that the introduction of cash in gift-giving practices has planted seeds for occasions of corruption, by introducing a form of capitalism

in a family-oriented tradition based on redistribution. The *lafo* described in the Ingram Report, on many occasions, took the form of cash donations. However, these donations were often very small, in the range of $10-20, thus making them somehow less valuable than, for instance, a fine mat. The question of difference between an *lafo* of goods and small amounts of cash has not been defined either politically or legally.

Another issue that emerges is the reciprocal nature of *lafo*. While the Ingram report describes the practice as a mutual exchange of goods and services, it is not clear if the donations made to Field implied the expectation of some special favour (so, possibly, implying a form of abuse of power on the side of Field), or were simply to be considered a form of gratitude towards his work as an MP. Was *lafo*, that is, a donation or a form of bribery? If it was a donation, was it to be considered a form of payment for the public service performed? If the reciprocal nature of the practice stands, is it acceptable for an MP to receive money in exchange for his public service (which is already paid through public revenue)?

A third issue has to do with the transparency of the practice. Are *lafo* donations to be receipted? How can they be used? If, as stated, they cannot be refused (so as not to cause offence to the offerer), is it acceptable that they are kept by the person who receives them? Does their nature and level of acceptability change according to the use made of them (for instance, private use versus donating them to a charity or putting them into the party funds)?

Finally, a problem emerges in the relationship between a cultural practice rooted in a tribal tradition, and its application in a different cultural context such as New Zealand's democratic parliamentary system. More generally, the problem can be defined in terms of the potential effects of cultural traditions such as *lafo* in encouraging unethical, or even corrupt, practices in economic and political contexts highly different from those where these traditions have originated. For instance, Findlay (2007) has underlined the relevance of tribal loyalties and relationships of obligation in the Pacific Islands' indigenous cultures, and how some practices linked to this can be considered corrupt in other contexts such as market economies. Although not referring specifically to the practices of *lafo* and *koha*, he underlines how "what may be deemed a political bribe in a modernized context may seem to the local population little more than the exercise of clan fealty in a transitional culture" (Findlay, 2007, p. 3-4). Larmour (2006) identifies the problem of gift-giving in the Pacific Islands as "the existence of socially sanctioned public gifts that are more than token and symbolic, yet not condemned as bribes", bringing as an example the diffuse practice, in Samoa, of "politicians […] expected to provide gifts of 'food money and school fees'

to voters", and the exchange of reciprocal gifts between chiefs and voters during electoral campaigns in Fiji (Larmour, 2006, p. 11). Tuimaleali'ifano (2006, p. 370) underlines how the introduction of cash in the gift-giving practices in Samoa has modified the nature of this family-oriented activities, thus planting what he calls "seeds of corruption". Similar issues can be raised about koha, a Māori practice of gift-giving, especially when it enters the realm of politics: koha is a practice that entails reciprocity, and it has also shifted from donations of goods to the use of cash (Mead, 2016). It can be concluded that, despite the indisputable cultural nature and relevance to the practices of iafo and koha, when these practices happen in different cultural, economic and political contexts they may conflict with sets of different established rules, or modify their nature so as to become something else. They need, therefore, to be renegotiated and reconstructed so as to fit the new contextual conditions.

As seen, the issue of *Iafo* is particularly entangled. Firstly, this is due to the lack of legal or political regulation of the issue. Ultimately, *Iafo* as seen in the Ingram Report cannot be considered corruption by the law, and does not break any ethical code of Parliament. However, the practice is brought to the attention of the Government, and its acceptability is questioned. Moreover, it sparks a heated public debate, and a milder parliamentary debate, thus showing that it is considered a relevant issue for the social life of the country. The analysis of the public debate surrounding the issue of *Iafo*, therefore, serves the following purposes:

- Showing how contested topics generate a battle for framing, and how the media constitute a main arena for this negotiation and, ultimately, (re)construction of an issue;
- Demonstrating the importance of culture(s) in determining what constitutes corruption, and what is to be considered socially acceptable;
- Finally, showing how, in a situation of a legal or institutional void, the public debate hosted in the media is capable of generating suggestions for new public policies and regulations, and of forcing powerful actors to clarify their position in relation to specific issues.

7.3. FRAMING *LAFO* AND *KOHA*: THE DEBATE IN THE NEWS MEDIA, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

The debate about the practice of *lafo* and *koha* (considered as the Māori equivalent of *lafo*, although the exact correspondence of the two practices is contested), sparked by the Ingram Report, peaked on print media in the week 2-9 September 2006. During this brief period, a range of different voices entered the public debate, in an attempt to disentangle the issue, including politicians and public officials, journalists and members of the public. Therefore, the sample used for analysis is composed of 16 news items (retrieved through the Newztext database, using the search words "lafo" and "koha") from *The New Zealand Herald* (8 items), *The Dominion Post* (5 items) and *The Press* (3 items). To offer a complete account of the debate, news pieces, editorials, commentaries and letters to the editor are included in the sample. Letters were included to account for the strategic importance of letters' selection for newspapers (Wahl-Jorgensen, 2002).

The choice of including all kinds of print media content is aimed at showing how the media have the ability to carry multiple voices into the public debate, thus giving life to a framing battle in which relevant issues are socially constructed, de-constructed and re-constructed. In this sense, the media are an arena for public debate. Moreover, they are active participants in the public debate through at least two types of action: the selection of the voices to be heard, and the use of their own voice through commentaries and editorials. As a result, a wide variety of voices participate in the public debate over *lafo* and *koha*. In particular, an analysis of voices[64] represented in the sample shows the following numbers:

- 14 politicians or local administrators;
- 1 celebrity;
- 6 members of the public;
- 4 journalists;
- 4 experts (2 cultural experts, and 2 legal experts).

Given the cultural relevance of the debate, it should be noted that the significant lack of Māori and Pacific journalists in New Zealand print media (McGregor, 2007; Hollings, 2007) is reflected

[64] A voice, in this case, is meant as a specific person (or organization) that takes part in the public debate, regardless of the number of times it is quoted. Editorials are considered in the "journalists" category, while letters to the editor belong to the "members of the public" category.

in the sample under consideration here. There is only one article authored by a representative of the Pacific community, Tapu Misa. However, there is more variety in the selected sources, which include several people from the Māori and Pacific community (e.g. Samoan rugby player Peter Fatialofa, several Māori politicians and MPs, cultural experts Paul Tapsell and Pa'u Tafa Mulitalo), and a variety of positions over the practices of *lafo* and *koha*. This last aspect can moderate, although not eliminate, the Pakeha[65]-centric perspective of the print media.

A qualitative framing analysis of the sample shows that the battle for framing develops around five main domains, in which the framing contest is between a cultural frame (which supports cultural relativism and the argument that *lafo* and *koha* should be considered acceptable and inalienable cultural practices) and a political frame (which resolves cultural relativism by treating the issue as a political one, and arguing that in the context of New Zealand politics and institutions, the two practices should be judged in terms of their political acceptability). Although these domains are often overlapping, they can be conceptually separated as boxes containing each a specific opposition of two different frames, battling for dominance. These domains are:

- Clash of cultures;
- Issue of reciprocity;
- Issue of transparency;
- Use of *lafo*/*koha*;
- Importance of the formal role.

First, the development of the public debate over each of the four domains is described, and subsequently the consequences of this debate are analysed and discussed.

7.3.1. Clash of cultures

Arguably the most important domain of the debate relates to the definition of the contested acceptability of *lafo* (and *koha*) as a clash of cultures. On the one hand, the acceptability of *lafo* and *koha* is justified through the existence of strong cultural traditions in the Samoan and Māori communities, which make the two practices unavoidable on the part of the receivers of cash donations.

[65]New Zealander of European descent (https://maoridictionary.co.nz/search?idiom=&phrase=&proverb=&loan=&histLoanWords=&keywords=pakeha)

On 2 September 2006, former Samoan rugby player Peter Fatialofa shows support to Field when he explains that Field's title of Taito (chief) culturally obliges him to accept lafo in the form of money donations. As reported in the New Zealand Herald:

> *Mr Fatialofa […] said Mr Field had not asked for money in return for his services as an MP, but many Samoans would expect to give him lafo when they visited him. […] It's part of the custom.* (L1)[66]*.*

This thesis is sustained by individual members of the Māori Party, who juxtapose the practice of *lafo* with the Māori practice of *koha*. As reported in all three papers, MPs Hone Harawira and Pita Sharples admit having received cash gifts from constituents. Harawira, in particular, frames the attacks against Field as a form of racial discrimination, as seen in an article by the Herald:

> *Harawira has jumped to Field's defence, claiming the embattled MP is a victim of "brown bashing" and is within his cultural rights to accept gifts from constituents.* (L2)*.*

His words in response to critics are reported in *The Dominion Post* like this:

> *He hits back at the critics of that, saying "you can play your Pakeha corruption bullshit on somebody else but not on me" and that "it's our way of life. It may not be yours, but I don't care about your way of life".* (L8)*.*

While the view that *lafo* and *koha* are to be considered acceptable in all cases, as a cultural right of Samoans and Māori, it is contested by Māori Party co-leader Tariana Turia (who claims cash *koha* must not be taken for personal use); she admits the existence of a cultural element related to the practice, and underlines the importance of debating over the issue:

> *She said the issue of gift-giving raised difficult questions. "The Samoan community are incredibly generous. I've received beautiful finely woven mats that probably cost a lot more than getting a $50 bill. It means that we need to talk about things. There will be cultural situations".* (L3).

On the other hand, however, the acceptability of *lafo* and *koha* as a legitimate cultural practice is contested by the view that those practices must abide by the rules of New Zealand's representative democracy. In this second view (political frame), accusations of racism are rejected, and the framing of the issue as a clash of cultures is refused, motivated by the idea that

[66] This and all subsequent quotes are indicated by a code assigned to every single item of the sample. For a full reference, see Appendix D.

the democratic tradition and its rules must dominate over everything else. This principle is well expressed in a Dominion Post editorial that replies to the positions of Harawira and Sharples:

> *They just do not get it. The furore that rightly surrounds Labour MP Phillip Field is not about brown bashing and a failure to understand the principles of lafo – similar to koha – as Mr Harawira appears to believe. It is about the core values of a modern democratic system and transparency and accountability. […] What there should not be any uncertainty over is the standards New Zealanders have a right to expect from their MPs, irrespective of the cultural background they come from.* (L8).

This view is adopted by Samoan columnist Tapu Misa, who claims that many Samoans disagree with the view of a "clash of cultures", and that "Most Māori and Pacific people have no trouble identifying the proper place for koha and mea alofa" (L10).

So, while the attempt of framing the issue as a clash of cultures dominates the beginning of the debate, this view soon becomes secondary when it becomes clear that lafo and koha in New Zealand need to be related to the democratic tradition of the country. The debate over the cultural nature of the practices is never really clarified, but is put into the background in favour of a discussion over the other three domains of the battle for framing. These domains (issue of reciprocity, use of *lafo*/*koha*, and importance of formal roles) are of fundamental importance in the re-construction of the issue of *lafo* and *koha*, and in the development of consequences and potential solutions.

7.3.2. The issue of reciprocity

The Ingram Report is not fully clear about the nature of the *lafo* which emerged during the inquiry. While *lafo* is defined as a "mutual gift-giving and service" (thus assuming reciprocity at the base of the practice), the descriptions of cash donations to Field do not provide enough details to understand if a service was expected in exchange. Regardless of the reality about Field's acceptance of *lafo*, this uncertainty emerges in the public debate around the issue, and becomes a fundamental step towards the social construction of *lafo* and its acceptability in New Zealand. Are *lafo* and *koha* given to MPs as donations motivated by gratitude for the public service conducted, or are they payments offered in exchange for favours? A cultural reading of the issue would suggest that reciprocity is a feature of *lafo*, and an acceptable one. However, a political framing would suggest otherwise. In a political and institutional context, (cash) *lafo* or *koha*

donated in exchange of a personal service, and kept unaccountable, could be perceived as an "occult exchange" (della Porta & Vannucci, 2012), and a form of corruption.

Those who defend (or partially defend) the practice of *lafo* and *koha* in the public debate appear to leave the issue of reciprocity expressly unclear. They admit receiving donations, or admit that they know about people who have received this kind of donation, but they never specify if these donations were linked to specific, personal services. The absence of such details allows us to think that they recognise that *lafo* and *koha* donated in exchange for favours would be considered unacceptable in New Zealand politics. Therefore, the reciprocal nature of *lafo* and *koha* is left uncertain. However, all the definitions of the practice given in both the Ingram Report and the media sample specifically mention the reciprocal nature of the two practices. For instance, the New Zealand Herald reports the words of Dr Paul Tapsell, an expert in Māori culture:

> *Dr Tapsell said koha was based on reciprocity, with expectations surrounding the giving and receiving. [...] "If [Māori Party leader] Pita Sharples was receiving koha it would be represented in terms of obligation whether it was met tomorrow or in the next generation".* (L6).

In the same article, this concept is further underlined by Samoan cultural expert Pa'u Tafa Mulitalo, who is reported as saying that *"the culture of gift giving in Samoa known as lafo was also about reciprocity and sharing"* (L6).

Māori Party co-leader Pita Sharples (who admitted accepting *koha*, and refused to declare what use he made of it) defines the practice as based on "mutual bonding and obligation" (L7).

This creates a paradox, in which reciprocity is clearly stated in definitions of *koha* and *lafo*, but kept silent when referring to personal experience. However, despite the definitional uncertainties, the substantial issue of reciprocity is amply discussed, and eventually a clear position emerged: reciprocity (the offer of *lafo*, *koha*, or any cash donation in exchange for services) is unacceptable in the New Zealand context. This idea is reiterated throughout the sample, for example when Prime Minister Helen Clark is reported as saying that "no MP should accept money for work done, regardless of Māori or Pacific Island custom" (L7). An editorial from the Herald clarifies the importance of the point, regardless of the words' correct definitions:

> *Whatever might be the right definition and interpretations of these customs – and surely there are many variations – one thing is clear: it is not acceptable for a member of Parliament to receive gifts of cash for services rendered in the course of his or her duties, all the more so when those services are improper".* (L5).

Similarly, reciprocity is contested by Labour Māori MP Shane Jones, who is reported as criticising Harawira and stating that "any suggestion that money be exchanged for political favours was a corruption of the idea of koha" (L12).

Finally, in a letter to the editors, a reader writes:

> *Māoris call it koha, Samoans call it lafo. Why pussyfoot around? In good old plain English it's a backhander, more often than not handed over surreptitiously either for services rendered or in anticipation of a service to be rendered. […] It opens the way for every public servant to cut themselves a bit of that cake, with the result that we could end up like most of the Third World, where no-one gets anything without the obligatory backhander to whoever issues the permit or grants the consent.* (L14).

In conclusion, it emerges that the final, widely shared view (on which agreement is found between editorialists, members of the public writing letters, and the leaders of Labour, National, Green and Māori parties) is that, regardless of definitions or cultural aspects, any amount of cash received by an MP in exchange for services or favours must be considered unacceptable from an ethical point of view, and has the potential to be considered corrupt.

7.3.3. The issue of transparency

Transparency, as seen in previous chapters, is considered a necessary step to prevent corruption. The problem of transparency in relation to the practice of *lafo* and *koha* is particularly important. In the course of the public debate, a discussion arises around the question of cash donations to MPs are to be recorded, and made public and transparent, or if they can be considered a private matter between MPs and constituents. While several politicians affirm that some sort of record of such donations must be kept, an article reports Māori Party Pita Sharples' belief that *koha* does not need to be receipted (L12). The issue eventually brings the Māori Party to clarify its position by an official statement made by party leader Tariana Turia, and reported by *The Dominion Post* (L13), *The Press* (L12) and *The New Zealand Herald* (L11), saying that "[t]he practice of the Māori Party when receiving *koha* is that we receipt it and record it in the same way as we do all other income that comes into the Māori Party".

7.3.4. Use of *lafo/koha*

The debate over *lafo* and *koha* involves another decisive issue: does the acceptability of *lafo* and *koha* depend on the use made of it? More specifically, is *koha* acceptable if kept by MPs for personal use, or if put into party funds or given to charity, or in none of these cases? In terms of cultural practices, personal use can be acceptable. However, in politics, the personal use of cash donations might easily be seen as unethical and potentially corrupt. In this domain too, therefore, cultural and political framing are incompatible, and generate a debate.

Once again, the debate is sparked by the Ingram Report, in which is reported that Field donated higher amounts of received *lafo* to churches or charities, but does not specify if smaller *lafo* was kept for personal use. The first two Māori MPs who admitted having received *koha* and defended the practice had different opinions about what is the proper use of these cash donations. While Hone Harawira said money was passed to a Māori language immersion school, Pita Sharples believed what he did with *koha* is no-one's business, thus implying the possibility of personal use. The issue, however, is actually settled quite rapidly. On 4 September, an article in *The Dominion Post* states that "[…] politicians appear to agree that cash gifts for personal use are unacceptable" (L3). An editorial in The New Zealand Herald summarises the issue like this:

> *Those who declared at the weekend that they had received koha hastened to establish their ethical credentials by adding that the money did not go into their own pockets but was returned, spent on a good cause or deposited in party coffers and therefore could not be construed as improper.* (L5).

One of these three options (return of the money, donation to a good cause, or putting it into the party funds) is identified as acceptable (versus the unacceptability of personal use) by several actors who intervened in the public debate, including Green MP Metiria Turei, Māori Party leader Tariana Turia, columnist Tapu Misa. Over this issue, finally, there is an official positioning of the Māori Party, whose leader Tariana Turia declared that all *koha* should go towards party funds.

7.3.5. The importance of the formal role

Finally, the acceptability of *lafo* and *koha* is linked to the importance of the official role of an MP, and the duties and standards that accompany it. While supporters of the cultural frame consider the practice of *lafo* and *koha* to be a cultural right of Samoans and Māori, a counter-

argument is created over the relative primacy of being a member of the New Zealand Parliament over being a Samoan or Māori (political framing).

The theme is brought to attention in an article by the *New Zealand Herald*, where it is pointed out that, while it was clearly unacceptable for an MP to receive money in exchange for services:

> *Less clear […] is whether they are entitled – legally or under Parliament's rules – to take cash donations as a personal gift if the money is not given in exchange for a service or on the condition of some type of representation.* (L4).

In this statement, not only is the lack of clarity emphasised, but implicitly there is a request to address it in terms of laws or Parliamentary rules. In the same article, the topic is further developed when National Party deputy leader Gerry Brownlee offers the official position of his party ("*donations should always go through officials, never MPs"),* while public law expert Robert Buchanan admits that *"it would be sensible for Parliament to turn its mind as to whether there's a need for some guidance on this matter".* This suggestion of creating a Parliamentary code to regulate *lafo* and *koha*, emerged through the words of a public law expert interrogated by the media, will later lead to several politicians accepting this suggestion, showing that media debate has the potential to influence the development of new public policies.

The issue is also raised by The Press, in which it is underlined that "[…] currently there are no rules governing the acceptance of cash by MPs, except for ministers of the Crown" (L7). In this case, the issue is linked to the use of *lafo*/*koha* (see 7.3.4.), and leads to a variety of positionings from politicians. Prime Minister and Labour party leader Helen Clark, and Māori Party leader Tariana Turia, agree that cash donations may be accepted by MPs, on the condition that they are handed on to the party. Green MP Metiria Turei, instead, is reported saying that "[a]ll MPs, regardless of their cultural background, knew that accepting money from constituents was wrong […]" (L7). Later, an opinion piece by Samoan columnist Tapu Misa titled "There's a place for *lafo* and it's not an MP's pocket". (L10).

*S*ignificantly, two letters to the editor in the *Dominion Post* show a much more direct opinion over the nature of cash gifts given to MPs. The first one states that:

> *The Māori Party's Hone Harawira is disingenuous to say the least, because koha is bribery and always has been. Gifts to children and family, and a dollar in a charity's collection tin, are the exception. All else comes with an overtone of influence and advantage for self. (L16).*

The second one, instead, is made of one single sentence, “This week’s *koha* is next week’s protection racket” (L16).

7.4. CONCLUSIONS

This account of the debate shows how arguments and counter-arguments are developed and brought to the public through the media in an attempt to socially construct *lafo* and *koha* in the context of New Zealand politics. In several cases, the primacy of the role of MPs over cultural backgrounds is mediated by the use made of *lafo* and *koha*, and their acceptability in the institutional context of New Zealand. The “clash of cultures” argument is contrasted sometimes by claims of the predominance of democratic culture, sometimes by reframing it as a cover-up. Despite the presence in the public debate of contrasting positions which are never fully solved (variability is, after all, at the core of public debate; see Billig, 1991), eventually the political frame tends to dominate over the cultural frame that promotes cultural relativism. Situating the practices of *lafo* and *koha* in a political context outlines the contradiction of defending a cultural tradition that, as practised by Field, has lost its original motives (reciprocity and hierarchies rooted in a tribal tradition), and happens instead in the public service function rooted in democratic tradition. *Lafo* and *koha* are not contested in general, but in the specific context of New Zealand politics and institutional life. While the cultural frame promotes cultural relativism by decontextualising the single events, and claiming their legitimacy on the base of decontextualised cultural traditions, the political frame uses the specific context of the events to uncover the contradiction of a cultural tradition applied in a context based on completely different cultural premises, and the potential damages of *lafo* and *koha* for the foundations of public service ethics. The eventual dominance of the political frame generates a number of tangible effects.

The first is the ***establishment of informal rules*** to regulate future events and interactions. In the absence of formal laws or Parliamentary rules, the debate brings to the emergence of several ideas over *lafo* and *koha*. Some of them (the idea of a clash of cultures, the personal use of *lafo* and *koha* donations, the unaccountability of these practices, and the idea of reciprocity and exchange of cash and services) are rejected. Others (transparency, the primacy of democratic culture, the non-personal use of cash donations, and the immorality of exchanging cash and services) tend to dominate.

This brings us to the second effect, namely the ***forcible positioning of powerful actors***. Eventually party leaders, MPs and parties are forced to take official positions over the issue. The final position, stated among others by Prime Minister Helen Clark, and by Māori Party leader Tariana Turia (speaking for the whole party) is that of receipting every form of cash donation, and handing it over for party use (as seen in titles such as "*Māori MPs agree cash koha must go to party"* and "*Receipts needed for party koha says Turia"*). This positioning can be described as a way for the Māori Party (whose MPs Hone Harawira and Pita Sharples previously claimed the right to accepting *koha* as a personal donation) and the Government (whose member Taito Philip Field is accused of receiving *lafo* in exchange for services) to restore a lost accountability. This forced positioning is the result of the social pressure generated by the media's development of arguments against any sort of exchange involving politicians, and their aggressive request for accountability through official positioning. It demonstrates the power of the media in influencing the framing of contested issues, contesting powerful actors, and developing cultural environments in which specific ideas dominate.

The third effect is that of ***facilitating the development and implementation of original policies***. Through the media, the lack of regulations over cash donations to MPs emerges, and the necessity of clarifying the issue is underlined. Eventually, the idea of developing a set of official rules is brought up, as seen in the titles "*Govt to back new rules for cash gifts"* and "*MPs may get new koha-busting rules".* Soon after, in 2008, the Cabinet Manual (which regulates the activities of the Government) is updated by introducing (among other changes) a specific rule for gift-giving to members of the Government. Articles 2.83-84-85, regulating "Cultural gifts", clarify:

> *"[A]lthough cultural gifts may be offered to a Minister with the best of intentions, accepting such gifts may create a perception of a conflict of interest or accusations of "double dipping". Ministers should return gifts of cash immediately, with a respectful statement explaining that they honour the intent behind the gift, but that it is their job to serve, and that they are already well remunerated for their work" (Cabinet Office, 2008)*[67].

The formulation of these articles acknowledges some of the main points emerging from the public debate, as described in the previous section. In particular, the principle that ethics connected to a public role (political frame) precedes the importance of cultural practices is established. With the introduction of these articles in the Cabinet Manual, the unacceptability on

[67] The previous version of the manual (Cabinet Office, 2001) did not regulate cultural gifts such as *lafo* and *koha.*

the part of a member of the Government of cash donations, regardless of their cultural nature, is formalised.

To summarise, an unregulated, contested issue is initially brought to public attention, where a framing battle brings to the social construction and reconstruction of the issue.

Once a degree of agreement is reached, powerful actors are forced to position themselves, proposals for official measures emerge, and eventually the dominant frame is implemented into a formal rule to be respected by all Cabinet members. This demonstrates the concrete effects that media can have in influencing public policies and the regulation of political and social life. This role is particularly important in cases of practices lacking clear legal definitions and belonging to transitional cultures or multi-cultural environments. Through the reporting of multiple voices, the strategic use of editorials and columns, and the active search for opinions and counter-opinions (such as the public law expert interrogated by the New Zealand Herald who raises the question of a possible Parliamentary code regulating *lafo* and *koha*), the media force political actors to position themselves over a contested issue, and to take action to restore lost accountability.

CHAPTER 8 – CONCLUSIONS

The investigation of how the news media constructs corruption, in a comparative perspective of two diverse countries such as New Zealand and Italy, has shown that corruption can be framed in radically different manners. Moreover, it has been shown that the news media can play a relevant role in the construction of a public understanding of corruption, and influence the development and implementation of formal and informal rules for regulating corruption-related contested issues. The link identified between levels of corruption and representations of corruption, and the argument developed in Chapter 7 about how the media contribute to the social and political life of countries by creating a public arena, participating in the public debate and exerting power, and also constituting a demonstration of the importance of the framing processes in the social world. Frame building and framing effects, that is, are not limited to human cognition but are social processes generated in the social world.

At this stage, therefore, there are the necessary elements from which to draw some important conclusions. The first part of this chapter is dedicated to the summary of the main empirical findings of this thesis, in regard to the media construction of corruption, and some reflections about the role of the news media in shaping the public debate over corruption.

The second part of the chapter concludes the theoretical argument in defence of a social constructionist theory of framing. This theoretical argument underlies the whole thesis, and is developed mainly in response to recent claims of a theory of framing limited to the study of media effects on individuals (Cacciatore, Scheufele & Iyengar, 2016; Scheufele & Iyengar, 2017). In this thesis, the argument for a social constructionist theory of framing is based on three main pillars:

1. A critique of framing as a theory of media effects;
2. A theoretical and conceptual development of framing theory in support of a social constructionist perspective. This includes a comparison of the framing theory with the social representations theory, and the introduction in framing theory of the mechanisms of anchoring and objectification;
3. An exemplification, by means of empirical analysis of the framing of corruption, of the newly introduced concepts and the socially-bounded nature of the framing processes.

In this chapter, these three pillars are resumed and developed in the light of the whole thesis, with the aim of integrating them into a single theoretical body which leads to a suggestion for a

re-definition of frames. This re-definition aims at incorporating the main theoretical developments suggested in this thesis, and to constitute an improvement in the theory of framing as a social process.

In the last section of the chapter, the main results and limitations of this thesis are highlighted, and some suggestions for future research are offered.

8.1. REPRESENTATIONS OF CORRUPTION, AND THE ROLE OF THE MEDIA IN SHAPING PUBLIC DEBATE

The premise of the empirical part of this thesis is the relevance of the public debate developed in, and by, the news media about corruption. In the formation of a public understanding of such a complex (and often hidden) issue as corruption, the media are "means of promoting government accountability" (Tumber & Waisbord, 2004a, p. 1034) and for "the establishment and maintenance of good governance" (Peters, 2003, p. 44). However, how is the news media debate differently shaped in countries with very different levels of corruption? At the core of the decision to investigate the social construction of corruption was the idea that addressed corruption as not just a matter of reforms and strengthening of the judiciary, but that the struggle against corruption starts from the public debate that surrounds it, and of which the media are protagonists. Anti-corruption also depends on widespread ideas that can facilitate, or impede, its action. This connection has been well certified in the Italian case. In the aftermath of the *Tangentopoli* scandal, scholars have noted how a mix of reluctance to curb corruption on the side of politics, matched to citizens' widespread disinterest, fatalistic attitudes, and distrust in politics had led to failures in implementing strong and successful anti-corruption policies in the country. They noted, moreover, that in other contexts (e.g. France) corruption had been tackled with more success when it was put at the centre of the public debate (della Porta & Vannucci, 1999, 2007).

As certified by the yearly CPI, Italy's position is today not much better than it was in the 1990s. As seen, some attempts at reform have been made, but success has been modest, and corruption scandals have continued to emerge throughout the years, culminating in a peak in 2014 with three cases of major national relevance (see Chapter 4).

At the same time, New Zealand has remained constantly towards the top of the CPI, meaning that the perception of corruption has not grown significantly, and the country has successfully maintained a reputation for integrity.

Results from framing analysis in this thesis show that these differences in levels of perceived corruption in the cases of New Zealand and Italy are matched to substantial differences in the framing of corruption in the news media. Differences in framing, in turn, are linked to specific interpretations of corruption. So, "corruption as individual crime frame" in New Zealand constructs corruption as an action of single individuals, in contrast to the integrity of the system/country. This leads to two relevant features of the interpretation of corruption in the New Zealand news media:

1. Corruption is seen as an exception to the norm;
2. Individual responsibility is seen as central in the explanation of corruption.

Consequently, corrupt individuals are seen as a risk to the integrity of the country, and so is the failure in punishing corrupt individuals promptly. On the other hand, the dominant frame in Italy ("systemic corruption") characterises corruption as an issue that involves a whole system, and specifically politics and/or the society. This framing of corruption is obtained by characterising corruption as an endemic feature of the system (e.g. through narratives of normality and professionalisation of corruption, or by linking directly corruption to organised crime), or by constructing corruption as an external force that largely affects the whole system (e.g. through disease, war and animal metaphors, and with personifications of corruption). Both these strategies, however, have similar consequences for the interpretation of corruption. The main features of this interpretation are the reverse of the New Zealand case. Namely, in Italy:

1. Corruption is seen as widespread and "normal";
2. Individual responsibility is relegated into the background and loses importance in favour of either a dilution of responsibility or an externalisation of responsibility.

This is linked, in turn, to fatalistic attitudes and a focus on the emergency character of anti-corruption (limitation of the damage, rather than prevention or structural reform). Other scholars have described a similar attitude as a "spiral of progressive distrust"[68] (della Porta & Vannucci, 1999b, p. 190), linked to limitations in the development of efficient anti-corruption policies.

[68] The original quote, in Italian, is "spirale di sfiducia progressiva".

To extend the comparison, the Italian media coverage of the CPI constructs corruption as a problem that affects the system, while in New Zealand it is constructed as a threat to a functioning system. The difference is perhaps subtle, but nonetheless relevant. The New Zealand focus on corruption as a threat allows a stronger focus on how to prevent the threat by defending the integrity of the country (it is, primarily, a moral defence and a form of prevention). In Italy, instead, the interpretation of cases as symptomatic of a wider problem brings either to overgeneralisations (to the point of developing interpretations of corruption as a genetic feature of the society), or to externalisations of the threat, and in general to a focus on damage and consequences. This, in turn, results in a loss of salience of personal responsibilities, prevention, and reform, and in a growing relevance of fatalism.

These differences may certainly reflect the reality of a drastic difference in levels of corruption in the two countries. They do not, however, reflect the reality of corruption itself. For instance, the sets of metaphors widely used in the Italian media tend to be misleading, as they represent corruption as an external threat or a genetic trait. The reality of corruption, on the other hand, is that of people engaging in corrupt exchanges, whether they do so individually or in organised networks (della Porta & Vannucci, 2012).

Although further research is needed to track the journey of frames beyond the news media, it is plausible to assume (and this assumption has been extensively justified throughout this thesis) that media frames play a relevant role in the representation of corruption in the wider arena of public debate. Moreover, the underlying argument of the empirical part of this thesis is that contextual differences in levels, histories, and features of corruption are linked to differences in media framing of corruption.

However, the existence of this link is by no means evidence of its inevitability. Journalists should be aware of the potential implications of their framing actions. The framing devices identified in the Italian case are functional to the development of a “systemic corruption” frame. Practically, however, they do not offer any indication of how to curb corruption, nor do they contribute substantially to develop an anti-corruption debate. The normalisation of corruption, that is, is integrated and naturalised in the mainstream Italian print media.

On the other hand, New Zealand’s news media focus on individual responsibilities, and their discourse of integrity contribute to set the standards of the country, and to efficiently locate

responsibility in cases of corruption. Actions of single individuals and groups are judged against established standards of integrity. So, for instance, the choice of the Labour Party to avoid the expulsion of Field in the aftermath of the Ingram Report is constructed by the press as damaging to the integrity of the country. The place of the New Zealand news media in the social construction of corruption and anti-corruption policies is evident in the results of Chapter 6, which shows that media can voluntarily exert influence in the development of a public debate aimed at setting new ethical and legal standards in relation to contested issues (in this case, *lafo* and *koha* in New Zealand politics).

It is concluded that framing is not just about understanding and making sense of an issue, but it also affects the social and political life of a group (in this case, a country). This leads to the possibility of hypothesising that media framing of corruption in Italy could be detrimental to the creation of a successful public debate over corruption that challenges the current situation and facilitates the development and implementation of anti-corruption policies, and could instead favour a social environment that tends to normalise high levels of corruption. On the other hand, New Zealand's framing of corruption seems to be supportive of anti-corruption through public debate.

8.2. IN DEFENCE OF A SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIONIST PERSPECTIVE: A CRITIQUE OF FRAMING AS A THEORY OF MEDIA EFFECTS

Proponents of a limitation of framing to a theory of media effects have underlined the ambiguity of framing theory in its actual state, which they consider due to a lack of clarity and consistency of some of its concepts (Cacciatore, Scheufele & Iyengar, 2016). In this thesis, some ambiguities of framing theory have been pointed out, such as the issue of the location of frames, the nature of frame dynamism, and the lack of an explanation of how frames are linked to framing devices and frame functions. Subsequently, improvements in the conceptualisation of framing theory have been suggested to overcome these ambiguities. However, the inconsistencies outlined by critics of a broad perspective on framing are mostly due to the preliminary assumption that framing theory should be centred on the study of behavioural and attitudinal effects of media frames (Scheufele & Iyengar, 2017). From this would descend the need to limit framing theory to the

study of media effects of equivalence-based frames (Cacciatore, Scheufele & Iyengar, 2016)[69]. It should be noted, however, that this perspective is not devoid of its own ambiguities and inconsistencies. This section tries to outline the main limitations of framing as a theory of media effects.

8.2.1 Are individual-level effects the only framing effects?

Proponents of framing as a theory of media effects suggest that framing research should be limited to the study of individual-level effects of framing (cognitive, behavioural, attitudinal or emotional). While this is certainly a powerful approach in fields such as cognitive psychology or marketing, where the study of individuals' decision-making is fundamental, is it really sufficient in political communication? This narrow perspective, to be justified, should be laid on the assumption that all framing effects happen at the individual-level, or that individual-level effects are the only ones that matter. In political communication, however, these assumptions could only be defended if, for instance, every political decision was taken according to popular vote or opinion polls. This is clearly disproved by reality. Framing is also a matter of power, and its effects are not necessarily linked directly to the strength of its effects on individuals. Chapter 7 of this thesis, as well as other research (see Reese & Lewis, 2009; Hänggli, 2012), show this quite clearly. Moreover, some scholars have underlined how "weak framing effects can have outsized political consequences" (Entman, Matthes & Pellicano, 2009, p. 185). Limiting framing theory to the investigation of individual-level effects, therefore, may increase theoretical precision, but at the cost of losing much of the explanatory potential of a broader perspective on framing.

8.2.2. Equivalence framing vs. Emphasis framing

In favour of framing as a theory of media effects, it is also argued that research should focus exclusively on *equivalence-based* frames, in contrast with the so-called *emphasis framing*

[69] It should be noted that, despite claims for a narrower theory of framing based on individual-level effects, frames continue to be investigated from a wide range of perspectives. For instance, there are studies on moderators of individual framing effects (e.g. Chong & Druckman, 2007; Druckman & Nelson, 2003; Lecheler, Schuck & de Vreese, 2013; Schemer, Wirth & Matthes, 2012), but also on the more socially bounded phases of frame building and framing contest (e.g. Entman, 2003; Hänggli & Kriesi, 2012; Reese & Lewis, 2009). Matters of power, journalism practice, and potential for mobilisation have also all been part of framing research (e.g. Hänggli, 2012; Schuck & de Vreese, 2012). Despite its critics, the multi-paradigmatic approach to framing (D'Angelo, 2002; 2012; Entman, Matthes & Pellicano, 2009) is alive and well.

(Cacciatore, Scheufele & Iyengar, 2016; Scheufele & Iyengar, 2017). Druckman (2001, p. 228, 230) distinguishes between an "*equivalency framing effect"* that "examines how the use of different, but logically equivalent, words[70] or phrases […] causes the individuals to alter their preferences", and an "*emphasis framing effect"* that "by emphasizing a subset of potential considerations […] can lead the individuals to focus on these considerations when constructing their opinions". The difference is that emphasising framing does not presuppose the logical equivalence of statements.

The prototypical example of equivalence framing is the "Asian disease" problem of Tversky and Kahneman (1981; see also Kahneman & Tversky, 1984), which demonstrates that presenting the same information in terms of gains or losses can radically modify people's decision-making.

However, what should be the meaning of "equivalency" in framing theory? Druckman's definition speaks of logical equivalence, and his definition is recalled by Cacciatore, Scheufele and Iyengar (2016). However, basing framing theory on logical equivalence means limiting the analysis to arguments and inferences. What could be, in political communication and media studies, the explanatory power of a theory limited to the analysis of logically equivalent arguments? That is to say, how many times is the reality of political communication (or journalism) characterised by different presentations of logically equivalent arguments?

It has also been suggested that "equivalence" should correspond to *informational equivalence,* that is, the possibility of inferring exactly the same information from two different statements (Siau, 2004). Informational equivalence has been suggested in Scheufele and Iyengar (2017), and in Druckman (2001)[71]. However, informational equivalence runs the same risk of logical equivalence. In how many cases is the reality of politics and media constituted by different presentations of exactly the same information?

However, the empirical results presented in this thesis on the media framing of corruption in Italy and New Zealand demonstrates that the problem with equivalence framing goes even beyond these objections. Equivalence framing is not necessarily in opposition to emphasis framing. Logically equivalent statements can still emphasise different aspects of the same issue. It is, for instance, what happens in the "Asian disease" experiments (Tversky & Kahneman, 1981),

[70] It should be noted, here, that logical equivalency normally does not apply to single words.
[71] Druckman (2001, p. 230) talks about differences in wording, by including equivalent wording in the range of equivalence framing (for example, the alternative use of "forbid" and "not allow"). In this case, the equivalence is informational (and semantic), as words do not constitute logical arguments, and cannot therefore be logically equivalent.

where differences in framing are expressed by emphasising the risks (potential deaths) or emphasising the gains (potential survivals). What the experiments find, actually, is that emphasis is of fundamental importance in decision-making. It is not clear, therefore, why emphasis (which seems to be the central element of framing) should be disregarded in framing theory. It seems, instead, that equivalence framing is just a sub-species of emphasis framing, which should be considered the most general type of framing (Entman's seminal paper on framing, for instance, is centred on the concept of emphasis, see Entman, 1993).

The difficulties of limiting framing theory to equivalence framing are evident from the plethora of studies that focus, instead, on emphasis framing. These include studies that are taken as examples in papers supporting a narrow framing theory. The study by Price, Tewksbury and Powers (1997), for example, presents the same information in the main body of the articles, but e*mphasises* different aspects, for instance, in the titles (using emphasis frames such as "conflict" and "human interest"). The same study quoted as an example of (visual) equivalence framing in Cacciatore, Scheufele and Iyengar (2016), and in Scheufele and Iyengar (2017) does not seem to be based on a real equivalence. The study (Bailenson et al., 2008) investigates individuals' evaluation of candidates by modifying the candidates' faces in terms of traits or skin complexion. These are qualitative modifications that change the information presented, making the photos informationally not equivalent[72].

All the previous arguments suggest that framing as a theory of cognitive effects of equivalence framing maintains fundamental importance in the study of framing, but cannot claim to represent the whole body of framing theory. A narrow theory limited to the study of individual-level effects would have to ignore all other potential effects and dynamics of framing. Moreover, the focus on equivalence framing appears to have very limited explanatory power, and to disregard the fact that also equivalence framing is, after all, focused on differences in emphasis.

8.2.3. Limitations of the cognitive paradigm

There is, however, another problem when adopting a predominantly cognitive paradigm in the study of framing and framing effects. Much theorising in the cognitive paradigm has focused on how framing effects depend on availability, accessibility, and applicability of frames. To have

[72] The notion of logical equivalence would have no meaning in this example.

measurable cognitive effects, that is, media frames should be known to, and accessible by, individuals, and resonate with their existing schemas (see Cacciatore, Scheufele & Iyengar, 2016). Based on these premises, frames are mostly studied in terms of the strength of their effects in reinforcing certain beliefs and attitudes, or conversely in the potential mediators of framing effects. The problem with this approach is that it does not account for creativity and change. For instance, if framing effects depend on availability, accessibility and applicability, how can new frames emerge and have effects? Also, does this mean that individuals cannot creatively engage with frames, by mixing arguments, confronting ideas, creating original counter-arguments, and changing their mind?

Some notable exceptions to this approach, for example, have shown that weak frames can backfire, when confronted with strong opposite frames and moderated by conscious deliberation (Chong & Druckman, 2007); that frames can be actively opposed (to the point of increasing the level of mobilisation) by individuals who perceive them as a risk (Schuck & de Vreese, 2012); and that individuals can hold frames which are absent from the media environment, therefore showing a degree of independence from media content (Wettstein, 2012). These are all important examples of how framing processes go beyond the media effects paradigm, and of how individuals creatively engage in the framing contest according to their motivations and beliefs, and the information they possess. Instead of narrowing down its scope, framing research should investigate unexplored issues concerning, for instance, how frames can radically modify individual beliefs and attitudes, and how individuals practically engage with frames, both in their direct interaction with media content, and in more complex social environments.

8.2.4. Beyond the cognitive paradigm: bringing frames back to the social world

The cognitive paradigm tends to rely on the idea of a computational mind, in which frames, schemas, attitudes, beliefs and emotions are *activated*, *moderated*, *accessed*, but the nature of framing (either equivalence-based or emphasis-based) is necessarily social. If frames are expressed in the media, they are relevant to political communication (and therefore, to political processes), and they must be part of the social world, and processed in social interaction. Moreover, research has shown how engaging in interpersonal conversation (that is, in a social and discursive activity) can impact, and in some cases eliminate, framing effects (see Druckman

& Nelson, 2003). Such evidence suggests that framing works as a form of social activity, rather than patterns of activation moderated by purely cognitive factors. While studies in cognitive effects are fundamental in understanding *what* moderates framing effects, and the potential *size* of these effects at the aggregate level, they cannot answer questions such as *how* do moderators work, and *how* do people actively interact with media frames and engage in framing. To say it with the words of a scholar criticising social cognitivism in favour of discursive psychology, "rather than concentrating on putative inner entities and processes that might be occurring within an actor abstracted from action and interaction, the interest is in how cognitive notions are constructed, managed and oriented to in action" (Potter, 1999, p. 123).

So how can framing theory be clarified without renouncing its broad scope? Instead of narrowing the theory, the solution suggested in this thesis consists in the clarification of its main theoretical and operational concepts. This research has demonstrated that gaps and ambiguities in framing theory can be overcome by maintaining a social constructionist perspective on framing. The solution, as suggested in the following paragraphs, might lie in a more complete conceptualisation of the nature and mechanisms of framing, and consequently in a re-definition of the concept of the frame that incorporates all these new elements.

8.3. LINKING FRAMING DEVICES TO FRAME FUNCTIONS AND FRAMES

One of the main contributions to framing theory presented in this thesis is the introduction of the mechanisms of anchoring and objectification. These two mechanisms, originally developed in the theory of social representations (Moscovici, 1984), have the potential to fill a relevant gap in framing theory, namely the lack of an explanation of how a specific set of framing devices contributes to form, and reinforce a frame and its frame functions. The functioning of these two mechanisms has been exemplified in Chapter 6 using examples from the news media construction of corruption in New Zealand and Italy. Framing devices, such as metaphors, personifications, metonymies and narratives, anchor and objectify an object of knowledge by attributing it to a spatial location, a temporal location, and/or concrete characteristics. While anchoring is a mechanism based on the comparison of the object of framing with other familiar objects or categories (for instance, by means of a similitude or conceptual metaphor),

objectification consists in the direct attribution of features to an object (for instance, through personification).

The concepts of anchoring and objectification fill a gap in the operational definition of framing theory, and they are linked to the two concepts, introduced in this thesis, of interactive and internal dynamism (see Chapter 6, section 6.5.). Once they are introduced, therefore, a full operational schematisation of frame generation and reinforcement can be drawn. The first element of these schema is frames, while the second elements are represented by the four functions that characterise every frame, namely problem definition, causal attribution, moral judgement and suggestion of solutions (Entman, 1993). The third element is represented by framing devices (lexical choices, conceptual and ontological metaphors, and narratives), which exert power in the framing contest according to their salience, given by positioning and repetition (Entman, 1993). The final element is represented by the mechanisms of anchoring and objectification. These mechanisms explain how framing devices are connected to their frames. The relationship among these elements is schematised in Figure 1. A framing device can anchor (by comparison) or objectify (by direct attribution of features) the object of framing, thus characterising it with a temporal location, a spatial location, and/or concrete features. This process acts as a reinforcement of the frame functions expressed by the frame (and, in some cases, as a way of weakening contrasting frames), and therefore reinforces the frame itself. It could be seen, in a way, as a schematisation of the processes of internal dynamism of frames. It is through the anchoring and objectifying processes of framing devices that frame functions are generated and reinforced, or modified to adapt to counter-frames. Thus, frames evolve internally (internal dynamism) while participating in the framing contest (interactive dynamism).

The analysis of the media framing of corruption in New Zealand and Italy reveals how the specific framing devices identified for each of the two countries contribute to the reinforcement of particular frames, which in turn determine a different definition of corruption, different causal attributions and different solutions. These framing devices, it has been seen, differ mostly in the way they anchor and objectify corruption. So, for instance, the externalisation of the causes of corruption is obtained by anchoring corruption to epidemic diseases or natural disasters. On the other hand, individual responsibility is underlined in New Zealand by anchoring integrity to society through specific narratives. The investigation of media frames of corruption, in this case, constitutes a clear example of the functioning of anchoring and objectification in the processes of

frame building and reinforcement. Once these elements are introduced and explained, it is possible to reformulate the concept of the frame so that, by adopting a social constructionist perspective, it incorporates both the fundamental characteristics of conceptual clarity and operational precision.

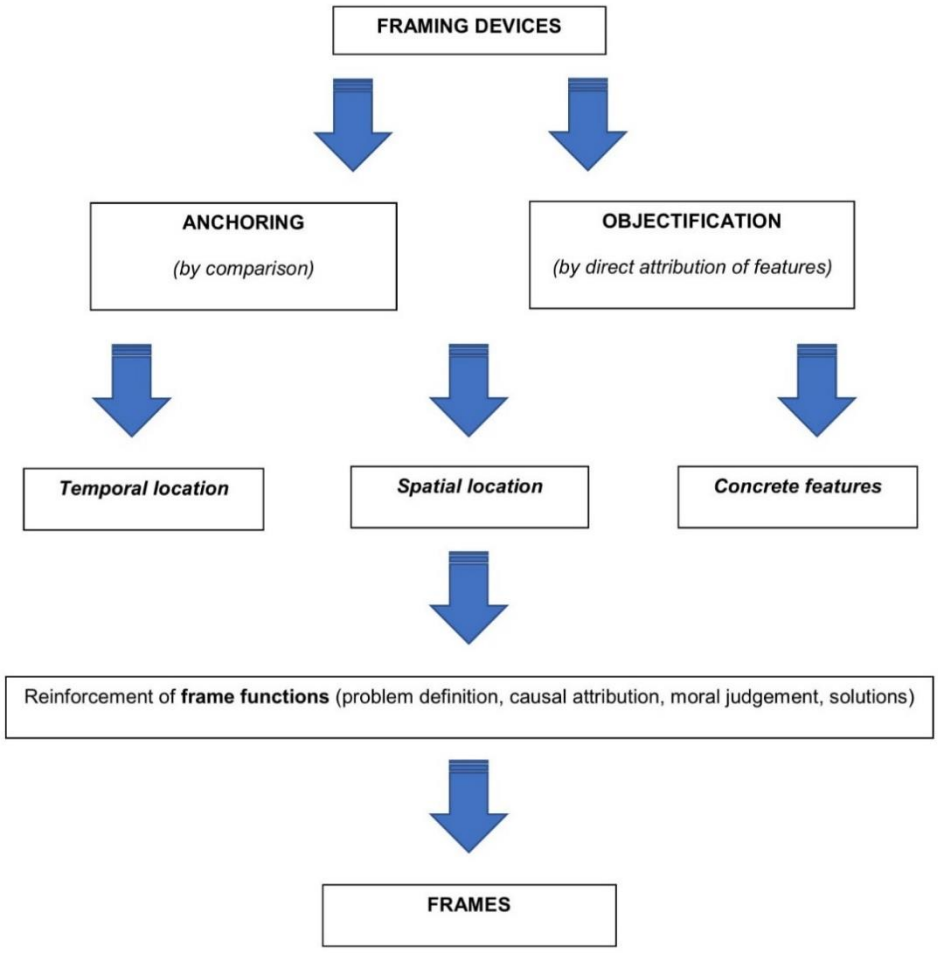

Figure 1 – A scheme of anchoring and objectification

8.4. A SOCIAL THEORY OF FRAMING: PROPOSAL FOR A MORE COMPLETE DEFINITION OF A FRAME

The theoretical discussion developed in this thesis, and supported by empirical data, has shown the limitations of narrowing down framing theory to the cognitive paradigm, and the relevance of maintaining a perspective centred on framing as a series of social processes of construction and

re-construction of reality. Building on this premise, a series of theoretical developments have been suggested, to overcome some of the main ambiguities and unclarified point of framing theory. Specifically, the main theoretical developments proposed were:

- A shift from the "unresolved debate about the […] location of frames" (D'Angelo & Kuypers, 2010, p. 2) to the more substantial question about the nature of frames. Rather than cognitive constructs or features of media texts and discourses, it has been argued that frames are social constructs. As such, they are created and processed in social interaction, and are *expressed* (rather than located) in discourse, communication, and texts. At the individual level, it has been suggested that frames, rather than elements stored in individual cognition and activated by specific inputs, are better described as elements involved in the processes of a*rgumentative thinking* (Billig, 1991). Frames, that is, have an intrinsically social, dialogical and dynamic nature.
- This dynamism can be classified into the two proposed categories of *internal dynamism* (including all changes within a frame) and *interactive dynamism* (changes in the relationships of dominance between frames).
- Finally, the introduction of anchoring and objectification as explanatory mechanisms of how framing devices act to compose a frame and reinforce its main functions.

The introduction of these ideas now allows a re-formulation of the definition of frame that incorporates these new elements, and aims at offering both increased conceptual clarity and an operational ground for framing analysis. This definition states that:

A frame is a social construct that, by anchoring and objectifying an object of knowledge through a range of framing devices, organises and structures it according to its definition, causes, moral judgement and potential solutions.

First, this definition includes a statement about the social nature of frames. In its first words, it resonates with the definition given by Reese (2001, p.11), but specifies that frames are socially constructed, rather than just "socially shared". While the adjective "shared" implies a location of frames and a process of transmission, the term "social construct" implies a stronger statement about the nature of frames and the fundamental role of social interaction in the processes of frame

development. This eliminates the issue of the location of frames and is the premise for the conceptualisation of the mechanisms of internal and interactive dynamism.

The re-definition maintains the idea of frames as social creations that organise and structure knowledge (as in Reese, 2001), and specify that the structure of knowledge is created by framing devices that, by anchoring and objectifying an object of knowledge[73], contribute to its definition in terms of the four frame functions. The abstract nature of frames is underlined, and separated from its linguistic and concrete expressions found in texts and, more broadly, discourses. The introduction of anchoring and objectification, moreover, suggests a standardised operationalisation of frames that could work as a guide for framing research. Frames are operationally identified by the particular functions they perform, and expressed by a range of identifiable framing devices. The functioning of these framing devices, in turn, is operationally described by their capacity to anchor and objectify knowledge through the processes schematised in Figure 1 (see 8.3.).

It should be underlined that this definition of frame can include both emphasis-based frames and equivalence-based frames. This can be shown using the example of the already mentioned prototypical equivalence framing represented by the “Asian disease” problem of Tversky and Kahneman (1981). The two different framings of the Asian disease present the same causes, moral judgment (which is absent in both cases) and solution of the problem, but two different problem definitions (potential losses vs. potential gains). This different problem definition is reinforced by two framing devices (the use and repetition of the verb “to die”, and the use and repetition of the verb “to save”) which objectify the issue of the “Asian disease” respectively in the potential deaths, and potential survivors.

By redefining frames this way, therefore, framing theory could benefit from a conceptual clarity and an operational foundation that allows it not to renounce its broad scope.

[73] An “object of knowledge” is defined here as a specific element of the socially constructed reality (Berger & Luckmann, 1967). In framing theory, the focus is generally on issues or events.

8.5. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY, LIMITATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This thesis constitutes an organic attempt to elaborate on a theory of framing as a social process. This aim is obtained by combining a theoretical effort to develop new concepts and advance fruitful comparisons between theories, and an empirical investigation that can help to exemplify and explain the new theoretical developments. As such, this research offers original contributions both for the development of framing theory, and the empirical investigation of media representations of corruption. In this section, all these contributions are outlined. Moreover, the limitations are identified, and directions for future research are suggested.

8.5.1. Significance of the study

Contrary to the wide attention that has been given to the economic, political and legal aspects of corruption, the study of its social construction in the public debate, and especially in the media, has been relatively neglected. This, despite the repeated claims on the importance of the media in curbing corruption (e.g. Stapenhurst, 2000; Peters, 2003). Only very recently, several studies have been published investigating the media construction of corruption in different contexts.

The empirical research conducted in this thesis offers new insights into the way the news media construct corruption. The main original contributions stem from the decision to focus, perhaps for the first time, on the comparative analysis of most different cases. Investigating how the news media frame corruption in New Zealand and Italy, two liberal democracies characterised by very different levels of corruption, has outlined some very relevant differences. It has been demonstrated that in a country characterised by historically low levels of corruption, the news media tend to focus on individual responsibility in corruption scandals, and to juxtapose corrupt individuals to the integrity of the political system and the country. Something very different, however, happens in Italy, a country with historically high levels of corruption. Here, the news media tend to generalise or externalise corruption, leading to a loss of relevance of personal responsibility, and a rise in fatalism and sense of emergency. It has been demonstrated that metaphors of corruption (likening it to disease, war, disaster, or animals) already identified in other studies (e.g. Bratu & Kazoka, 2016; 2018) as seemingly widespread, are nevertheless not universal. They tend, in fact, to be absent in the New Zealand's print media discourse about

national corruption, but to appear when the discourse moves to corruption in countries perceived as very corrupt. This is a highly relevant finding, as it raises questions over the nature of the link between levels of perceived corruption, and different framings and understandings of the issue.

Thanks to the development of a specific method of framing analysis, moreover, this thesis develops a more in-depth framing analysis, by balancing the need for both the reliability and the validity of the results. Frames have been investigated in terms of the functions they play in constructing the issue of corruption, and in the rhetorical and narrative repertoires that give them the power to dominate the discourse. This introduces an element of novelty in comparison with other studies on the media framing of corruption. While other studies focus mainly on its metaphorical construction (see Bratu & Kazoka, 2018), here the framing of corruption is investigated considering a series of different framing devices (metaphors, but also personifications, metonymies, and narratives), and the way through which these devices contribute to particular problem definitions, identifications of causes, moral judgements and suggestions of solutions. This particular operationalisation of framing analysis, moreover, has worked as well as a valid exemplification of the mechanisms of anchoring and objectification introduced in framing the thesis by this work. These last two mechanisms are part of a wider theoretical discourse carried out in this thesis to generate contributions for the development of framing theory. In response to some prominent critiques, this thesis defends a broad-scoped, social constructionist perspective on framing, against the idea of a framing theory limited to the study of individual effects of media frames. The argument has been developed along two different, but complementary lines:

1. A critique of framing as a theory of media effects, that outlines the limitations, ambiguities, and ultimately the narrowness of such an approach;
2. An attempt to fill the gaps in the social constructionist and critical paradigms of framing, by shifting the question about the location of frames to the issue of the social nature of frames, and by introducing the concepts of internal and interactive dynamism, and the mechanisms of anchoring and objectification.

All these ideas were aimed at two main objectives. The first one was to reaffirm, with the support of theoretical arguments and empirical evidence, the eminently social nature of framing, the fact that frames are products of social interactions, and that all framing processes should be seen as social processes. The second objective was the development of a definition of the frame

that included both conceptual clarity and operational grounds, so as to overcome some ambiguities and take a step towards a stronger theory of framing as a social process.

Throughout the thesis, the theoretical investigation and empirical research have supported and enhanced each other's results. Thanks to this continuous interaction, the theory has informed findings on the social construction of corruption, while empirical results have contributed to support and explain the newly introduced theoretical concepts.

8.5.2. Limitations of the study, and suggestions for future research

The empirical results of this thesis, and the comparison with results from similar research, suggest that future research should pay further attention to the link between levels of perceived corruption, historical and socio-political contexts, and media representations of corruption. The nature and extent of this link should be clarified, by extending the analysis to larger sets of countries, and by making use of quantitative methods and statistical analysis. The investigation of the social construction of corruption in contexts characterised by high levels of integrity also deserves further attention. This was an element of novelty introduced in this thesis by using New Zealand as a case study, but other examples should be investigated.

While this research was limited to the analysis of print media, and to a focus on dominant frames, further research could expand its reach to other media, the investigation of secondary frames, and a focus on case studies of counter-framing. To obtain a more complete picture of how corruption is socially constructed in a particular context, moreover, it would be necessary to understand the framing preferences and strategies of other participants in the public debate, such as citizens, anti-corruption movements and organisations, political parties or institutions.

As the focus was on the contextual specificities of dominant frames about corruption, this research skipped an analysis of the relationship between representations of corruption and features of media systems. According to Hallin and Mancini categorization of media systems (Hallin & Mancini, 2004), Italy is a polarized pluralist model, while New Zealand better fits into the liberal model. This suggests substantial differences in the journalistic pratice. These differences should be investigated by further research that focuses more specifically on the relationship between journalism practice and reporting about corruption. A first step in this direction has been made by Mancini et al. (2017), in a paper showing that political partisanship of media outlets (a

typical feature of the Italian media system) is capable of influencing the framing of corruption cases.

From a theoretical point of view, while the concepts of anchoring and objectification are useful to clarify the relationship between frames, frame functions, and framing devices, they cannot explain the whole range of framing devices. The selection of sources and facts, for instance, are central devices for the generation of frames, but cannot be explained through the mechanisms of anchoring and objectification. Moreover, the introduction in framing theory of the concept of argumentative thinking (that is, thinking as a form of dialogical interaction) that is suggested in this thesis, should be investigated by future research. The idea of framing as a social process should be the ground for a research effort that goes beyond the cognitive paradigm, and focus its interest on a qualitative investigation (perhaps with focus groups) of how individuals actually engage with the framing processes.

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APPENDIX A – CODING MANUAL AND INTERCODER RELIABILITY TESTS

Coding manual:

FRAME FUNCTION	CODES (CATEGORIES)	DESCRIPTION
CAUSES	C1. ROTTEN APPLE(S)	References to the individual(s) and/or small group responsible of corruption. Focus on individual responsibilities.
	C2. CORRUPTION NETWORKS/ CORRUPT POLITICS/ CORRUPT INSTITUTIONS	References to widespread or multiple corruption networks, corrupt politics, corrupt institutions, a political and institutional environment that favours and/or accepts corruption. Focus on responsibilities of politics and/or public institutions. Juxtapositions with organized crime.
	C3. CORRUPT SOCIETY	References to a corrupt society. Corruption as a feature of the culture and/or society.
	C4. CULTURAL FEATURE	A corrupt action is described as a normal feature of a culture, an act of generosity and/or a good intention.
	C5. CONSPIRACY	Allegations of corruption are rejected as false or part of a conspiracy.
PROBLEM DEFINITION	P1. WIDESPREAD PROBLEM	Corruption as an emergency, a disaster, an event with widespread, complex consequences for institutions, politics and/or society (this includes disease, epidemic, war and natural disaster metaphors). Single cases as symptoms of a corrupt environment, expression of a corrupt system.
	P2. ISOLATED CASE	References to isolated case, honesty of the system, corruption as an exception Stability of the system. Corruption as a foreigner/stranger.
	P3. VICTIM	Pleads of innocence. References to some kind of victimization (victim of a conspiracy, of false allegations, of a cultural misunderstanding).
MORAL JUDGMENT	M1. NEGATIVE FOR INDIVIDUALS	Negative moral judgment of the individuals (i.e. breach of trust). Focus on individual responsibilities.
	M2. NEGATIVE FOR POLITICS/INSTITUTIONS	Negative moral judgment of the political system, class or public institutions. Includes negative judgment of relevant segments of the political or institutional system (i.e. one major party, the government, a coalition, a major institution, etc.). Negative moral judgment differs from allegation of corruption: a judgment can be negative without carrying with it an allegation of corruption.
	M3. NEGATIVE FOR SOCIETY	Negative moral judgment of the society/culture Social/national/cultural immorality.
	M4. INVERTED	Negative moral judgment of the accuser(s). Positive moral judgment of the accused is restored.
	M5. SHIFTED	the corrupt act is reframed as something normal and/or positive.
SOLUTIONS	S1. LAW ENFORCEMENT/ POLITICAL PUNISHMENT	references to investigations, trials, convictions (more in general, legal aspects of the case). In alternative (or in addition), references to political consequences for the individual(s). Focus on law enforcement, and/or on politics' ability to ostracize corrupt actors.
	S2. REFORM	References to reforms. It includes different types of reform: of the legal system (excluding special, emergency laws), of the institutional system, of the ethical codes, etc.
	S3. EMERGENCY MEASURES	References to emergency measures, special laws, task forces with special powers.
	S4. FATALISM	References to impossibility of facing corruption and/or to past failures. Includes those cases in which fatalism is not explicit, but emerges from a combination of absence of offered solutions and focus on the persistency and strength of corruption.
	S5. NO NEED FOR SOLUTION	Rejection of allegations of corruption, leading to no need for a solution.
GENERAL RULES FOR CODING: a category is coded if its elements are present in the title and/or first paragraph, or if they recur throughout at least one third of the news text. Categories are not mutually exclusive.		

Intercoder Reliability tests:

CATEGORY	PERCENT AGREEMENT	COHEN'S KAPPA
C1	88.46154	0.692913386
C2	84.61538	0.694117647
C3	96.15385	0.648648649
C4	96.15385	0.835443038
C5	100	1
P1	88.46154	0.769230769
P2	96.15385	0.920245399
P3	88.46154	0.597938144
M1	92.30769	0.628571429
M2	88.46154	0.763636364
M3	100	1
M4	100	1
M5	96.15385	0.868217054
S1	92.30769	0.710227273
S2	92.30769	0.710227273
S3	96.15385	0.782978723
S4	80.76923	0.085106383
S5	88.46154	0.604651163

APPENDIX B – TABLES BASED ON THE "GLOBAL CORRUPTION BAROMETER 2013[74]" (AUTHOR'S ELABORATION)

Table 1 - Over the past two years how has the level of corruption in this country/territory changed?		
	Italy (%)	**New Zealand (%)**
Increased a lot	45	25
Increased a little	19	40
Stayed the same	32	31
Decreased a little	4	4
Decreased a lot	0	1

Table 2 - To what extent do you think corruption is a problem in the public sector in this country/territory?		
	Italy (%)	**New Zealand (%)**
A serious problem	61	18
A problem	26	29
A slight problem	12	26
Not really a problem	1	20
Not a problem at all	1	8

Table 3 - To what extent is this government run by a few big entities acting in their own best interests?		
	Italy (%)	**New Zealand (%)**
Entirely	34	9
Large extent	35	35
Somewhat	25	35
Limited extent	5	18
Not at all	1	4

Table 4 - How effective do you think your government's actions are in the fight against corruption?		
	Italy (%)	**New Zealand (%)**
Very ineffective	27	1
Ineffective	34	33
Neither effective nor ineffective	26	34
Effective	13	19
Very effective	1	3

[74] https://www.transparency.org/gcb2013. Accessed on 2 March 2018.

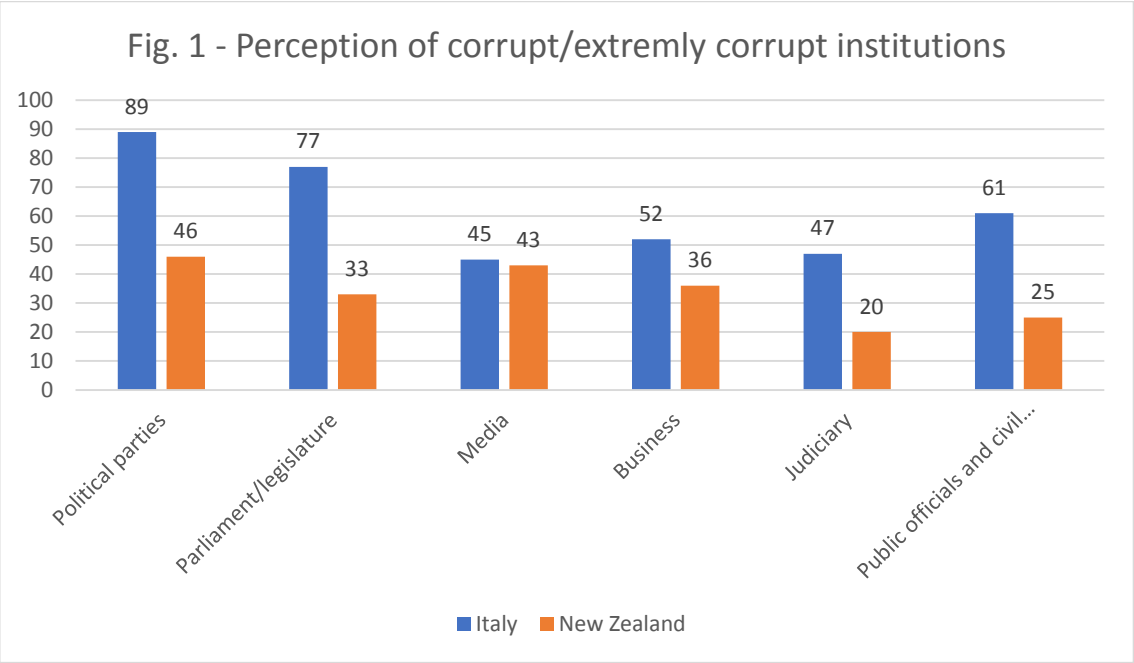
Fig. 1 - Perception of corrupt/extremly corrupt institutions
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
89
46
77
33
45
43
52
36
47
20
61
25
Political parties
Parliament/legislature
Media
Business
Judiciary
Public officials and civil...
Italy
New Zealand

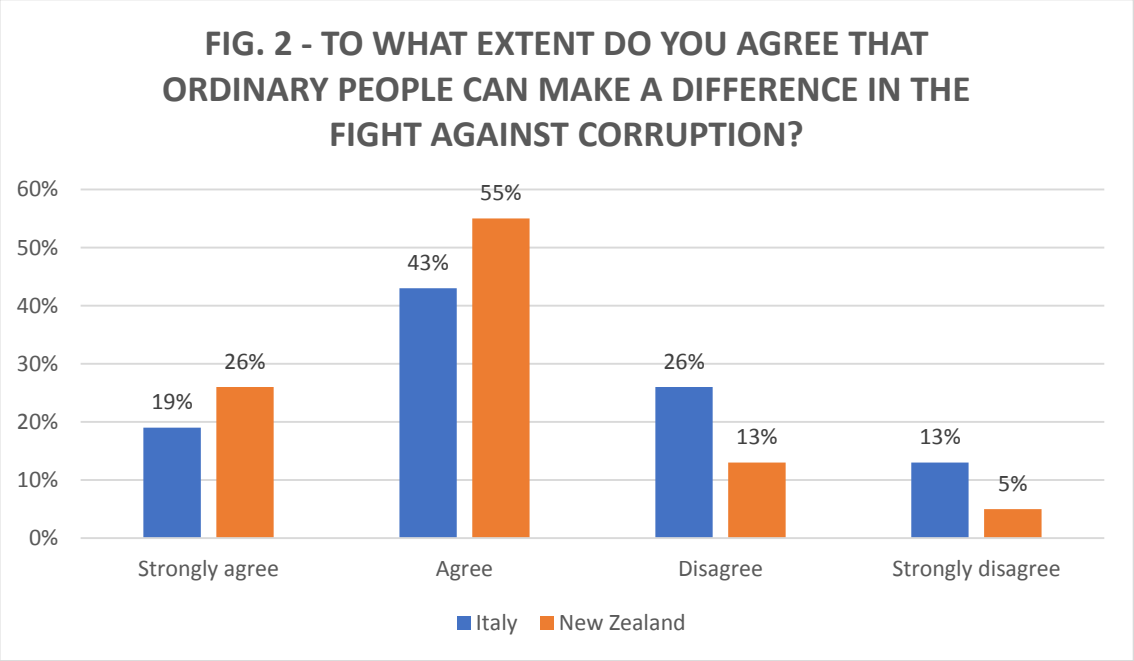
FIG. 2 - TO WHAT EXTENT DO YOU AGREE THAT ORDINARY PEOPLE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE FIGHT AGAINST CORRUPTION?
60%
50%
40%
30%
20%
10%
0%
19%
26%
43%
55%
26%
13%
13%
5%
Strongly agree
Agree
Disagree
Strongly disagree
Italy
New Zealand

APPENDIX C – SCREENSHOTS OF WEBSITES OF ANTI-CORRUPTION ORGANIZATIONS

1) Riparte il futuro - www.riparteilfuturo.it

2) Transparency International New Zealand – www.transparency.org.nz

APPENDIX D – LIST OF ARTICLES QUOTED IN THE TEXT

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CDS 10: Ecco la nuova governance. Per guidare i lavori il nome dell'uomo Tav. *Il Corriere della Sera*, May 12, 2014.

CDS 11: Expo, domani arriva Renzi. Grillo prepara il contr-evento. Verso il 2015. *Il Corriere della Sera*, May 12, 2014.

CDS 14: La Scala sia un esempio; le due emergenze milanesi. *Il Corriere della Sera*, May 14, 2014.

CDS 20: Una pallida imitazione di Tangentopoli; scandalo Expo. *Il Corriere della Sera*, May 16, 2014.

CDS 24: Fondazioni per Expo, il Tar: appalto affidato ad azienda da escludere. La "cupola": la gara illegittima finisce nelle intercettazioni. *Il Corriere della Sera*, May 18, 2014.

CDS 29: L'attacco di Grillo: Noi con i pm a colpi di magistratura. *Il Corriere della Sera*, May 9, 2014.

CDS 32: Grasso: Subito nuove norme. La lotta all'economia criminale è una priorità della politica. *Il Corriere della Sera*, May 12, 2014.

CDS 36: Grillo: Un'associazione a delinquere nata per riciclare denaro pubblico. *Il Corriere della Sera*, May 14, 2014.

CDS 37: Frigerio e la classe dirigente poco rimpianta. Chi scende chi sale. *Corriere della Sera*, May 16, 2014.

CDS 4: I dinosauri politici e la rete di contatti sopravvissuti anche ai loro partiti. *Il Corriere della Sera*, May 10, 2014.

CDS 5: "Il protettore, poi nove anni di rate. Così ti fai il capitolato su misura". Le carte. *Il Corriere della Sera*, May 9, 2014.

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L 12: Turia lays down rule on koha. *The Press*, September 6, 2006.

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L 14: Backhanders lead to corruption. *The Press*, September 8, 2006.

L 16: To the point. *The Dominion Post*, September 9, 2006.

L 2: MP's koha passed to school. *The New Zealand Herald*, September 3, 2006.

L 3: Politicians tread carefully around koha. *The Dominion Post*, September 4, 2006.

L 4: Pandora's box full of koha, lafo and chocolate. *The New Zealand Herald*, September 5, 2006.

L 5: Editorial: Race card obscures koha issue. *The New Zealand Herald*, September 5, 2006.

L 6: Gift debate sign of maturity, says expert. *The New Zealand Herald*, September 5, 2006.

L 7: Govt to back new rules for cash gifts. *The Press*, September 5, 2006.

L 8: Accounting for the backhanders. *The Dominion Post*, September 5, 2006.

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NZH 46: Matt McCarten: Labour's been dreadful over Field and voters have finally noticed. *The New Zealand Herald*, September 3, 2006.

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REP 23: Affondo di di Pietro, "C'è corruzione più di prima". *La Repubblica*, May 17, 2014.

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ST 31: Il finanziere anti-corruzione: "Irregolari sette appalti su dieci. Pagano cittadini e lavoratori". *La Stampa*, May 20, 2014.

ST 37: Expo 2015, irresponsabile buttare via tutto e rinunciare. *La Stampa*, May 16, 2014

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