Boundary Spanner Corruption in Business Relationships

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Dedication

Completing a doctorate is a laborious process for the student, but no less an undertaking for those who had a Ph.D student (sometimes involuntarily) inflicted upon them. Highest in my pantheon of heroes are my supervisors, Professor Henneberg and Dr Forkmann. Their tenacity, understanding and superhuman generosity is the only thing that kept me going. I had vied for the title of *Worst Student In Western Europe,* while in London. I later moved into global consideration after relocating to Singapore. My supervisors unfailingly offered support through these and other life-changes, time-zone mismatches and afforded me unearned grace in the face of inordinate missed deadlines. Thank you, Stephan and Sebastian.

A great debt of gratitude is also owed to my interviewees. In many sessions, they shared their insight and experience on topics that many are unwilling to discuss. Although mine is only a modest contribution, I hope that their spirit of openness allows business to open the debate of an overlooked business issue.

Lastly, and most importantly, the greatest thanks are owed to my wife, who endured countless late nights, urgent deadlines and undeserved stress. Without her support and unflappable encouragement, the whole endeavour would have been largely theoretical. Thank you, Miku.

Any analytical clangers, clumsy expressions or other mistakes remain squarely my own.

Abstract

Boundary spanner corruption—voluntary collaborative behaviour between individuals representing different organisations that violates their organisations' norms—is a serious problem in business relationships. Drawing on insights from the literatures on general corruption perspectives, the dark side of business relationships and deviance in sales and service organisations, this dissertation identifies boundary spanner corruption as a potential dark side complication inherent in close business relationships It builds research questions from these literature streams and proposes a research structure based upon commonly used methods in corruption research to address this new concept. In the first study, using an exploratory survey of boundary spanner practitioners, the dissertation finds that the nature of boundary spanner corruption is broad and encompasses severe and non-severe types. The survey also finds that these deviance types are prevalent in a widespread of geographies and industries. This prevalence is particularly noticeable for less-severe corruption types, which may be an under-researched phenomenon in general corruption research. The consequences of boundary spanner corruption can be serious for both individuals and organisations. Indeed, even less-severe types can generate long-term negative consequences. A second interview-based study found that multi-level trust factors could also motivate the emergence of boundary spanner corruption. This was integrated into a theoretical model that illustrates how trust at the interpersonal, intraorganisational, and interorganisational levels enables corrupt behaviours by allowing deviance-inducing factors stemming from the task environment or from the individual boundary spanner to manifest in boundary spanner corruption. Interpersonal trust between representatives of different organisations, interorganisational trust between these organisations, and intraorganisational agency trust of management in their representatives foster the development of

a boundary-spanning social cocoon—a mechanism that can inculcate deviant norms leading to corrupt behaviour. This conceptualisation and model of boundary spanner corruption highlights intriguing directions for future research to support practitioners engaged in a difficult problem in business relationships.

Statement of originality

I, Jonathan Webb, confirm that the research included within this thesis is my own work or that where it has been carried out in collaboration with, or supported by others, that this is duly acknowledged below and my contribution indicated. Previously published material is also acknowledged below. I attest that I have exercised reasonable care to ensure that the work is original, and does not to the best of my knowledge break any UK law, infringe any third party's copyright or other Intellectual Property Right, or contain any confidential material.

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Signature: J.Webb

Date: 01/09/2022

Details of collaboration and publications:

An earlier version of the conceptual work in chapters II and V was accepted to into the proceedings of the Academy of Management, 2017: Webb, J., Henneberg, S., & Forkmann, S. (2017). The Dark Side of Buyer-Supplier Relationships and the Role of Corruption. *Academy of Management Proceedings* (Vol. 2017, No. 1, p. 16461).

Earlier versions of the conceptual and qualitative study are published in the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science:* Forkmann, S., Webb, J., Henneberg, S. C., & Scheer, L. K. (2022). Boundary spanner corruption: a potential dark side of multi-level trust in marketing relationships. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 1-26.

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I. Introduction

Boundary spanner corruption is an important but understudied phenomenon. This dissertation defines boundary spanner corruption as *voluntary collaborative behaviour of individuals representing different organisations that violates their own organisations' norms*. Boundary spanner corruption can occur between any counterparts from firms in business relationships—frontline employees, such as salespeople and buyers; mid-level supervisors, such as sales and procurement managers; or executives. It ranges from deviance that violates only organisation norms (e.g., personal favours, excessive social entertaining and gift-giving, or unreasonable discounts) to more severe malfeasance that also contravenes norms, laws or regulations of the broader society (e.g., bribery, bid-rigging, fraud, and embezzlement implemented through boundary spanner collusion).

Boundary spanners are individuals entrusted to represent the interests of their organisation (Aldrich & Herker, 1977). The most prominent examples of these roles relate to sales and procurement sides of a business relationship. On the sales side, representatives win contracts and ensure revenue vital for the organisation's commercial persistence. On the procurement side, representatives provide the inputs necessary to maintain operations (Handfield & Bechtel, 2002). To deliver this, these boundary spanners create close relationships (Palmatier, 2008). These close relationships bring significant value to businesses (Morgan & Hunt, 1994). For example, they can enhance communication and efficiency in an otherwise bureaucratic inter-organisational relationship (Haytko, 2004). Yet, these close relationships between boundary spanners may also lead to sub-optimal behaviours and induce representatives to deviate from

organisational interests and norms (Carter, 2000). A 2021 survey of 1,336 senior executives 46% believed that business relationships were a primary source of corruption (Kroll, 2021). One such practice relates to boundary spanner corruption, in which representatives of separate organisations in a business relationship collude to potentially harm their organisations.

At the societal level, corruption is a significant drain on societal resources. The UN (2018) estimates that corruption costs the global economy approximately 5% of its total yearly GDP. The World Bank estimates that bribery alone amounts to approximately 2% of the annual global GDP (Kaufman, 2005). Endemic corruption in society has negative impacts at the firm level. Research conducted by fraud examiners finds that 81% of cases of organisational fraud relate to boundary spanner representatives (Association of Fraud Examiners, 2020). Corruption is largely considered more prevalent in developing economies (Transparency International, 2021b). Yet, boundary spanner corruption is often much more widespread than we would assume and can manifest in even highly regulated markets (Sööt et al., 2016).

In examples of boundary spanner corruption, there are a number of organisations which have been penalised through fines, prosecution or market penalties when instances are revealed. Boundary spanner corruption, when exposed, can impact stock market valuation (Wei et al., 2017). For example, when it was discovered that managers of GlaxoSmithKline's Chinese subsidiary bribed doctors to increase sales, the company's share price lost 60% of its value (Jack, 2013). Further to this, the company suffered an 18% decline in sales in China the following year (GSK, 2016).

Despite these apparent negative consequences, no research studies have yet explored boundary spanner corruption directly. Research on corruption chiefly relates to corruption in the political or governmental sector (Gopinath, 2008) and rarely includes boundary spanners directly

(Arnold et al., 2012). Researching corruption is notoriously difficult, but the challenges of investing close and personal boundary spanner relationships may be harder still (Aven, 2015). This dissertation aims to tackle some of these research challenges and seeks to illuminate a hitherto undeveloped conceptual space, namely boundary spanner corruption.

This chapter first provides an initial definition of boundary spanner corruption. Second, it outlines the epistemological approach of the dissertation and the studies within it. Third, it discusses the structure of the dissertation and the research questions explored. Fourth, it outlines contributions made by the dissertation. Fifth, it outlines the research journey that the PhD programme has entailed for me.

I.1 A definition of boundary spanner corruption

This section develops a definition of boundary spanner corruption based on the characteristics commonly occurring in prominent public cases. Emergent characteristics that are shared across these cases will be drawn out to provide an initial conceptualisation of the phenomenon. This conceptualisation will then be used as a basis of the research structure for the dissertation.

First, boundary spanner corruption is undertaken by *representatives of two or more organisations who collaborate across organisational boundaries*. It can involve frontline representatives, managers, executives, or indeed any individuals representing any type of organisation in any type of vertical or horizontal interorganisational relationship. Deviance types such as 'autocorruption' (corruption involving a single individual acting alone, such as employee theft) are not in the domain of boundary spanner corruption, as it can be engaged in by any individual within the organisation without the use of a boundary spanner relationship (Boersma, 2012). Interorganisational corruption, that is corruption existing between two organisations in a

business relationship (such as market manipulation or price-fixing) can also be excluded from this domain as these types are motivated primarily by the organisation and not the boundary spanner representative (Beenen & Pinto, 2009). By contrast, this dissertation focuses on boundary spanning representatives who have a greater opportunity to engage in corruption due to their ongoing interaction with external counterparts, which is essential for the development of deeper interpersonal relationships. For example, representatives of Turner Construction paid Bloomberg executives $15 million in bribes and kickbacks for systematically rigging bidding processes in Turner's favour and purchasing $240 million of more expensive, higher-commission products and services (Associated Press News, 2018). In the LIBOR scandal, traders from Bank of America, Barclays, Citigroup, JP Morgan Chase, Royal Bank of Scotland, and UBS colluded in fraudulent manipulation of the London Interbank Offer Rate (*The Telegraph,* 2015);[1] an investigation revealed that requests for rate manipulation were reciprocated with small personal favours and gifts (*The Economist,* 2012).

Second, the boundary spanners' *collaborative behaviour is contrary to their organisations' norms*, contravenes formal and informal organisational policies and procedures, and violates their agency obligations to their organisation-principals (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). A firm's representatives may be encouraged, promoted, or required to participate in organisational corruption (Pinto et al., 2008). Any collusive activities sanctioned by one's firm do not defy organisation norms, but rather are consistent with deviant organisation norms and are thus organisational corruption (not boundary spanner corruption). For example, the top management of neither Bloomberg nor Turner Construction was involved in the elaborate pay-

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[1] LIBOR rates are set daily by the ICE Benchmark Administration (IBA) which comprises designated panels of global banks for each currency. Traders representing 16 major banks, including Bank of America, Barclays, Citibank, Deutsche Bank, JPMorgan Chase, and UBS, constitute the panel for the US dollar LIBOR.

to-play scheme engineered collusively by their representatives. When the corruption was publicly exposed, Turner stated: "Turner rejects the conduct alleged against two former employees as an absolute betrayal of Turner's core values of integrity, which are followed by the 9,000 Turner employees who work hard, honestly and well every day" (Associated Press News, 2018). The collaborative manipulation of LIBOR rates explicitly violated norms of the traders' banks. Citibank declared that the revelation was "an embarrassment to our firm and stands in stark contrast to Citi's values" (ABC News, 2015).

Third, corrupt behaviour is *voluntary*. One representative proposes an action that violates their agency obligations; the boundary spanner counterpart agrees voluntarily to engage in the activity, which also violates the partner organisation's norms. A firm's representative may be coerced or forced to commit deviant acts (Elangovan & Shapiro, 1998; Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Boundary spanner corruption excludes blackmail and all other involuntary deviant activities. Although lured or tempted, either individual can decline to participate without experiencing personal negative consequences. No one forced Bloomberg employees to accept Turner Construction's bribes. There may be professional consequences, however, such as when refusal to participate results in the loss of a customer, with a concomitant negative impact on the salesperson's compensation. For this reason, some organisations limit personal negative consequences if a solicited bribe is declined and reported. Often, however, the personal relationship between boundary spanners becomes predominant: Traders in the LIBOR scandal had forged close, jovial relationships in which rate manipulations were based on personal reciprocity and the provision of favours (*The Economist*, 2012).

Fourth, the representatives' behaviour *threatens the well-being of their organisations*, even if one or both organisations benefit in some manner. For example, when a buyer signs a

major contract due to a bribe or as a personal favour to a salesperson, the customer firm purchases goods that it otherwise would not have acquired. This imposes on the customer greater costs, poorer quality, or other opportunity costs. The supplier may potentially benefit if the illicitly acquired sales revenues could not have been obtained cleanly from another customer. Despite any short-term benefits, however, both involved organisations incur significant latent financial risk (Palmatier et al., 2007a) associated with the potential future discovery and exposure of corruption. The Turner Construction scandal undermined customer satisfaction and severely endangered future business industry-wide. "[It is] a shame that a few rogue employees may have acted in a non-compliant and criminal manner and tarnished the image of the companies they worked for and the industry as a whole" (*The Real Deal*, 2018). Banks involved in the LIBOR scandal were fined a total of $6 billion, leading a top executive to remark: "The lesson here is that the conduct of a small group of employees, or of even a single employee, can reflect badly on all of us, and have significant ramifications for the entire firm" (ABC News, 2015).

These identifying characteristics highlight the multi-level nature of boundary spanner corruption—an interpersonal relationship between representatives of two firms in an interorganisational relationship violates the intraorganisational norms of each firm. This dissertation will therefore aim to further conceptualise the nature of boundary spanner corruption, theorise its key mechanisms and understand its prevalence and consequences when occurring in the field.

I.2 Epistemological approach

As with all acts of scholarship, this dissertation aims to enhance knowledge on a specific topic. However, before the methods and structure of the dissertation are outlined, I shall explore the epistemological assumptions that underpin the decisions made in execution. These assumptions relate to ontology (the nature of reality) and epistemology (the nature of knowing about reality) (Morgan & Smircich, 1980).

In the study of ontology in social sciences broadly two main schools of thought exist. First, a subjectivist account posits an ontology where the nature of reality is more of an act of human imagination and interpretation (Goertz & Mahoney, 2012). The world is therefore understood through the prism of the human mind, where meanings and personal experiences are constitutive of reality (Cunliffe, 2011). Indeed, subjectivists see the world as purely comprised of "subjective experiences of individuals" (Antwi & Hamza, 2015: 219). Second, an objectivist account sees reality as comprising of tangible objects (Aliyu et al., 2014). In contrast to subjectivists, objectivists detach reality from human perception with a "belief in an objective, real world" (Antwi & Hamza, 2015: 218). Human perception is separate from a discrete and concrete world that is "observable and [possesses] measurable regularities, laws, and patterns" (Cunliffe, 2011: 649).

Epistemology explores how knowledge is framed, filtered and understood (Morgan & Smircich, 1980). Within the subjectivist account, gathering knowledge about the world entails a "critical subjectivity in a participatory transaction with cosmos" (Aliyu et al., 2014: 81). That is, the act of perception entails a direct engagement with the world, which is constitutive of human meanings (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). The methods deployed to capture this knowledge engage with the wide range of 'fuzzy' phenomena within the world. Indeed, for these researchers,

"fuzziness is an ontological claim about the real world" (Goertz & Mahoney, 2012: 206). The objectivist approach, by contrast, "emphasises that genuine, real and factual happenings could be studied and observed scientifically and empirically" (Aliyu et al., 2014: 83). 'Fuzziness' for objectivists is therefore dismissed as noise or other confounding factors (Goertz & Mahoney, 2012). Objectivist epistemologies will deploy replicable and standardised instruments to perceive and measure the world and thereby build a knowledge base from these independent perceptions (Cunliffe, 2011).

Corruption research is also subject to the objectivist/subjectivist debate (Tänzler et al., 2016). As will be explored in chapter III, there is a wide range of different research techniques available to study the concept. Despite this, there is no consensus as to which acts are constitutive of corruption (Macedo & Valadares, 2021). Many more objectivist accounts have aimed to describe and measure corruption as it manifests in the real world (Transparency International, 2021). However, given the social undesirability issues around corruption, the act of research itself impacts the reliable collection of objective informant testimony (Blasius & Thiessen, 2021). The difficulty in extracting data on illicit activities such as corruption places greater reliance upon relationship-forming and trust-building between researcher and informant (Koudelkova & Senichev, 2015). This has consequently led to a significant role of qualitative research in the field (Varraich, 2016) that tends to have a slant towards more subjectivist accounts (Aspers, 2015).

This dissertation will employ to take inspiration from both schools. By acknowledging that corruption is a real and measurable phenomenon in the world which (as chapter III will demonstrate) boundary spanner corruption should therefore be considered an objective happening in the world. The dissertation aims to deploy methodological pluralism to capture the

full range of facets of the concept. Adopting pluralism in the approach to corruption research helps address a complex and "self-concealing" issue (Bader et al., 2014: 14). The stance taken by this dissertation will be to assume that there is a separate, discrete phenomenon of boundary spanner corruption. However, as noted above, the impact of the research on sensitive topics requires an engagement with the role of the researcher within the investigation process is a factor in corruption research. Moreover, understanding the meanings and perceptions is critical in exploring new concepts (Gupta, 1995). Therefore, this dissertation aims to capture much of the 'fuzzy' aspects of research, especially through more exploratory research grounded in more subjective survey responses, as outlined in chapter IV. The culmination of these approaches will be brought together through a model in chapter V, that proposes a framework for boundary spanner corruption by using subjective interview data. This dissertation will take a mixed methods approach. The primary objective of this dissertation is to introduce and explore the concept of boundary spanner corruption. Chapter III will also reveal that no singular research method is suitable for addressing all five research questions arising from this dissertation. To address all of this, the dissertation will apply a mixed methods approach. The following section will discuss these research questions in more detail.

I.3 Research questions

As this dissertation introduces the concept of boundary spanner corruption, the research questions that are required to make sense of the concept are fundamental and broad (Seuring, Sarkis, Müller & Rao, 2008). Therefore, to explore a new phenomenon, this dissertation poses five key questions. These questions are outlined in table 1.1.

TABLE 1.1
RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Question	Topic	Question
RQ1	Nature	What is the nature of boundary spanner corruption?
RQ2	Prevalence	How prevalent is boundary spanner corruption?
RQ3	Consequences	What are the consequences of boundary spanner corruption?
RQ4	Motivators	What motivators give rise to boundary spanner corruption?
RQ5	Mechanisms	What mechanisms explain boundary spanner corruption?

As chapter II outlines, boundary spanner corruption is not a topic directly researched by relevant literature streams. This dissertation will draw from the three most relevant research streams. The first such stream relates to general perspectives of corruption, as analysed by various disciplines, such as ethical, legal, social and economic thought. By exploring this broadness of academic thought, a wide range of insights will be collected into the new concept. A second stream explores the dark side of business relationships. This area of research investigates how negative performance arises from close business relationships. Lastly, research on deviance in sales and services organisations will be explored. This literature examines deviant behaviours from boundary spanner representatives.

In the general perspectives on corruption literature, various types of activities or behaviours by the representatives under study are described as 'corrupt'. The facets and manifestations of general corruption, *viz.* its nature, are variously described (Dimant & Schulte, 2016). Wider accounts of general corruption's nature list numerous violations against the law from legal perspectives (Boersma, 2012), whereas more narrow accounts limit its nature to describe tightly defined activities, such as bribery from economic perspectives (Gambetta, 1993). However, these accounts are drawn from an area understanding of the nature of general corruption and therefore have an indirect relevance to boundary spanner corruption. The

literature in the dark side stream provides insight into certain aspects of general corruption in business relationships, but the problem is framed in an incompatible way with boundary spanner corruption. In deviance in sales and services organisation literature, we find a focus on individual deviance that excludes the collusive nature of boundary spanner corruption. There is no single source or literature stream that provides a codified account of the phenomenon's nature. This dissertation asks therefore:

RQ1. What is the nature of boundary spanner corruption?

The literature indicates that general corruption although more prevalent within developing economies is a widespread phenomenon (Transparency International, 2021). Yet, certain studies find evidence of boundary corruption in developed economies (Sööt et al., 2016). These investigations either look at corruption more generally, or specific sub-groups in boundary spanners (such as buyers). Few studies provide a reliable measure of the prevalence of boundary spanner corruption. This research agenda therefore proposes the following question:

RQ2. How prevalent is boundary spanner corruption?

The impacts of general corruption, described by the literature, can be significant at the individual, organisational and societal levels (Mauro, 1995). However, the underdeveloped nature of research on boundary spanner corruption has resulted in a weak understanding of the potential consequences of boundary spanner corruption. This research agenda, therefore, proposes the following question:

RQ3. What are the consequences of boundary spanner corruption?

The perspectives on general corruption provided a range of factors that explain its emergence. Social perspectives of general corruption in particular provide a wide range of

motivating socio-cultural factors that may drive deviance, such as group membership, value systems, race, religion, etc. (Gatti et al., 2003). Both the corruption and the dark side literature also directly indicate that the presence of high levels of trust may also provide the opportunity for deviance through complacency or lack of monitoring. Within the sales and services literature, several motivating factors provide organisational drivers for boundary spanner corruption either at the intra-organisational level, where opportunities for deviance may exist, or through more individual factors, such as an individual proclivity for corruption. Again, the literature does not provide a comprehensive or codified list of these motivators. This research agenda, therefore, proposes the following question:

RQ4. *What motivators give rise to boundary spanner corruption?*

The differing perspectives on corruption proffer differing accounts for the mechanisms behind corruption. Social perspectives rely chiefly on mechanisms based upon relationships, attitudes and beliefs to drive behaviour, whereas economic perspectives are almost exclusively focused on material incentives. Dark side research focuses on the lack of monitoring or oversight leading to boundary spanner corruption. The research on sales and services organisations identifies a number of factors that explicate deviance, as applied to corruption. These can relate from unintentional factors (such as cognitive bias or excessive social interactions) to intentional factors (such as opportunism). This research agenda, therefore, proposes the following question:

RQ5. *What mechanisms explain boundary spanner corruption?*

I.4 Structure of the dissertation

FIGURE 1.1

OVERVIEW OF THE DISSERTATION
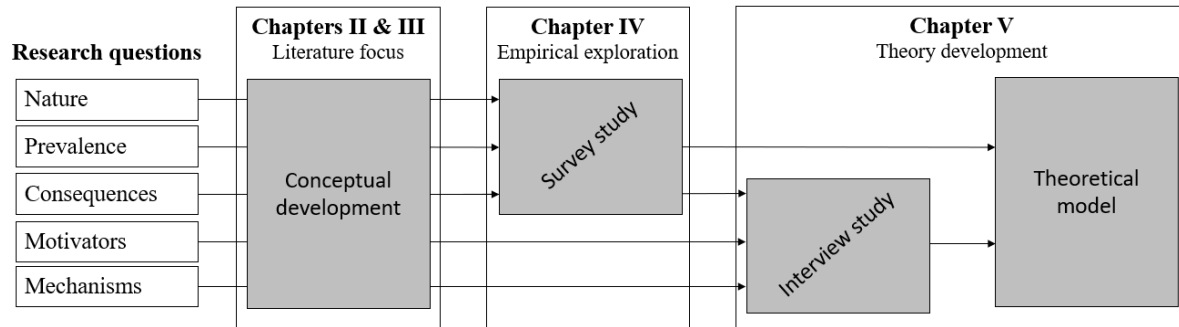
The dissertation is outlined into chapters that seek to answer these research questions that highlight conceptual steps within the broader development of an argument on boundary spanner corruption. These stages are outlined in figure 1.1.

Chapter II explores the three pertinent literature streams on boundary spanner corruption. First, in respect of the writings of corruption in the broader ethical, legal social and economic perspectives. Second, it reviews the dark side of business relationships. Third, it reviews more specifically deviance as it manifests within the sales and services organisation literature. Third, the chapter concludes with an initial model of boundary spanner corruption that integrates the insights gleaned from the three literature streams.

Chapter III reviews the quantitative and qualitative methods that have been used by researchers in corruption and selects several approaches for use in addressing the identified research questions. The chapter concludes with a research design for investigating boundary spanner corruption based on a combination of survey and interview research methods.

Chapter IV takes an empirical approach to explore the nature, prevalence and consequences of boundary spanner corruption within an exploratory survey study. This chapter surveys practitioner boundary spanners to gain their direct experience of boundary spanner corruption in the field. The purpose of this chapter is to use the practitioner experience to make sense of the research questions that are subject to gaps in the literature.

Chapter V presents the results of an interview study to answer questions on the motivators and mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption. This chapter offers an explanatory framework by examining the literature in combination with interview data to build a theoretical model of boundary spanner corruption. The focus of the study is a series of interviews with practitioner boundary spanners as well as experts familiar with the topic.

Chapter VI presents the conclusions and findings of the above research. This chapter will detail the theoretical and managerial implementations of the dissertation.

I.5 Contribution

This dissertation makes a number of contributions to deepen the understanding of boundary spanner corruption. The outline of the contributions is made in table 1.2.

First, in respect of conceptual contributions, this dissertation offers a distinct definition of boundary spanner corruption and provides qualifying characteristics for the phenomenon. This conceptualisation offers more precision in identifying a distinct concept within general corruption research, in which conceptual boundaries do not often possess clear edges.

Second, on a theoretical level, the dissertation extends current literature and offers a theoretical contribution in terms of a framework of boundary spanner corruption. The three major literature streams that the dissertation reviews have each been extended by this research.

Research on general corruption has largely overlooked boundary spanner corruption, and this dissertation provides an additional micro-analytical lens through which a broader phenomenon can be viewed. In the dark side of business relationships, mechanisms regarding inter-personal relationships are identified as another explanation of the negative (or curvilinear) impact of trust upon performance. In the sales and services deviance stream, the dissertation identifies collusive deviance between representatives as another driver of corrupt behaviour. In a further integrative theoretical contribution to these three literature streams, the dissertation proposes a model of boundary spanner corruption that integrates the insights gleaned from relevant literature streams and combines that with practitioner experience through practitioner interviews.

Third, on an empirical level, the research guides empirical research into collecting evidence on boundary spanner corruption, largely using survey and interview techniques. The data collected have provided some (partial) answers to the research questions set by this dissertation. On the *nature* of boundary spanner corruption, the dissertation found that the facets that comprise the concept are rather broad and include both less severe and more severe manifestations. This suggests that many of the previous studies on corruption may have missed these more low severity manifestations of the phenomenon. In respect of *prevalence*, the dissertation finds evidence of boundary spanner corruption in a range of businesses, industries and geographies. This is often despite the context of a low level of recorded prevalence for general corruption. Boundary spanner corruption, therefore, is more widespread than previously appreciated. On the *consequence* of boundary spanner corruption, the dissertation finds noticeable individual and organisational consequences for this type of deviance. Interestingly, it finds that the degree of seriousness for less severe corruption types can be greater than in more severe cases. On the *motivators,* the dissertation finds that a range of background individual,

organisational and socio-cultural factors can drive boundary spanner corruption. Individual

issues of moral compass combined with organisational factors such as weak monitoring cohere

to help motivate the emergence of boundary spanner corruption. Lastly, on the *mechanism,* the

dissertation proposes the social cocoon mechanism that normalises corrupt behaviours within

inter-personal boundary spanner relationships.

TABLE 1.2

SUMMARY OF FOUR SUBSTANTIVE CHAPTERS

Chapter	Methods	Key findings
Chapter II Literature review of relevant research streams	Literature review: Review of literature steams	Boundary spanner corruption is an undeveloped concept within general corruption, the dark side of trust and sales and services deviance research. Each stream provides a contributory element to help understand the phenomenon but the concept requires further conceptualisation and theory-building.
Chapter III Literature review of corruption research methods	Method review: Review of approaches used in general corruption research	A combination of survey-based methods and interview-based methods is an effective combination in covering most research questions in boundary spanner corruption.
Chapter IV Exploratory survey in boundary spanner corruption	Pilot: Open interviews with five senior boundary-spanners Survey: Survey of 98 boundary spanners in the USA	The *nature* of boundary spanner corruption is multi-faceted and manifests in many guises. Boundary spanner corruption is *prevalent*, especially less-severe manifestations. Boundary spanner corruption results in negative *consequences* for both individuals and organisations.
Chapter V Interviews of boundary spanner and theoretical model of boundary spanner corruption	Interviews: Semi-structured interviews with 31 boundary spanner representatives and experts Theoretical: Congruent analysis of interview data and literature to develop theory	Multi-level trust and social cocoon *mechanisms* give rise to boundary spanner corruption. Weak behaviour-based controls *motivate* this effect. Further *motivators* are provided by individual, organisational and socio-cultural factors.

I.6 Research journey

As with all doctoral studies, the journey itself has been a challenge. Not only in terms of balancing research commitments with a busy full-time job, but also in meeting research deadlines during a highly disruptive Covid-19 period. Moreover, the research itself has been replete with disappointments and dead ends. Much time, for example, was expended on generating an event study the effect on equity prices in instances of boundary spanner corruption revelations. Although the construction of a database of cases was laborious – it subsumed nearly a year of budgeted time - the study itself struggled to demonstrate the main effects and ultimately the research was superseded by another published paper. Further, aspects of the respondent data from the survey in chapter IV did not speak directly to the research questions of the dissertation, and therefore were discarded. It is hoped that this allows for a more focused piece.

Nevertheless, a PhD is a lengthy process of reiteration, reflection and continued learning. Much of the refinement in thinking and execution of argument is honed within the review process of editorial publication. My dissertation has been coupled with a publication journey with my supervisors (Professor Stephan Henneberg and Dr Sebastian Forkmann) and co-author (Professor Lisa Scheer), where some aspects of this dissertation have been published in the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science (*Forkmann et al., 2022). The process of rethinking, rewriting and responding to reviews has been invaluable to the honing of the arguments presented in this dissertation. Further refinement of thinking unfolds within debate and discussion with peers and colleagues within symposia, workshops and conferences. I have been fortunate to have received funding from Queen Mary University of London and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime to attend several events to further my research (see table 1.1 for a list of conferences at which I attended and presented).

The earlier discussion on aspects of the conceptualisation also received significant support and praise from the global scholarly community. A presentation contribution at the Academy of Management Annual Conference in 2017 received a *Best Paper* award (Webb et al., 2017). Contributions to the Society for Business Ethics also received an 'Emerging Scholars *Founders' Award'* during the attendance of the 2016 annual conference in Los Angeles, USA. Other more practitioner-oriented thoughts generated during early research phases were converted into an essay for the Institute for Business Ethics, which received an award in its annual postgraduate essay competition (Webb, 2016). All these interactions, discussions and debates have been invaluable for the refinement of the thoughts in this dissertation.

TABLE 1.3

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS OF DISSERTATION DEVELOPMENT

Date	Title	Conference
Aug 2017	The Dark Side of Buyer-Supplier Relationships and the Role of Corruption	Academy of Management, *Annual Conference.* Atlanta, USA
Aug 2016	A theoretical model of corrupt exchanges in business relationships	Society for Business Ethics, *Annual Conference.* Los Angeles, USA
June 2016	A theoretical model of corrupt exchanges in business relationships	Interdisciplinary Corruption Research Network, *How to Research Corruption.* Amsterdam, Netherlands
Aug 2015	Poster presentation: Corrupt exchange in buyer-supplier relationships	Society for Business Ethics, *Annual Conference.* Vancouver, Canada
July 2015	Corruption and the dark side of business relationships: A model	*7th Bi-Annual International Conference on Business Market Management.* QMUL, UK
June 2015	Understanding and combatting corruption in the supply chain	Philippines Institute of Supply Management *Annual Conference.* Manilla, Philippines
Sep 2014	Corruption and the dark side of business relationships: Overview and a research agenda	*Workshop on the Dark Side of Business Relationships.* SOAS, UK

I.7 Conclusion

This chapter has identified and conceptualised boundary spanner corruption. It has detailed an approach to a research programme from the research questions that emerge from this conceptualisation and described the structure of this dissertation that aims to answer these questions. The next chapter will review the three identified literature streams and integrate their insights to form an initial framework of boundary spanner behaviour.

II.   Literature review relating to boundary spanner corruption

This chapter explores the research questions raised in chapter I and reviews the relevant key literature streams applicable to boundary spanner corruption. As boundary spanner corruption is a nascent concept, the chapter identifies and reviews several literature streams that each provide insight into the phenomenon (Hart, 2018). Further, literature reviews not only reflect previous investigations but also provide a clear agenda for future research to close identified gaps (Paul & Criado, 2020). In that respect, this chapter reviews identified literature streams for their capacity to answer the questions asked in chapter I. The second object of this chapter is to provide an initial model, informed by insights gleaned from the literature on the motivators and mechanisms in boundary spanner corruption.

Given the focus on corruption within boundary spanner relationships, this chapter will first explore the general corruption literature. This literature is voluminous, covering a range of different disciplines and contexts. A Google Scholar search for the phrase "corruption" delivers over 139,000 results. This quantity underlines the complexity of corruption as a nested concept, consisting of layers of domains in which the boundary spanner resides (see figure 2.1 for illustration). The conceptualisation of boundary spanner corruption outlined in chapter I requires that it must be (1) corruption collaborative conducted by two organisation's representatives (2) contrary to organisational norms within their respective organisations, while being (3) a voluntary act, and (4) harmful to their respective organisations. This specific conceptualisation of corruption is nested within the broader domains of corruption. The broadest domain-level understanding relates to the domain in which the corruption takes place: namely the public or private sectors (Heidenheimer, 1970). Research on corruption has largely focused on private-to-public corruption - that is, corruption within the governmental sector (Argandoña, 2003). By

<div style="text-align:center">

FIGURE 2.1
NESTED CONCEPTUALISATION OF CORRUPTION

</div>

General corruption
- Private-to-public corruption
- *Private-to-private corruption*

Private-to-private corruption
- Auto-corruption
- Organisational corruption
- *Boundary spanner corruption*

Boundary spanner corruption
- Conducted by organisational representatives
- Against organisational norms
- Voluntary
- Harmful to organisational interests
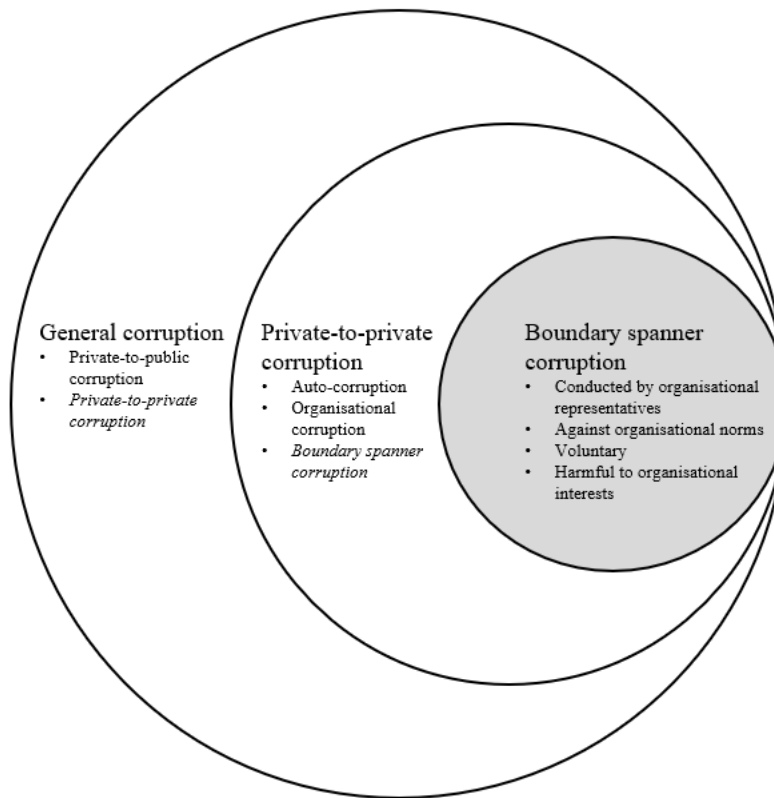
contrast, studies into private-to-private corruption – corruption involving solely representatives within business relationships– are few (Gopinath, 2008). These may relate to 'autocorruption', in which an individual alone acts against organisational interests, such as theft or embezzlement (Boersma, 2012).

Another strand of research explores organisational corruption, in which individuals within an organisation collude to act against their employer or act corruptly based upon employer instruction (Pinto et al., 2008). It is within this domain of private-to-private corruption, that boundary spanner corruption is situated, although distinct from either autocorruption (it is collaborative) or organisational corruption (representatives act against organisational interests). Unfortunately, research into this domain is scarce in the corruption literature stream (Arnold et

al., 2012) and the nature, prevalence, consequences, motivators or explanatory mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption are not developed. This is perhaps unsurprisingly, given that it is a nascent concept, gauging its prevalence or measuring its consequences is impossible. A more developed understanding of the motivator and mechanisms may also be required to fully conceptualise the concept for further research. Given the nascent conceptualisation of boundary spanner corruption, a broader account of the phenomena must be informed by a wide range of related literature steams.

There is plentiful research into private-to-private corruption, but not all the relevant literature streams satisfy the focus upon boundary spanner corruption as defined in chapter I. For example, the literature on employee discrimination, for instance, does not relate to interactions between representatives of different organisations (Kunze et al., 2011). Similarly, the literature on corrupt organisations does not cover behaviours that are against organisational norms (Pinto et al., 2008). The literature on benign employee collusion (Luft, 2016) does not outline behaviours that actively harm the organisation in their relationship. Further, the literature on corporate fraud (Comer, 1998), individual fraud (Ogino, 2007) or mistakes in service quality (Berry et al., 1994) does not describe voluntary behaviour. By contrast, this review identifies three relevant literature streams that do contribute to boundary spanner corruption as defined, namely perspectives on general corruption, the dark side of business relationships, and deviances in the sales and services organisations literature streams. Unlike other candidate literature streams, all three can account for collaborative collusion between boundary spanners; they can describe behaviours that run contrary to organisational norms; they can describe voluntary behaviour; which can be harmful to their respective behaviours. This dissertation will therefore focus on these literature streams for review.

See figure 2.2 for a graphical illustration of these overlapping literature streams. This chapter

reviews the potential for perspectives on general corruption to inform the research questions in

chapter I. These perspectives cut across the nested conceptualisation of corruption (outlined in

figure 2.1) but employ different views borne from different schools and academic disciplines.

Two more literature streams will be employed to relate more closely to boundary spanners in

organisations. Firstly, the dark side of business relationships literature; and secondly, the sales

and services deviance literature. These additional literature streams also enrich the understanding

of boundary spanner corruption through conceptualisation and practice of corruption and

deviance in an organisational setting specifically occupied by boundary spanners. These two

streams will also be reviewed in respect of their potential to answer the research questions. The

weight of the insight proffered by the research streams largely relates to the motivators and

mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption. The review will therefore focus on these aspects to develop a model of boundary spanner corruption. This review will use tick tables to examine the key research studies in each of the research streams, in terms of their conceptualisation of motivators and mechanisms relevant to boundary spanner corruption.

II.1 Perspectives on corruption

As a complex social phenomenon, the definition of general corruption is subject to different conceptualisations (Kaufman, 2005). The previous section outlined the nested nature of corruption, which outlines the layers from the general conceptualisation to the private-to-private domains and the ultimate focus upon boundary spanner corruption. Another dimension identifies the victims of corruption, whether it is the public or the law itself (Gardiner, 2002). There are conceptual scales of corruption exploring the severity of each corruption type: 'grand' corruption or high-level political corruption against 'petty' corruption or routine, administrative graft (Heidenheimer, 2002). Further similar conceptual scales relate to the severity of corruption from the most severe 'black' types to the less severe 'white' types to 'grey' forms of corruption, which occupy an intermediary space (Heidenheimer, 1970). These severity scales can be simplified into 'severe' corruption (both grand and black) that relates to criminal acts with significant consequences, and 'less severe' (both petty and white or grey) in which the deviance may not be criminal and consequences are less impactful (Köbis et al., 2017).

Dimensions are also drawn from disciplines of study, such as sociology, economics and law (Ades & Di Tella, 1999; Della Porta & Vannucci, 2017; Bull & Newell, 2002). Given the nascent nature of boundary spanner corruption, this dissertation will employ this discipline-based approach to widen the range of captured thought (see table 2.1 for an illustration of this approach, where typical studies in each perspective are compared). General corruption has been

examined by a wide range of disciplines from economics, legal studies, political science, psychology, sociology and business studies. Each of these disciplines applies its own theoretical perspectives to provide diversity to thinking on corruption. This section will review four major perspectives on corruption: (1) ethical perspectives; (2) legal perspectives; (3) social perspectives; and (4) economic perspectives. For each of these, insights offered into the research questions will be discussed in terms of the conceptualisation of the phenomenon. Gaps will be reviewed more generally in section II.5. These perspectives will not always provide a complete picture of boundary spanner corruption, therefore, the limitations of these perspectives will also be discussed, with particular reference to their applicability to boundary spanner corruption. For brevity, for the remainder of this section, the single use of 'corruption' will refer to the 'general corruption' concept within the nested conceptualisation, which also reflects the use of the term by the various perspectives.

TABLE 2.1
KEY LITERATURE ON CORRUPTION

Source	Corruption domain			Severity		Motivator level			Study type	
	Public-to-private	Private-to-private	Boundary spanner	Severe	Less severe	Socio-cultural	Organisational	Individual	Empirical	Conceptual
Ethical perspectives										
Badenhorst (1994)		✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	
Collins, Uhlenbruck & Rodriguez (2009)	✓			✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
Pedigo & Marshall (2009)	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
Gottschalk (2012)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
Craft (2013)	✓			✓	✓			✓	✓	
Sharma & Bagozzi (2021)		✓		✓				✓	✓	
Legal perspectives										
Lascoumes (2014)		✓			✓		✓		✓	
Ceresola, R. G. (2019).	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓	
Teichmann (2019)	✓				✓		✓		✓	
Association of Fraud Examiners (2020)		✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		✓	

Source	Corruption domain			Severity		Motivator level			Study type	
	Public-to-private	Private-to-private	Boundary spanner	Severe	Less severe	Socio-cultural	Organisational	Individual	Empirical	Conceptual
Social perspectives										
Ashforth & Anand (2003)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Anand, Ashforth, & Joshi (2004)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Martin, Cullen, Johnson, & Parboteeah (2007)	✓			✓		✓			✓	
Misangyi, Weaver, & Elms (2008)						✓		✓		✓
Pinto, Leana, & Pil (2008)	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓		✓
Economic perspectives										
Celentania & Ganuzab (2002)		✓	✓	✓				✓		✓
Lambert-Mogiliansky & Sonin (2006)		✓	✓	✓				✓		✓
Lange (2008)		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓
Arnold, Neubauer, & Schoenherr (2012)	✓		✓	✓			✓		✓	
Iriyama, Kishore, & Talukdar (2016)	✓		✓	✓		✓			✓	
Jávor & Jancsics (2016)		✓		✓				✓	✓	

II.1.1 Ethical perspectives

Conceptualisation: Much of public discourse refers to 'corruption' in a loose sense. Within the general public, the word is used to relate to all manner of social and ethical ills (Twain, 1922*)*. For others, it can seem to cover all criminal activity, from tax evasion, money laundering, counterfeiting, and fraud (Fabre, 2009). Arguably, the etymological origin of the word suggests a metaphorical looseness; the Latin origin of the word (from *corruptus*, meaning broken suggests a corrosion of "the fabric of society" (Nicholls et al *2011.*: 1). The word 'corruption' can be treated as the opposite of 'ethical' and describes corruption as immoral acts (Nielsen, 2003). Within certain geographic contexts, 'corruption' is used to describe virtually anything dishonest (Smith, 2007).

Beyond the looser concept of the general public, scholars have attempted to use universalistic ethical perspectives as a basis against which corruption can be contrasted. For Scott (1972: 3) "corruption, we would all agree, involves a deviation from certain standards of behaviour". This definition has been simplified over the years to describe the "abuse of public office for private gain*"* which is used widely within the literature (Wei, 1999). The extension of this ethical definition has been championed by anti-corruption NGO, Transparency International (2014), which extends this definition to include private-to-private corruption and describes corruption as the "abuse of entrusted power for private gain". It is this simplified ethical conceptualisation of corruption that is widely employed by researchers in a range of different literatures (Alatas, 1990; Heymans & Lipiez, 1999; Arnold *et al.*, 2012).

This school chiefly explores the lack of ethical standards within individuals as a driver for corrupt behaviour. Corruption is driven simply by the weak moral compasses of individuals

(Craft, 2013). Corruption may also be driven by an organisation lacking a depersonalised equivalent: organisational moral integrity (Badenhorst, 1994). A major debate within this perspective is whether the predominant driver relates to individuals (or 'bad apples') or organisations (or 'bad barrels') (Gottschalk, 2012).

Limitations: These ethical perspectives require an *a priori* ethical system in place to obtain: What is the 'abuse' of power? Who decides this? And what criteria are used? Moreover, as will be apparent from the social perspective (section 2.1.3), many of these ethical assertions are not so much universal as intrinsically grounded in a local ethical system. A frequently occurring challenge to ethical perspectives on corruption is their grounding in socio-cultural norms that are geographically bounded. Indeed, perspectives on ethics can vary markedly between societies, which undermines the generalisability of ethical definitions of corruption (Lascoumes, 2014). The widespread prevalence of corruption also indicates that corruption itself may be considered the prevailing ethical standard, as opposed to the exception (Koechlin, 2013).

Insights into boundary spanner corruption: Despite these challenges to ethical perspectives on corruption, those looking to explore the phenomenon within a boundary spanner context frequently rely upon the ethical definition of corruption in research. This relates to researchers within the marketing space (Berthon et al., 2008) and the procurement space (Arnold et al., 2012). The main insight that emerges from this perspective is that the ethical consideration of the individual factors is critical. That is, understanding the boundary spanner representative's moral compass is an important motivator for boundary spanner corruption.

II.1.2 Legal perspectives

Conceptualisation: Given that ethical perspectives are difficult to provide a firm foundation for empirical research, other scholars have looked to explore the law for a conceptualisation of corruption. In fact, the earliest references to corruption were in legal statutes, as opposed to ethical arguments (Génaux, 2004). This has forged a long tradition within legal studies to examine corruption. Unlike the wide definitions posited by ethical theories, legal perspectives aim to narrow the definition. These perspectives understand corruption as a crime or violation of the law (Boersma, 2012). As such, corruption is a well-known concept under the law of many jurisdictions. The 2010 UK Bribery Act for example is considered to be the "strictest anti-bribery regime in the world" (Nicholls et al*.,* 2011). The UK Bribery Act, unlike other statutes (such as the US Foreign Corrupt Practices Act), creates an offence of corruption within a business relationship (*ibid*). Corruption is an indication of an injustice where behaviour deviates from the prescriptions of a statute (Génaux, 2004). This definition can operate within a jurisdiction, or even across them, as corruption can also be regarded as a violation of international human rights laws (Kofele-Kale, 2000). Legal perspectives also offer greater precision in defining corruption by using items from legal codes (bribery, embezzlement, trading in influence, abuse of function, etc.) to provide a typologised definition of corruption (Boersma, 2012). The existence of corruption, from the legal perspective, stems from poorly constructed or inadequate laws and weak legal enforcement (Gardiner, 2002). This weak enforcement of laws can lead to conflicts of interest which effective laws or regulatory regimes are expected to police against (Rose-Ackerman, 2000).

Limitations: Legal perspectives may fail to describe behaviours within jurisdictions that are *de jure* deviant but *de facto* common. Certain jurisdictions empower individuals to employ their

own legal rationalisations of behaviour that may be considered corrupt for some, yet acceptable for representatives' individual notions of justice. Relevant here is the work of Cohn (2001) who argues that often "fuzzy legality" is at work, by which the legality of an act is not always entirely clear and representatives consequently make their own applications of natural justice. Indeed, some argue against:

> "…the commonly held view that corruption is simply the law's negation, a vice afflicting the body politic. Instead we argue that corruption and the law are not opposites but constitutive of one another." (Nuijten & Anders, 2007: 2)

Insights into boundary spanner corruption: Applying the legal perspective to boundary spanner corruption is a challenge, as the focus of the perspective principally rests upon national law, as opposed to cross-national organisational interests. The universality of this perspective is further undermined where a jurisdiction does not prohibit boundary spanner corruption or enforce these laws. Rather, the main insight that emerges from this perspective indicates the importance of control mechanisms in enforcing behaviours. Enforcement is important not in respect of statue, but in enforcing organisational norms, or written expressions of these norms in artefacts such as a code of conduct, which directly reflect the nature of boundary spanner corruption.

II.1.3 Social perspectives

Conceptualisation: Gupta (1995) notes that much of the discourse surrounding 'corruption' is based on Western and Weberian notions of the rational-legal state, which simply does not exist in this form in many other societies. To complete an understanding of corruption, an appreciation therefore of the broader social context is important. There are two traditions within the social perspective that provides insight into the definition. First, a more socially grounded approach

abandons the notion that 'corruption' can have a universal definition. Rather, it is considered a word or discourse through which competing political identities, ideologies and demands can be contested and articulated (Koechlin, 2013). A second, more normative approach, looks at social norms that occur within different societies. This approach sees corruption as deviance against a norm that can manifest as deviance against a prescribed social behaviour (Fehr & Fischbacher, 2004), trust (Uslaner, 2005), or power hierarchies (Smith, 2007). Comparing corruption and norms between societies can provide a more generalisable definition (Fisman & Miguel, 2007).

The normative approach provides powerful drivers of corruption. Indeed, norms can override laws (Tulaeva, 2014). There are two relevant norms within the literature: Those that prohibit corruption and those that motivate it. Prohibitive norms regarding social behaviour and trust drive attitudes regarding corruption (Fehr & Gächter, 2000). Attitudes regarding what is and is not prohibited can lead to differing aptitudes to engage in corruption (Köbis, 2017). Prohibitive norms regarding behaviour, belief systems and attitudes drive corruption across different societies (Gatti et al., 2003). The distribution of prohibitive norms within a society is predictive of the distribution and prevalence of corruption within that society (Hauk & Saez-Marti, 2002). The second type of norm motivates corruption (Campbell & Göritz, 2014). Motivation norms (such as those prioritising performance) can often override prohibitive norms of ethical behaviour (Martin et al., 2007). These motivating norms can also create corruption within an organisation. At a subgroup level, corrupt social cocoons can normalise corruption (Anand et al., 2004). Social cocoons describe how norms between individuals or within subgroups can create their own norms of behaviour that sit in isolation from predominate norms in a wider organisation (Greil & Rudy, 1984). Corrupt social cocoons can create deviant subgroups within an otherwise ethical organisation (Campbell & Göritz, 2014) With repetition

and institutionalisation, corruption can become normalised on an organisation-wide level (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Misangyi et al., 2008). Where these norms have been structurally absorbed into the culture of that organisation, it can itself grow into a corrupt organisation (Pinto et al., 2008).

Social perspectives also point to trust as an important motivator for corruption. Even for criminal interactions, a certain degree of trust is required between the agents to enable the corrupt exchange to take place (Husted, 1994). Trust is at once facilitative of corruption, yet corruption is also a violation of trust. To resolve this tension, Uslaner (2005) distinguishes between generalised trust (trust between individuals and strangers) and particularised trust (trust between individuals and people with whom they have a relationship). On a social level, high degrees of generalised trust are also associated with lower corruption rates (Pena López, & Sánchez Santos, 2014). Increased generalised trust, as a rule, reduces corruption in a society, whereas "corruption thrives on particularised trust, where people only have faith in their own kind (or own small circle of malefactors)" (Uslaner, 2005: 27). Tonoyan (2005) observes a 'dark side' of particularised trust which leads to increased corruption. It is this high level of particularised trust for those within the circle, which can lead to subverting the system through corruption later (Gambetta, 1993). Trust is at once a driver of corruption, yet also corruption drives distrust. At a social level, corruption reduces the degree of generalised trust within a society (Richey, 2010). At an organisational level, corruption is corrosive to generalised trust (Banerjee, 2016). From an individual level, corruption lowers the degree of particularised trust within an organisation and lowers interpersonal trust between employees (Seligson, 2002).

Limitations: The limitations of social perspectives are that their grounding in the socio-cultural contexts often reduces the ability to generalise findings. Understanding the definition of

corruption under the social perspective, therefore, is often contextually driven, leaving the definition to be *sui generis* and difficult to apply beyond the confines of the socio-cultural context. To provide more generalisability, normative approaches generalise between societies by exploring norms as they emerge within those contexts (such as trust and power) and comparing the nature of those norms between geographies. There is still debate regarding the capability to generalise the findings of these norms to different socio-cultural contexts (Fisman & Miguel, 2007).

Insights into boundary spanner corruption: There is an established literature exploring motivating norms within a business or organisational context, although none has been directly applied to explore boundary spanner corruption. The external nature of boundary spanner norms does make them more susceptible to the influence of socio-cultural norms that may outweigh organisational norms. In particular, social cocoons are of particular relevance to boundary spanner representatives, whose high level of interpersonal trust with counterparties may provide a mechanism to explain the emergence of corruption (Campbell & Göritz, 2014). These social cocoons provide encapsulation mechanisms that isolate them from organisational standards and normalise corruption between boundary spanner representatives (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). Moreover, social perspectives also identify trust, specifically at the interpersonal level, as a mechanism for corruption. Researchers have noted that 'particularised trust', in which personalised relationships are based upon identity, may lead to corruption (Tonoyan, 2005). It also seems plausible that the prevalence of particularised trust in an organisation may also be a driver for the emergence of social cocoons, which in turn potentially leads to corruption. These factors are highly relevant to the trusted nature of boundary spanner representatives who are tasked to form relationships with counterparts in organisations.

II.1.4 Economic perspectives

Conceptualisation: The final perspective examined in this review explores theories drawn from economics. These are theories that predict behaviour based on rational representatives' incentives (Dimant & Schulte, 2016). Writers within economic perspectives have sought to build models which understand the incentives that rational agents would tend to engage in corrupt exchanges. For instance, Becker (1968) describes corrupt individuals weighing a rational cost-benefit analysis exercise, where the marginal benefit of engaging in corrupt activity (e.g. the size of the bribes) outweighs the marginal cost (e.g. the risk of being revealed).

There are two major contributions of economic theory that provide behavioural drivers or mechanisms for corrupt activity, namely rent-seeking and principal-agent models. On the former, principal-agent theory examines the misalignment of incentives between the agent and principal. Principal-agent theory can be used to analyse corruption in a wide range of contexts from grand corruption (Groenendijk, 1997) to petty bribery (Gambetta, 2005). Within the literature on corruption, Della Porta and Vannucci (2017) provide a clear explanation:

"There is corruption where:

1. Where there is a secret violation of a contract that, implicitly or explicitly, specifies a delegation of responsibility and the exercise of some discretionary power.
2. When an agent who, against the interests of preferences of the *principal,* acts in favour of a *third party*, from which he receives a reward." (*ibid.*: 16-17)

Harris (2003) believes that corruption is principally an interstitial activity, where corruption occurs between organisations. This is the space in which boundary spanners can exploit their privileges as representatives and pursue their own interests (potentially against those

interests of their employers). In these theories, the degree of agent autonomy to act is weighed

against the controls put into place by the principal, to reduce the agent's opportunity to engage in

corruption (Aidt, 2003). A sub-set of principal-agent models uses the concept of conflict of

interest (Rose-Ackerman, 2002). This account sees corruption as "behaviour that deviates from

the formal duties of a public role (elective or appointive) because of private-regarding (personal,

close family, private clique) wealth or status gains" (Nye, 1967: 419).

Another driver of corruption within the economic perspective explores rent-seeking

theories. A rent-seeker is an "individual who invests in something that will not actually improve

productivity or will actually lower it, but that it does raise his income because it gives him some

special position of monopoly of power," (Tullock, 1967: 17). This theory explains individual

motivations to actions not in relation to contractually agreed terms but to the potential for a

position of responsibility to extract rents from others (Krueger, 1974). This is a theory frequently

used to analyse drivers of corruption within a private-to-public corruption context (Harris, 2003).

Langseth and Michael (1998) find that public officials are likely to act as rent-seekers within the

distribution of public services and thereby adding more inefficiencies and costs to those end-

users and indeed the broader society. Rent-seekers induce bribery, for example, directly from the

service users.

Limitations: In terms of limitations, economic perspectives do not so much proffer definitions of

corruption, but construct models that explain the emergence of corruption (Philp, 1997).

However, the theories within economic perspectives provide predictive tools and models with

which the drivers of corruption can be better understood.

Insights into boundary spanner corruption: A key insight of economic perspectives are derived

from the incentives-focused approaches of economic perspectives. Models for boundary spanner

corruption need to account for the opportunities and incentives that boundary spanners face within their roles. In particular, theories focus on risk-reward calculations by individuals when placed in situations where the opportunity for deviance is present (Cressey, 1950). Boundary spanners, in that interstitial space also have a wide opportunity to engage in deviant behaviour (Harris, 2003) Therefore, the application of principal-agent theories, in particular, is useful within the boundary spanner research to outline the conflicting interests of representatives and their respective principal organisations (Arnold et al., 2012). Economic perspectives provide insight into intraorganisational trust as a motivator for boundary spanner corruption. The greater the degree of intraororganisational trust a boundary spanner representative is afforded, the greater their opportunity to take advantage of their 'monopoly of power'.

II.1.5 Perspectives applied to boundary spanner corruption

These different perspectives on corruption provide varying definitions and drivers of corruption. Some of these perspectives cover a wide range of behaviours, such as normative and social perspectives that incorporate rich understandings of ethics and social factors into their understanding of corruption. Conversely, legal and economic perspectives are narrower in their scope, and tend to rely upon contract or law as an analytical foundation. These perspectives also yield differing degrees of universality. Ethical and economic perspectives intend to apply to universal behaviours. Social perspectives are s*ui generis* and reliant upon the social context to provide an understanding of the phenomena. Other perspectives can straddle the divide and provide both universal and context-dependent accounts. Legal perspectives are grounded upon statutes drawn from a particular jurisdiction, but the perspective also gives rise to universalistic accounts based upon universal human rights (Kofele-Kale, 2000). Social perspectives also demonstrate similar properties as their focus on norms and trust can be contextually driven, but the underlying mechanisms also have universal applicability. As a general rule, it is mostly the social and economic perspectives that explore phenomena relevant to boundary spanner corruption - see table 2.2 for a comparison of these different perspectives.

Although the perspectives broaden understanding of boundary spanner corruption, they do not relate directly to boundary spanner corruption and can provide only inferential insight. For the first research question, the perspectives provide a broad conceptualisation of general corruption and its definition, however this does not also map directly onto this dissertation's conceptualisation of the concept. For example, legal and economic perspectives reduce the definition of the concept as a violation of law (Tänzler et al., 2016)

TABLE 2.2

PERSPECTIVES ON CORRUPTION

Perspectives	Key source	Conceptualisation	Driver(s) of corruption	Limitation	Insights into boundary spanner corruption
Ethical perspectives	Transparency International (2014)	Corruption as an unethical act	Lack of moral compass	Lack of generalisability; requirement of ethical system.	Highlights individual factors such as moral compass.
Legal perspectives	Kofele-Kale (2000); Génaux (2004); Boersma (2012)	Corruption as a contravention of law or regulation	Lack of legal enforcement; weak legal institutions	Limiting corruption to only relate to legal statute.	Highlights organisational factors, such as control systems.
Social perspectives	Uslaner (2002); Gatti, Paternostr, & Rigolini (2003); Smith (2007)	Corruption as deviance from social norms	Norms of social behaviour, Norms of particularised trust; norms of patron-client relationships	Lack of generalisability; *sui generis* phenomena	Highlights socio-cultural factors as well as interpersonal mechanisms (e.g trust and social cocoon)
Economic perspectives	della Porta and Vannucci (2017); Gambetta (2005)	Corruption as agent profit maximising	Organisational capture by individual/groups; Misalignment of principal-agent interests	Vague definition of corruption.	Highlights incentives and opportunities motivators

and may miss other actions in jurisdictions in which boundary spanner corruption is not criminalised or where the law is not enforced (Gupta, 1995).

One of the major aspects of these competing perspectives is the focal concepts that they deploy to provide a definitional basis for corruption. Within the social perspectives, different aspects of relational elements are included. These largely relate to studies at the interpersonal levels (Ashforth & Anand 2003; Anand et al. 2004; Pinto et al., 2008; Misangyi et al., 2008).

The breadth of levels represented in the social perspective research is broad. The richness offered by social perspectives on corruption offers a depth of analysis that recognises the complexity of trust in interpersonal and social contexts. By contrast, ethical perspectives offer too loose a definition and understanding of the phenomenon to afford much analytical depth in the description of this complex environment. Similarly, legal perspectives are narrowly focused upon statutes to refer in any significant depth to the boundary spanner role. Therefore, the social perspectives provide perhaps the most appropriate lens to understand boundary spanner corruption. More specifically, the deviance against organisational norms (and the potential for violation of trust in a multi-level business relationship) can provide a guide rail to deepen the understanding of boundary spanner corruption.

Similarly, the economic perspectives of corruption also offer an approach to understanding the multiple levels of boundary spanner corruption. However, these theories are targeted toward inter-organisational and intra-organisational levels compared to the interpersonal concerns of social perspectives. Boundary spanners are representatives of the businesses and are entrusted to present their employers. That the interests between boundary spanners and their employers differ further suggests the principal-agent distinction used within economic perspectives. On top of the principal-agent distinction, boundary spanners are nested in a model level structure of trust that includes inter-organisational trust between the principals at the organisation level in the business relationship and the interpersonal level between boundary spanner representatives between the two organisations in the business relationship (Fang et al., 2008). The explanatory mechanisms and motivators of economic theories (such as economic incentives, and financial reward) provide an account that can accommodate these differing levels.

II.2 The dark side of business relationships

A finding within the review of the corruption literature streams was the importance of trust as a

motivator. Both the social and economic perspectives revealed trust as an important

representative of their models, namely social cocoon and principal-agent theories. Research that

focuses on trust and its potential negative consequences in business relationships is the dark side

of business relationships literature. This stream focuses on how relational mechanisms can

negatively influence outcomes in interorganisational and interpersonal contexts that relate to the

boundary spanner space. This section will therefore review the literature on the dark side of

business relationships and its relevance for boundary spanner corruption. First, the section will

succinctly examine business relationships. Second, it will explore boundary spanners' roles

within those business relationships. Lastly, it will review the dark side of business relationships

in answering the research questions outlined in chapter I.

Business relationships: Business relationships, like other social phenomena, represent a

complex, multi-faceted concept (Tähtinen & Blois, 2011). Although they are often nested in

more complex networks, business relationships are conceptually distinct from business networks

(which relate to multiple organisations) and describe dyadic interactions between two

organisations (Anderson et al., 1994). These two organisations both are private sector

organisations, that is, the concept relates to business-to-business interactions, as opposed to

business-to-consumer interactions (Friman et., 2002). Business relationships are further

contrasted from business transactions, in which one-off deals are made between two

organisations on a largely calculative basis (Andersen & Kumar, 2006). Rather, they are

characterised as containing co-operative, co-ordinated and collaborative behaviour (Humphries

& Wilding, 2004). Although they can be either close or distant, business relationships are associated with a sense of commitment to further interactions between the organisations (Lewicki & Bunker, 1996). At the closest level of collaboration within business relationships, symbiotic partnerships or strategic alliances form (Child, 1998). These close business relationships can be characterised as replacing the calculation of transactional exchanges with an "open-ended commitment to take initiatives for mutual benefits of both parties" (Sako, 1998: 89).

Business relationships are initiated by a multitude of antecedents including attractiveness (Mortensen, 2012), the competitive environment (Slater & Narver, 1994), mutual benefits (Campbell, 1997) and trust (Blois, 1999). The formation of business relationships often emerges from a more transactional past of repeat exchanges (Sako, 1998). Where the formation of business transactions chiefly rests upon calculation, sustaining and deepening the relationships can require organisations to engage with a more complex set of considerations (Child, 1998). Sustaining business relationships is furthered by factors such as communication (Low & Mohr, 2001) customer experience (Homburg et al., 2017), ethical behaviour (Ou et al., 2012), gratitude (Palmatier et al., 2009), loyalty (Palmatier et al., 2007b), performance (Palmatier et al., 2007a), relationship-specific investments (Williamson,1989) and trust (Morgan & Hunt, 1994).

The 'bright side' of these relationships is that they can bring significant value to businesses (Morgan & Hunt 1994; 1999). Close, effective business relationships can improve business performance (Palmatier, 2008), increase supplier responsiveness (Handfield & Bechtel, 2002), increase access to supplier resources (Pulles, et al., 2014) and increases knowledge transfer (Kim, et al., 2015). These are often facilitated by close interpersonal relationships

between boundary spanner representatives (Haytko, 2004), which will now be explored in more depth.

Boundary spanners in business relationships: Interpersonal representatives directly sustain business relationships, that is to say, "business relationships are contingent on recurrent personal interaction among individuals from both the buying and the selling organisations" (Anderson & Kumar, 2006: 521). A major component to facilitate these personal interactions are dedicated boundary spanner roles, such as sales managers or procurement managers, who are responsible for the external representation of their respective organisations (Aldrich & Herker, 1977). Boundary spanners act as gatekeepers for external organisations, helping navigate the complex operational and organisational structures within an organisation (Fawcett et al., 2015). Boundary spanners are also organisational eyes into the external world, perceiving and conveying information to the organisation (Leifer & Huber, 1977). The role is particularly instrumental in managing collaborative arrangements and integrating entities in close partnerships or alliances (Williams, 2011). Communicative and collaborative boundary spanners, when deployed in such partnerships, can enhance the overall performance of these relationships (Dekker et al., 2019). To deliver this, boundary spanners are often entrusted with wide autonomy (Perrone et al., 2003) When such latitude is granted, the benefits to the organisation can be significant, for example in the generation of additional innovation boundary spanners feel less encumbered by internal organisational constraints (Hsu et al., 2007).

However, the complex requirements of the boundary spanner role can create goal ambiguity (Johlke & Duhan, 2001), which itself can impede job satisfaction and performance (Crawford & Nonis, 1996). Consequently, their positions are stressful (Stamper & Johlke, 2003)

and can often lead to burnout (Ambrose et al., 2014). Boundary spanners identify both with their

own organisation and external group partners, bisecting their identities (Richter et al., 2006).

These dual roles often lead to internal emotional conflicts, as representatives struggle to

accommodate the commercial interests of their organisation as well as the interests of an external

counterparty (Friedman & Podolny, 1992). These conflicts can also create split loyalties as

boundary spanners feel a greater personal affinity to those external to their organisation (Gino &

Galinsky, 2012). These role pressures and potential negative result of intraorganisational trust,

leads us to the dark side of business relationships, which will now be explored.

The conceptualisation of dark side of business relationships: There are also 'dark side'

effects that may potentially also account for deviance within business relationships. This chapter

now turns to this literature stream to review the mechanisms and levels that operate within this

stream that may have a bearing on boundary spanner corruption. This literature stream explored

the potential negative effects that emerge from close business relationships, which run contrary

to the interests of the organisations (Villena et al., 2019). For example, boundary spanners in

these business relationships can fall sway to a range of negative behaviours that harm the

organisation, such as complacency (Jap & Anderson, 2003), groupthink (Villena et al., 2011,

2020) or reduced objectivity (Moorman et al., 1992). These conflicting interests may also lead to

behaviours that internally harm the organisation such as opportunism (Rossetti & Choi, 2005),

sabotage (Harris & Ogbonna, 2006) or, as proposed by this dissertation, boundary spanner

corruption. These mechanisms show the 'dark side' of business relationships, in which close or

trusting relationships may deplete performance. See Table 2.3 for an overview.

TABLE 2.3

KEY LITERATURE ON THE DARK SIDE OF BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS

Source	Unintentional Dark Side Cognitive biases	Intentional Dark Side Opportunism against partner	Opportunism against own firm	Trust Factors Interpersonal trust	Interorganisational trust	Intraorganisational agency trust
Moorman et al., (1992)	✓	✓		✓		
Grayson & Ambler (1999)	✓	✓				
Wicks et al., (1999)		✓			✓	
Jap & Ganesan (2000)		✓				
Jeffries & Reed (2000)	✓			✓	✓	
McEvily et al., (2003)	✓			✓	✓	
Jap & Anderson (2003)		✓		✓		
Anderson & Jap (2005)	✓	✓		(✓)		
Rossetti & Choi (2005)		✓			✓	
Wuyts & Geyskens (2005)		✓			(✓)	
Fang et al., (2008)	✓			✓	✓	
Brown et al., (2009)	✓	✓				
Molina-Morales & Martínez-Fernández (2009)	✓				✓	
Noordhoff et al., (2011)	✓	✓				
Villena et al., (2011)	✓	✓			(✓)	
Wang et al., (2013)		✓			✓	
Villena et al., (2015)	✓	✓			(✓)	
Villena & Craighead (2017)		✓			(✓)	
Villena et al., (2019)	✓	✓			✓	
Villena et al., (2020)	✓				(✓)	

Note: indicates concepts very closely related to trust such as relational social capital. Intentional = actions that knowingly result in negative consequences for others; unintentional = actions that unknowingly result in negative consequences for others or oneself. The table includes only literature about the dark side of close business relationships and does not include related literature, such as on networks and general social relationships (e.g., Gargiulo & Benassi, 2000; Gonzalez et al., 2014; Langfred, 2004; Uzzi, 1997).

Research on the dark side of close business relationships distinguishes between intentional behaviours such as opportunism (Rindfleisch & Heide, 1997) and unintentional dysfunctional behaviours such as those arising from cognitive biases (Villena et al., 2011). Like other intentional dark side behaviours (Wuyts & Geyskens, 2005), boundary spanner corruption is voluntary and detrimental to organisational well-being. Business relationships can unintentionally generate a variety of sub-optimal effects, such as over-embeddedness and isolation, less diffusion of information and ideas, and ultimately less value creation and lower relationship performance (Gargiulo & Benassi 2000; Gonzalez et al., 2014; Uzzi 2018). A key attribute highlighted within the literature identifies cognitive bias within the minds of boundary spanners as leading to suboptimal outcomes (Villena et al., 2011). Close business relationships can increase feelings of devotion or obligation, resulting in cognitive biases such as myopia and consequently resource misallocation (Brown et al., 2009; Villena et al., 2011; Villena et al., 2015). Potential investments with partners are scrutinised less carefully (Villena et al., 2019). High interdependence and the cognitive lock-in often associated with close business relationships generate opportunity costs by reducing partners' motivations to negotiate, evaluate alternatives and opportunities, and scan for and respond to external threats (Fang et al., 2008; Jeffries & Reed, 2000; Langfred, 2004; McEvily et al., 2003). These unintentional factors deliver different effects at different organisational levels. At the interpersonal level, high degrees of involvement between boundary spanners (Moorman et al., 1992) in long-term relationships (Grayson & Ambler, 1999) that are close (Wuyts & Geyskens, 2005) and strong (Jap & Anderson, 2005) provide interpersonal motivating factors for boundary spanners to turn to the dark side in their relationships. Moreover, at the interorganisational level, relationships that are embedded (Noordhoff et al., 2011) and mutually interdependent (Villena et al., 2019) and with

high levels of relational investments (Jap & Ganesan, 2000) provides motivating factors for interorganisational opportunism. However, unintentional elements do not directly relate to boundary spanner corruption; the definition requires that representatives engage in voluntary collusion which requires a degree of awareness. That said, cognitive biases are individual factors that may determine a representative's proclivity to collude.

Among the intentional dark side behaviours, the focus rests primarily on opportunism, as it shares key characteristics with boundary spanner corruption. Research on opportunism in interorganisational relationships typically examines surreptitious actions by one firm or representative to take advantage of a partner firm or individual (Rindfleisch & Heide, 1997). Thus, it is similar to boundary spanner corruption as it occurs within an interorganisational relationship, involves surreptitious behaviour, impacts a partner firm, and typically involves frontline representatives. However, the differences are highly significant. Previous opportunism research has focused on activities that benefit the focal firm at the expense of a partner firm; representatives that engage in opportunism typically do so with the tacit or explicit approval of management. In addition, representatives that engage in opportunism do not collude with counterparts at other firms, but often mislead, misdirect, obfuscate, or lie to counterparts. In contrast, boundary spanner corruption involves collusive activity between individuals representing different firms in which secrecy and deception are directed against their own firms. Boundary spanner corruption has been overlooked in the relationship marketing literature.

In research on intentional and unintentional dark side behaviours, trust has been recognised as a pivotal factor (Wang et al., 2013; Villena et al., 2019). Trustors exhibit decreased desire, will, and ability to monitor highly trusted relationship partners, diverting scarce resources

to monitor those less trusted. However, decreased monitoring of highly trusted partners makes

the trustor inherently more vulnerable to intentional violations of trust (Wang et al., 2013),

malfeasance (Dyer & Singh, 1998; Gulati & Nickerson, 2008) and opportunism (Anderson &

Jap, 2005; Villena & Craighead, 2017). Trust thus provides the essential discretionary space that

enables surreptitious activities to go undetected. Intentional dark side behaviours are often

explicitly associated with a violation of trust such as salesperson opportunism violating the

buyer's interpersonal trust in that salesperson. Boundary spanner corruption is similarly a

violation of trust but differs from the extant literature about whose trust is violated. Boundary

spanner corruption does not violate interpersonal trust, but rather requires interpersonal trust; the

salesperson violates the seller's agency trust and simultaneously the buyer violates the

customer's agency trust.

Although the literature has acknowledged trust as a key factor in enabling dark side

behaviours, discussions often meld trust at different levels or simply fail to distinguish the

specific levels of trust. Even when the focal trustor-trustee is identified, there are few

investigations of the simultaneous or interactive effects of trust at multiple organisational levels,

with the intraorganisational level being particularly neglected. This vague conceptualisation of

the dark side of trust in the extant literature may help explain why boundary spanner corruption,

a multi-level phenomenon, has not yet been investigated.

Insights into boundary spanner corruption: Although the dark side of business relationships

literature does offer a wide set of conceptualisations, these do not directly apply to the nature of

boundary spanner corruption. Representatives in these models generally target their partners and

not their organisations. Although some indicators of pervasiveness exist, they do not provide

accounts that reveal the prevalence of boundary spanner corruption. Consequences of boundary

spanner corruption are also not analysed by the literature stream. However, the dark side of

business relationships literature stream contributes insightful motivators that apply to boundary

spanner corruption. The unintentional dark side of business relationships provides a range of

cognitive bias motivators (Moorman et al., 1992; Grayson & Ambler, 1999; Jeffries & Reed,

2000). Many of these can be mapped directly to the conceptualisation of boundary spanner

corruption used by this dissertation. This can relate to the interpersonal aspects of representative

relationships where their objectivity is reduced (Moorman et al., 1992) or their ability to

challenge their counterparty is lessened (Villena et al., 2019). However, these factors may

explain how individuals may unintentionally behave corruptly, but the definition requires that

corruption is engaged voluntarily. Therefore, these factors can provide a motivating background

to boundary spanner corruption, it cannot explain its emergence. Moreover, the facets described

by these accounts are rather wide and generally relate to opportunism applied by organisations

themselves.

A more significant contributory element provided by the dark side literature is the

inclusion of trust as a motivator. This is both evident at the interpersonal level (Jeffries & Reed,

2000; McEvily et al., 2003; Molina-Morales & Martínez-Fernández, 2009) and the

interorganisational level (Wicks, et al., 1999; Rossetti & Choi, 2005; Wang, et al., 2013).

However, an evident omission within the literature is the lack of studies exploring the nature of

intraorganisational trust. This is a key aspect of understanding the role of boundary spanners,

who are entrusted with agency responsibilities to represent their organisation (Aldrich & Herker,

1977). Moreover, understanding this internal level of trust is also critical to understanding the

nature of trust within a business relationship (Fang, et al., 2008). Within the boundary spanner

roles, there are instances where representatives feel external pressures to abuse their level of internal trust (Friedman & Podolny, 1992; Gino & Galinsky, 2012). To explore this particular literature gap, this chapter therefore turns to the sales and services literature to understand the factors within an organisation that may provide opportunities for boundary spanners to engage in corrupt behaviour.

II.3 Deviance in sales and service organisations

When exploring the research questions on the nature, prevalence and consequences of boundary spanner corruption, neither the perspectives on corruption nor the dark side of business relationships provided sufficient conceptualisation or empirical evidence. The dark side of corruption suggests trust factors and monitoring motivators. The perspectives on corruption similarly proffered a range of motivators and mechanisms. The corruption perspectives have not spoken directly related to boundary spanner corruption. To explore literatures to cover this gap, this section will now examine the literature in sales and service organisations and apply its insights to boundary spanner behaviour. By contrast, the procurement side of the boundary spanner relationship is not afforded the same detailed treatment, only a single paper has been found that tackles boundary spanner corruption within the procurement and supply chain management side (Arnold et al., 2012). As with previous sections, this will review the conceptualisation of sales and service deviance and then explore the drivers within it (these are summarised in table 2.4).

Conceptualisation of sales and services deviance: The deviance examined in the sales and service literature focuses almost entirely on individually motivated and executed acts. This research offers limited insights regarding how deviant intentions are manifest in collusive.

TABLE 2.3

KEY LITERATURE ON DEVIANCE IN SALES AND SERVICE ORGANISATIONS

	Context		Deviance Type			Deviant Representative		Dyadic Factors*		Intraorganisational Factors*		Individual Factors*	
Source	*B2C*	*B2B**	*Organisation-targeted**	*Colleague-targeted*	*Customer-related*	*Individual*	*Collusive**	*Inter-personal*	*Inter-organisational*	*Triggers*	*Opportunities*	*Propensity*	*Internal Control*
Individual Deviance Focus													
Jaworski (1988)	✓	✓	✓			✓					✓		
Jaworski & MacInnis (1989)	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓		✓
Agarwal & Ramaswami (1993)	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓		✓
Robertson & Anderson (1993)		✓	✓		✓	✓					✓	✓	
Ramaswami (1996)	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓		✓
Harris & Ogbonna (2002)	✓				✓	✓					✓	✓	
Ramaswami & Singh (2003)		✓	✓			✓				✓	✓		
Choi et al (2004)	✓	✓	✓			✓				✓	✓		
Harris & Ogbonna (2006)	✓				✓	✓					✓	✓	
Jelinek & Ahearne (2006a)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		
Jelinek & Ahearne (2006b)		✓	✓	✓		✓				✓			✓
Skarlicki et al. (2008)	✓				✓	✓				✓		✓	
Jelinek & Ahearne 2010		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓		✓	

	Context		Deviance Type			Deviant Representiative		Dyadic Factors*		Intraorganisation Factors*		Individual Factors*	
Darrat et al. 2010		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓			
Wang et al. (2011)	✓				✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	✓
Yoo et al. (2013)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓			✓
Yoo et al. (2014)		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓			✓
Chi et al. (2015)	✓				✓	✓				✓			✓
Darrat et al. 2016		✓	✓		✓	✓				✓			
Darrat et al. 2017		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓		
Hochstein et al. (2017)	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					✓	✓	✓
Huang et al. (2019)	✓				✓	✓				✓	✓		
Seriki et al. (2020)	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓	✓	
Collusive Deviance Focus													
Brady et al. (2012)	✓		✓		✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓

*Note: Denotes elements of most relevance to boundary spanner corruption.

deviance. Even in service sweethearting, the frontline employees violate their organisation's

norms, but the involved consumers act on their own behalf. In boundary spanner corruption,

however, both involved individuals are agents of their respective firms and by definition

violate the norms of both firms. The primary focus of sales and services relates to business-

to-business ('B2B') practices, as opposed to business-to-consumer ('B2C') behaviours.

Within the B2B space, the literature explores securing repeat business (Robertson &

Anderson, 1993) and other aspects of maintaining business relationships that may lead sales

representatives towards deviant behaviours. By contrast, within the B2C space, customers

may be preyed upon for temporary gain (Seriki et al., 2020). Within the definition of

boundary spanner corruption used by this dissertation, it is the B2B domain which will be of

primary relevance, as it provides the auspices between which the collusive representative

relationship can occur. Deviant, self-serving intraorganisational behaviours are similar to

boundary spanner corruption in that they, too, involve opportunism *vis-à-vis* one's own firm.

Research on sales and service has identified several types of deviance: organisation-targeted

deviance such as manipulating control systems through shirking or expense-padding

(Ramaswami, 1996), colleague-targeted interpersonal deviance such as sabotaging co-

workers (Jelinek & Ahearne, 2010), and customer-related deviance such as service

sweethearting (Brady et al., 2012) or service sabotage (Harris & Ogbonna, 2006). This

literature suggests that dysfunctional salesperson activities are motivated and enabled by both

intraorganisational factors and individual factors (Brady et al., 2012; Robertson &Anderson,

1993). These types of deviance primarily explore the target of the behaviour. Deviance can be

directed against other colleagues within the organisation (Seriki et al., 2020), which can

include elements such as excessive employee criticism to credit-stealing (Jelinek & Ahearne,

2010). Other deviance types also relate to targeting the customers themselves, who are

subject to negative acts by boundary spanners themselves (Wang et al., 2011; Huang et al.,

2019). More pertinently to this dissertation is the deviance type that targets the organisation (Skarlicki et al., 2008). These relate to a lack of employee commitment to the organisation (Ramaswami & Singh, 2003) or reluctance to share information with colleagues (Choi et al., 2004). Boundary spanners can demonstrate these organisation-harming behaviours in their roles. These behaviours range from ignoring company rules (Jelinek & Ahearne, 2006) to openly defying supervisor instructions (Choi et al., 2013). The representatives within the sales and service literature exclusively include those acting in their own capacity within the organisation. This relates to more 'bad apple' descriptions of deviance, as sales representatives seek to 'get even' (Jelinek & Ahearne, 2006b) to overcome long hours (Jelinek & Ahearne, 2010), stress at work (Jelinek & Ahearne, 2006b), or general role dissatisfaction (Darrat et al., 2017).

Intraorganisational deviance-inducing factors include triggers that motivate deviant intentions and opportunities that arise from failure to block or suppress those intentions from becoming manifest in behaviour (Fox et al., 2001; Marcus & Schuler, 2004; Robinson & Bennett, 1995). Triggers include factors such as perceived inequity of sales bonuses or unfair allocation of sales leads; opportunities can result from boundary spanner autonomy or organisational latitude regarding norm compliance. Some employees' individual dispositions make them more likely to contemplate deviant behaviour. These include individual deviance-inducing propensities, such as competitiveness and risk-seeking, and lack of internal controls to suppress deviance, such as low self-monitoring or lack of moral obligation (Marcus &Schuler, 2004). These deviance-inducing intraorganisational and individual factors provide great insight into the conditions that induce a boundary spanner to consider or desire to pursue deviant activities.

Insights into boundary spanner corruption: Despite the relevance of the studies discussed above, there are still gaps in addressing the boundary spanner research questions. The literature sheds little light on the inter-organisational considerations that lead representatives of different organisations to engage in more complex, collaborative deviance. Moreover, dyadic factors, especially those of a collusive nature are largely absent from the literature. This is essential to understanding boundary spanner corruption, which is principally a collusive act between agents of the organisation. That said, the sales and service research on deviant behaviours provides helpful insights regarding deviance-inducing intraorganisational and individual factors and how the discontent can manifest in individually-executed deviant acts. These relate to describing a larger business-to-business context (which reflects the remit of boundary spanners), in collusive acts that are targeted towards the organisation, that cover a range of individual and intraorganisational factors. A key contributing factor of the sales and services deviance research is triggers and opportunities for deviance within representatives' roles (Marcus & Schuler, 2004). Where a control environment is weak, then boundary spanners may be more minded to commit deviant acts (Jaworski, 1988). Moreover, this literature stream provides intraorganisational and individual motivators for boundary spanner corruption. These demonstrate and underline the various organisational levels in which boundary spanners occupy, as noted by the general perspectives on corruption. The sales and services literature shows that individuals may be driven by personal factors (such as stress or role dissatisfaction) or organisational factors, such as a lack of monitoring. These insights can enrich our understanding of boundary spanner corruption.

II.4 Summary of literature streams

This section identifies the key contributions of each of the consulted literature streams that inform boundary spanner corruption and the research questions outlined in chapter I.

Firstly, the perspectives consulted upon corruption provided definitions and insights on the concept drawn from different academic traditions. The ethical perspectives highlight the centrality of ethical standards in respect of corruption and the role of individual moral compasses in driving corruption. As applied to boundary spanner corruption, therefore, the moral compass of these individual representatives is an important consideration and provides an insight into the motivators of boundary spanner corruption. Legal perspectives provide a typologised definition of corruption drawn from statutes, which suggested an array of relevant behaviours (such as bribery, extortion, etc.) all of which can map on to boundary spanner activities. The legal stream also highlights the lack of regulatory control or enforcement as a potential driver for corruption which contributes as another motivator. The social perspective takes a broader definition of corruption, which was grounded in socio-cultural contexts. This allowed for a close examination of the motivators of corruption, relating to norms of reciprocity, trust and power hierarchies. This perspective provides an insight into the organisational group or subgroup that drove individual behaviour and potentially interpersonal groups within boundary spanner groups between their respective organisations. Finally, this section explores economic perspectives that defined corruption under the auspices of profit-seeking individual behaviour. The major motivator referenced the conflicting interests of principal-agent dilemmas, in which boundary spanner agents could potentially abuse the trust of their organisational principal by engaging in corrupt behaviour with others. However, despite the richness of this literature, few studies have been directed into the nature and drivers of boundary spanner corruption, which can only be partially explored through a patchwork of studies from different perspectives.

Secondly, the stream on business relationships defined the parameters of the business relationships in which boundary spanners operate. This section finds that the business relationships were of a non-transactional nature, related to business-to-business interactions

and were often facilitated by boundary spanner roles. These boundary spanners delivered substantial value to the business, although the pressure of the position and multiple roles to which they were expected to represent created conflicting interests within the execution of their representation within the business relationship. It is these factors that provide potential conditions for the emergence of boundary spanner corruption. Thirdly, the stream on the dark side of business relationships indicates that the mechanisms by which business relationships are forged can actually deplete relational performance. As with the corruption literature, dark side studies have found that trust can be a significant dark side mechanism (either intentionally or unintentionally). However, the theories that are derived from this literature stream cannot accommodate a multilevel understanding of trust that is essential to the nature of the boundary spanner role.

Lastly, the steam on boundary spanner deviance in sales and services provides an account of the representatives that relate to boundary spanner corruption. In respect of the contingencies, the relational factors of these investigations, however, tend to refer purely to individual or organisational factors, whereas collusive elements are central to the definition of boundary spanner corruption that demands the voluntary involvement of both representatives.

The consulted literature provides differing perspectives in answering the research questions. The insights and gaps provided by the reviewed literature streams are outlined in table 2.5. In respect of the first three research questions, the consulted literature streams do not offer direct answers. For questions on the nature of boundary spanner corruption, given that no studies directly explore boundary spanner corruption, this can only be inferred piecemeal from a variety of streams. The prevalence of boundary spanner corruption cannot be directly gauged as studies do not measure this phenomenon. Likewise, the specific

consequences of boundary spanner corruption are not directly explored by any of the consulted literature streams.

In contrast, the literature streams do provide more insight into research questions four and five. Every consulted literature steam provides insights into the motivators of boundary spanner corruption. In the corruption perspectives, ethical perspectives reveal the importance of individual factors, such as personal greed or weak moral compasses (Craft, 2013). Legal perspectives highlight the importance of weak controls for organisational standards or codes (Rose-Ackerman, 2014). Social perspectives provide insights into the impact of socio-cultural factors that shape deviant behaviours (Fehr & Fischbacher, 2004). It also underlines the importance of interpersonal trust in the social aspects of boundary spanner relationships (Campbell & Göritz, 2014). Economic perspectives highlight the intra-organisational distinction between principal and agent and entrusted responsibilities of boundary spanner representatives (Della Porta & Vannucci, 1999). Economic perspectives also provide motivators in respect of the incentives and opportunities open to boundary spanner representatives (Aidt, 2003). On the dark side of business relationships, trust drivers are flagged as a motivator for negative behaviour (Villena et al., 2019). This literature also provides a multi-level of trust between interorganisational, intraorganisational and interpersonal levels in which deviance can occur (Wang et al., 2013). The sales and service deviance literature provides individual motivators, such as dysfunctional salespersons activities (Brady *et al.*, 2012). The stream also explores intraorganisational factors in which ineffective control environments give rise to opportunities for deviance (Marcus & Schuler, 2004).

TABLE 2.5: INSIGHTS AND GAPS FROM THE LITERATURE STREAMS

Research questions		Ethical		Legal		Social		Economic		Dark side of business relationships		Sales and service deviance	
		Insight	Gap	Insight	Gap	Insight	Gap	Insight	Gap	Insight	Gap	Insight	Gap
RQ1	Nature		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
RQ2	Prevalence		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
RQ3	Consequences		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓
RQ4	Motivators	✓		✓		✓		✓		✓		✓	
RQ5	Mechanisms		✓		✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	

The review streams also provide some answers to research question five. Within the corruption perspectives, the social perspective provides social cocoon mechanisms that may explain boundary spanner corruption (Ashforth & Anand, 2003). In particular, the subgroup culture that can encapsulate boundary spanner representatives may provide a mechanism in which corruption is normalised against the interests and standards of their respective organisations (Anand et al., 2004). Other perspectives were largely silent on mechanisms. The dark side of business relationships also provides insights into mechanisms. These chiefly rest on trust factors, where trust reduces relational monitoring (Wang et al., 2013) and thereby increased opportunistic behaviour (Anderson & Jap, 2005). That said, other mechanisms within the literature stream do exist (such as complacency (Jap & Anderson, 2005); groupthink (Villena et al., 2011, 2020) or reduced objectivity (Moorman et al., 1992)) they do not directly explain boundary spanner corruption. The sales and services stream also contributes to understanding mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption. It offers mechanisms at the interpersonal level, relating to either how individuals perceive themselves at work or the opportunities to engage in deviant acts. It also indicates that intraorganisational factors, such as the degree of individual autonomy, have a potential bearing on boundary spanner corruption.

II.5 Proposed initial framework of boundary spanner corruption

Assembling these insights from the literature on boundary spanner corruption, this chapter proposes figure 2.3 that in which multilevel framework models boundary spanner corruption. This uses Fang et al.'s (2008) multi-level trust framework to explicate how boundary spanners' behaviour is impacted by interpersonal relationships between representatives of different firms, the intraorganisational relationships, controls, and practices that exist internally within each firm, and the interorganisational relationship between the firms. In this model, all three levels of trust play a role in the development of boundary spanner corruption.

Boundary spanner corruption requires mutual interpersonal trust between representatives of involved firms, but this alone is not sufficient. Interpersonal trust provides an opportunity for the development of a social cocoon, which may under certain conditions generate boundary spanner corruption (Anand et al., 2004). A boundary-spanning social cocoon is a microculture within the representatives' relationship that provides the discretionary space for the development of intra-cocoon norms that may conflict with cocoon members' organisational norms (Anand et al., 2004; Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Aven, 2015).

Close salesperson-buyer relationships and accompanying interactions allow a social cocoon to develop through encapsulation. The social cocoon can create and sustain a new set of norms that deviate from those of the seller and customer firms. As cocoon-specific norms become more dominant, a slippery slope towards boundary spanner corruption evolves. If deviance-inducing factors in the intraorganisational task environment or at the individual level generate deviant intentions in either the salesperson or buyer, the social cocoon provides the opportunity for collaboration with the counterpart. Although boundary spanners appear to be faithful representatives of their firms, in reality, they collaborate to engage in surreptitious behaviour that violates their firms' explicit or implicit norms (Zaheer et al., 1998).

The formation and strengthening of a boundary-spanning social cocoon are facilitated as greater intraorganisational trust is placed in each representative by their respective managers. Agency trust makes the firm more vulnerable to exploitation, as it weakens the imperative to develop and use intraorganisational controls to detect potential corrupt behaviours (Gargiulo & Ertug, 2006) and enables risk-taking by the boundary spanner (Mayer et al., 1995; Ring & Van de Ven, 1994; Rousseau et al., 1998). Mutual interorganisational trust similarly encourages the weakening of controls in relationships with trusted partner firms (Gulati & Nickerson, 2008; Wuyts & Geyskens, 2005).

FIGURE 2.3
INITIAL MULTI-LEVEL FRAMEWORK OF BOUNDARY SPANNER CORRUPTION
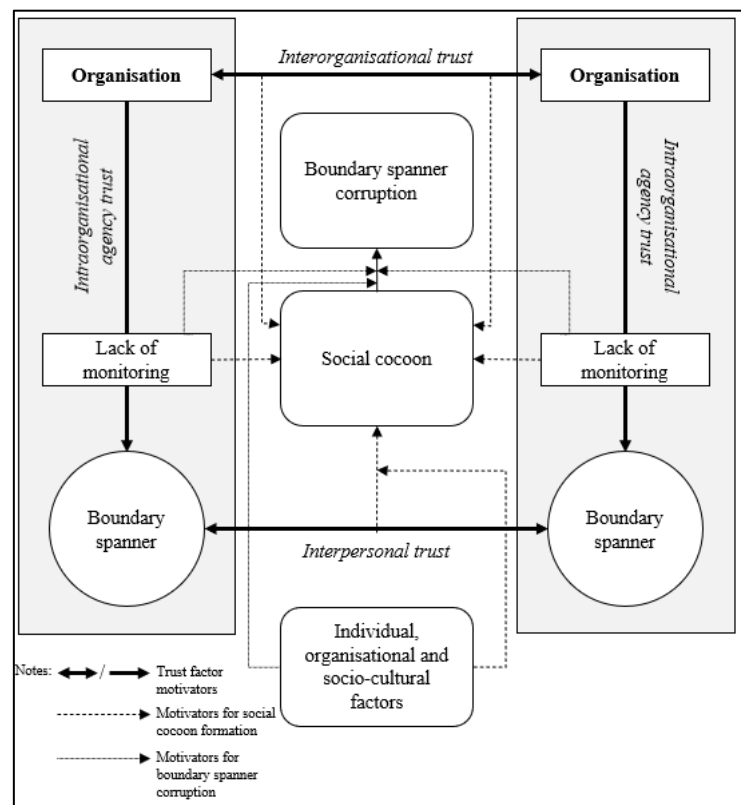
II.6 Conclusion

This chapter has provided a review of three relevant literature streams in their capacity to answer the research questions posed in chapter I. It reviewed ethical, legal, social and economic perspectives on corruption that help describe the nature of the boundary spanner corruption. Further, it reviewed relevant organisational streams on the dark side of business relationships and sales and service deviance. Significant gaps in the nature, prevalence and consequences of boundary spanner corruption were found. These gaps will be explored in chapter IV in an exploratory survey study.

Using the insights gleaned from the three literature streams, the chapter also combined the motivators and mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption into a multi-level model. This proposed a framework in which interpersonal, intraorganisational and interorganisational trust can give rise to boundary spanner corruption. This model will be further augmented through practitioner interviews and theoretical refinement in chapter V. The following chapter will explore the ways in which these research questions can be studied through empirical research methods.

III.   Developing a Research Strategy for Studying Boundary Spanner Corruption.

This chapter reviews research methods used in corruption research to determine the most appropriate approach to investigating the research questions identified in chapter II. Chapter III is divided into two sections. Firstly, it reviews the research methods used within corruption research. While chapter II principally analysed the literature as it provides insights into the concept of boundary spanner corruption, chapter III will review the research methods that can be applied to investigate the phenomenon. Secondly, the chapter identifies from the reviewed methods the most suitable methods (and excludes non-applicable methods) to address the research the questions raised by the research agenda, relating to the nature, prevalence, motivators, consequences and mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption. The chapter identifies survey- and interview-based approaches as the most suitable for investigating boundary spanner corruption due to the wide coverage of research questions that they can answer. It will conclude by outlining a mixed-methods research design to build a data-enriched conceptualisation of boundary spanner corruption. These will then be applied in studies outlined in chapters IV and V.

III.1 Methods in corruption research

This section reviews both quantitative and qualitative methods deployed in corruption research. Given the broad epistemological approach outlined in chapter 1, chapter III will aim to explore research facets from more objectivist schools. These will look at the objectivity of studies, and their method for exploring referents under study. It will also look at the replicability and generalisability of methods used to assess their insight into different contexts. The section will also draw from subjectivist schools. The depth of insight offered by methods varies markedly and those approaches more aligned to subjectivist approaches claim greater richer and deeper analysis into phenomena. As a general rule, more quantitative

approaches tend to provide a more objective account of the world, whereas qualitative studies can deliver the depth sought after by subjectivists. As such, this section will explore these two core methods.

III.1.1 Quantitative research methods in corruption research

This section reviews quantitative methods in corruption research. Within the general corruption literature, many various approaches have been employed (Langseth, 2016). As the analysis below will review, the nature of these approaches focusing on the quantification of corruption will often focus on questions of prevalence that often employ surveys in cross-national studies (Heinrich & Hodess, 2011). As such, quantitative methods are often aligned with the objectivist schools discussed in chapter I (Aliyu et al., 2014). However, many quantitative methods can also be employed to tackle more subjective matters, which may relate to other research questions such as RQ1 and RQ5 (Lambsdorff, 2006). This review will broaden its review techniques therefore that address all research questions and identify the most prominently used quantitative methods, namely: econometric analysis, event studies, experiments and surveys.

III.1.1.1 Econometric analysis-based research methods in corruption research

Relying more upon secondary data, econometric techniques analyse extant datasets to correlate relationships between observed variables. These studies generally take a cross-cultural or macro-economic perspective, in which large datasets pertaining to several economies are compared to explore corruption within different societies (Lambsdorff, 2007). They have been used successfully to draw cross-country comparisons, in which national economic or social behaviour is correlated against national data (Mauro, 1995). In respect of

the research questions of this study, their use has mostly been reserved for consequences and motivators for general corruption, which will be explored here.

RQ3 Consequences: There is a rich literature on econometric-based research methods from a range of disciplines indicating the consequences of corruption. At the macro-economic level, studies on the consequences of corruption are numerous. Corruption has been found to lower economic growth (Mauro, 1995), raise inflation (Langseth & Bryane, 1998), reduce competitiveness (Ades & Di Tella, 1999), lower foreign direct investment (Brouthers et al., 2008), undermine national transport infrastructure (Fazekas & Tóth, 2018), reduce the quality of government (Uslaner, 2011), undermine the rule of law (Buscaglia, 2001), increase inequality (Tanzi, 1998), reduce health outcomes (Habibov, 2016) and lower education quality (Heyneman et al., 2008). At the firm level, econometric-based research methods have shown that corruption has been associated with misallocations of capital and labour (Gamberoni et al., 2016) and lowered profitability (Bolarinwa & Soetan, 2019).

RQ4 Motivators: Econometric-based research methods have identified a range of motivators that potentially give rise to corruption. These relate to cultural factors in a geographic context, such as political instability (Pellegrini, 2011), colonial heritage (Treisman, 2000) and democracy (Shen & Williamson, 2005). Within these cultural contexts, economic motivators have also been identified as prospective causes, such as the level of economic development (Treisman, 2000), level of competition (Ades & Di Tella, 1999), national wealth (Paldam, 2002), lower-quality public administration (Andrei et al., 2009) and scarcity (Getz & Volkema, 2001). Lastly, individual factors have also been uncovered, such as gender (Breen et al., 2017).

Suitability for boundary spanner corruption: Econometric-based research methodologies for corruption have chiefly been applied to explore the motivators and consequences of corrupt behaviour. Within these question types, econometric-based research methods can offer an objective and replicable approach that can build validity in its findings. However, several critiques have also been levelled at econometric-based research methods. Econometric analyses are dependent upon accurate data. Yet sensitive topics, such as corruption, often create unreliable data sets as unreliable self-reporting or even fraudulent data collection is a commonly occurring issue (Blasius & Thiessen, 2021). Standard economic models, which are heavily influenced by Western values, may not be so applicable in other geographies or cultural contexts (Earle et al., 2010). The use of these approaches, as well as their findings, therefore, must be tempered by analytical caution. Furthermore, given the paucity of any data relating to boundary spanner corruption, econometric-based research methods may also prove unfeasible, as the secondary data is simply not available. As such, statistical inferences from these analyses do not independently provide insight into the nature of a phenomenon, so we will exclude econometric-based research methods from this research question. Therefore, for the outlined factors, this method will be excluded from consideration for this dissertation.

III.1.1.2 Event study-based research methods in corruption research

Event studies examine the effect of a pre-defined event type and its cumulative impact on share price during a standardised window period, for companies listed on publicly traded equity markets (Gunthorpe, 1997). They are primarily targeted to identify cumulative abnormal returns of a listed asset compared to an estimation of a normal returns model and compared the deviance of the defined event against the normal performance model (Johnston, 2007). Corruption has been a commonly used event type under study (Sampath & Rahman, 2018; Gunthorpe, 1997; Rao, 1997; Rao & Hamilton, 1996; Long & Rao, 1995). The event

study literature focused on boundary spanner corruption is slight, with only a single study extant (Kim & Wagner, 2021). Event study-based methods are primarily used to determine the consequences of an event type on company-listed stock prices, which will be the focus of this section.

RQ3 Consequences: Within corruption research, event studies consistently find a negative organisation valuation consequence of an uncovered corruption event (Sampath & Rahman, 2018; Gunthorpe, 1997; Rao, 1997 Rao & Hamilton, 1996; Long & Rao, 1995). Unethical behaviours also have a continuing effect on the stock prices of organisational partners in the supply chain (Nunes, 2018). Most of these studies explore general corruption. Once exception is a study that finds boundary spanner corruption leads to significant market penalties where bribery is uncovered in the supply chain (Kim & Wagner, 2021).

Suitability for boundary spanner corruption: Event studies are often a replicable and objective investigation into corruption and can offer generalisable results. However, they are limited by their exclusive focus on the consequences of corruption on stock market prices. They, therefore, limit the investigation to not only private companies, but those that are publicly listed. As such, they exclude many relevant contexts and prospective units of study from their purview. Despite this, they are also subject to the 'noise' of confounding events, which are often difficult to detect, and can sway the outcome of the findings (Sampath & Rahman, 2018). In addition, event studies can only capture what is publicly recorded so their explanatory power regarding unreported or less severe types of corruption is very low, which may comprise a significant number of boundary spanner corruption cases. Therefore, for the outlined factors, this method will be excluded from consideration for this dissertation.

III.1.1.3 Experiment-based research methods in corruption research

Experiment-based research methods rely on artificially created environments, in which treatments are carefully altered to identify effects upon the phenomenon under study (Abbink et al., 2002). Experiments are generally divided into two categories: Those conducted within a laboratory and the field (Armantier & Boly, 2008). The former requires either a physical laboratory environment or an online environment, whereas the latter tends to create external alterations to a field environment with only slight modification from a researcher or are field experiments of naturally occurring phenomena (Köbis et al., 2019). The focus on experiment-based studies has primarily emphasised the questions of nature, motivators and mechanisms within the research. Despite that, some field studies have uncovered some negative consequences of corrupt exchanges. Bertrand, Djankov, Hanna & Mullainathan (2007) find that bribes simulated in a field experiment create a misallocation of governmental resources. That said this section will focus primarily on the research questions RQ1, RQ4 and RQ5.

RQ1 Nature: The treatments of laboratory experiments largely define a space in which the nature of corruption is already assumed. Experiments test subjects' willingness to engage in types of corruption, such as bribery (Barr & Serra, 2010), extortion (Ryvkin et al., 2017), or gift-giving (Köbis et al., 2015). The nature of corruption is not revealed by the study but assumed as a treatment within an experiment.

RQ4 Motivators: Due to the controlled character of laboratory experimental design, researchers can create environments in which motivators can be explored and analysed. Many experiments explore the organisational arrangement conducive to corruption. For example, the corrupt behaviour of subjects in a *laissez-faire* environment can be compared to those who make decisions in a regulated environment replete with financial penalties and threats of

exclusion (Abbink et al., 2002). Other studies find that greater transparency in informational flows reduces corruption (Di Falco et al., 2016) and that job rotation also reduced simulated instances of corruption (Abbink, 2004). Field studies have also uncovered similar effects, where audits reduce the instance of corruption (Olken, 2007). From a cultural perspective, laboratory experiments have consistently found a difference in deviant subject behaviour depending on their cultural origin (Gaechter & Schulz, 2016). A subject's inclination to engage in corruption declines as they spend long periods in a non-corrupt country (Barr & Serra, 2010). Cultures also inform the views of individuals regarding punishment for corruption (Cameron et al., 2009). When exploring individual factors in experiments, high wages was associated with lower levels of corruption (Barr & Lindelow, 2004). Women were less likely to behave corruptly in laboratory games (Rivas, 2013). Field studies also show that individual professional or job role has been found to alter corrupt behaviour (Falisse & Leszczynska, 2022). Economics students were more likely to accept inducements than students of other disciplines (Frank & Schulz, 2000).

RQ5 Mechanisms: Experiments also enable researchers to explore corruption mechanisms under varied treatment conditions. More socially-focused games, for example, have found that within games, especially iterative games, reciprocity and even trust have been created between subjects (Abbink et al., 2000; Abbink, 2006). Further, the availability of self-justification mechanisms explains the emergence of deviance (Shalvi et al., 2011). Moreover, normalising the language of bribe-giving to "gift-giving" was more likely to accept a bribe (Lambsdorff & Frank, 2010). The precise nature of experiments enables researchers to fine-tune treatments to initiate mechanisms regarding boundary spanner corruption and understand the underlying mechanism between treatment and outcome.

Suitability for boundary spanner corruption: As a data source, many experiment-based research studies into corruption sample university students, as they are the most easily accessible subjects (Abbink, 2006). Yet, studies have also shown that public officials are less likely to engage in corruption in games than average students (Alatas et al., 2009). Experiment-based research methods are effective at deducing motivators and mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption. Within these question areas, experiment-based research methods offer replicable research approaches. However, there is a robust debate within experimental research about the applicability and generalisability of experiments to the broader society (Kubbe, 2016). Although experiment-based research methods borrow heavily from game theory (Camerer, 2003), experiments can accommodate scenarios where players do not behave rationally (Camerer et al., 2004). Indeed, parallel studies have also replicated laboratory results within the field (Armantier & Boly, 2008; Potters & Stoop, 2016). Further, a major practical limitation of this method of research is the resources required for a study. Experimental studies require a laboratory, appropriate computers and systems and a volunteer pool from which subjects can be selected. Access to these resources is often prohibitive. Therefore, for the outlined factors, this method will be excluded from consideration for this dissertation.

III.1.1.4 Survey-based research methods in corruption research

Surveys are a means to understand a phenomenon by sampling a subset of a population. A major divisional factor of these studies relates to the target population of the survey. Erlingsson and Kristinsson (2016) divide surveys on corruption into three types, which reflect the subject of the instrument, namely: (1) general public surveys, which sample a random selection of citizens within a specific geography; (2) practitioner surveys, which sample business people or government employees who engage in corruption through their work; and

(3) expert surveys, which sample specialists such as accountants or lawyers who manage corruption cases as a part of their profession.

General public surveys are conducted in large cross-country studies to study corruption in different geographies. Transparency International issues a regular *Corruption Barometer* that samples the view of the general public, including their perspectives on business executives, which stands as the most widely used general public survey on corruption (Transparency International, 2021b). Practitioner surveys concerning boundary spanner corruption can either explore the supplier-facing side and sample buyers or procurement managers (Arnold et al., 2012) or the customer-facing side and sample marketing or sales managers (Schwepker & Good, 2007). Other practitioners' surveys employ dyadic approaches that sample both for a comparative analysis (Carter, 2000). Expert surveys explore the views of lawyers, accountants or other professionals who are familiar with corruption cases as a part of their vocation. Some of these surveys are similar to perception surveys, insofar as they ask about general views on the prevalence of corruption in a geographic location, this is most famously typified by the *Corruption Perspectives Index* (Transparency International, 2021a). A further split relates to the referent under study. Respondents are often reluctant to accurately report sensitive matters (Azfar & Murrell, 2009). To address this, many surveys (most noticeably practitioner and expert surveys) survey the sample's perceptions of a phenomenon, as opposed to their direct acquaintance with it, used as a latent variable for corruption itself. Other surveys directly ask whether they have engaged in corruption, which is more typified by general public surveys (such as Transparency International's *Corruption Barometer, ibid.*) or practitioner surveys. Although the perception-based approach is reliant upon latent variables, the approach does obviate other biasing factors common to research into clandestine practice, such as social undesirability or lack of access to objective data (Lambsdorff, 2006). In general corruption

research, the use of surveys is widespread and has been used to explore the nature, prevalence, consequences and motivators of general corruption, which will be examined in this section.

RQ1 Nature: Surveys tend to identify generalisable characteristics of a population, which can yield insights into the nature of a phenomenon (McKinney & Moore, 2008; Burduja & Zaharia, 2019). Surveys allow for an investigation of manifestations of corruption to be listed and explored (Giannakis & Papadopoulos, 2016). Respondents representing different functional organisations can allow the exploration of the nature of corruption from several perspectives within the boundary-spanner dyad (Carter, 2000; Román & Ruiz, 2005). Respondents can be surveyed in different countries to reveal different views on the nature of corruption in a cross-national context (Sööt et al., 2016).

RQ 2 Prevalence: With either indirect or direct sampling techniques, the primary focus of many survey-based methodologies is to measure the prevalence of corruption within a defined population (Heinrich & Hodess, 2011). Survey-based methods allow researchers to provide a quantification of an otherwise intangible or nebulous concept and allow researchers to compare nebulous perceptions of corruption within a society to provide a comparative gauge of prevalence within and between geographies (Langseth, 2016). Researchers can access how widespread corruption in different target populations. In general public surveys tend to find that corruption is mostly a phenomenon in developing economies (Transparency International, 2021b). Whereas, practitioner surveys have uncovered a more widespread practice of general corruption, even in locations that are considered low risk (Sööt et al., 2016). A practitioner study by the World Bank (2020) finds that 17% of business owners are expected to pay bribes – although this applies to both private and public sector bribery. Expert surveys have also uncovered boundary spanner corruption in a range of jurisdictions,

sectors and contexts. The Association of Fraud Examiners (ACFE), a professional body of

forensic accountants that specialises in fraud, regularly produces its *Report to the Nations*

(2020) that provides descriptive data on general corruption from actual cases worked upon by

their expert community. ACFE's study finds that corruption is a prevalent phenomenon in all

surveyed sectors and geographies. Corrupt behaviour was found to be a particular issue

within the buyer organisation community, as 81% of purchasing fraud cases related to this

function.

RQ3 Consequences: Some studies have used survey devices to reveal the impact of

corruption – invariably, these aim to identify the negative consequences of corruption. Within

the general public surveys, this tends to focus on the broader societal impacts, where

corruption reduces health outcomes (Habibov, 2016), reduces education outcomes

(Heyneman et al., 2008) and reduces overall societal cultural cohesion weakens culture (Al-

Jundi et al., 2019). Practitioner surveys tend to explore negative consequences in inter-

organisational relation consequences such as future orientation (Good, & Schwepker Jr,

2022), trust (Guenzi, 2002), and consumer loyalty (Daunt & Harris, 2014). Practitioner

surveys also uncover internal impacts of corruption, such as reducing intraorganisational

cultural cohesion (Liu et al., 2004) and labour productivity (Nguyen, 2020). Expert

practitioner surveys tend to focus on the costs in terms of negative financial consequences or

prosecution actions (Association of Fraud Examiners, 2020)

RQ4 Motivators: At the organisational level, surveys-based studies have identified several

motivators that drive corrupt behaviour, organisational complexity (Arnold et al., 2012), a

lack of goal congruence (Carter, 2000), individual factors (Sharma & Bagozzi, 2022), social

ties (Collins et al., 2009) and the control environment (McKinney & Moore, 2008). Survey-

based studies at the societal level have also identified motivators at the socio-cultural level,

these relate to national attitudes (Jackson, 2000) or social reciprocity norms (Ariyabuddhiphongs & Hongladarom, 2014). Survey-based studies can also survey personal proclivities which have also identified motivators at the individual level, these relate to a lack of a moral compass (Craft, 2013), individual proclivities (Wated & Sanchez, 2005) or tolerance (Gong et al., 2015). Surveys can be thus an effective tool to draw out motivators of boundary spanner corruption.

Suitability to boundary spanner corruption: Survey-based research methods provide insights into the nature, prevalence, motivators and consequences of boundary spanner corruption. Only RQ5 questions on mechanisms for boundary spanner corruption are found to be more limited in the research method. As with other corruption studies, surveys raise questions regarding data quality, surveys are also subject to respondent error or direct misreporting (Blasius & Thiessen, 2021). This may be particularly challenging to overcome within the boundary spanner space, where survey respondents may also be reluctant to share self-incriminating testimony. This may account for the fact that no studies have surveyed boundary spanner corruption (Burduja & Zaharia, 2019). Despite these limitations, the objectivity and replicability of the research process can provide a confident basis by which to generalise the findings.

III.1.2 Qualitative research methods in corruption research

This section explores the appropriateness of qualitative research methods in boundary spanner research. A wide range of techniques is employed here, in part to deal with issues of social desirability bias (Varraich, 2016). The deep engagement with content and often individual testimony aligns qualitative methods with the subjective school outlined in chapter I (Antwi & Hamza, 2015). These include studies to answer research questions requiring a degree of depth, such as RQ1 on the nature of boundary spanner corruption. This section

covers the following materials, which are the most frequently used in qualitative studies, namely: structured case studies, content analyses, focus groups, interviews and structured literature reviews (Brandt & Eiró, 2016). Only one prominent area is excluded in this section that relates to ethnographic studies, which are excluded from consideration here as it is not a practical research method for this dissertation.

III.1.2.1 Case study-based research methods in corruption research

Case study-based research methods are examinations of a phenomenon within the contexts of particular episodes, organisations, sectors or geographies. Case study-based research methods examine rich data combined from a variety of sources within a singular study. These studies can include primary research by interviewing members of a target case within an organisation (Ertz et al., 2019) or direct observation of organisational practice and meetings (Dávid-Barrett, 2019). Secondary analysis within organisations is also employed by documentary analysis of annual reports (Islam et al., 2015) or organisational policies (Blanc et al., 2019). Within a broader context, reporting by third parties about the target case is also included, which can cover news reporting (Azim & Kluvers, 2019), parliamentary debates (Girard, 2021) or legal documents (Baker & Faulkner, 1993). Within corruption research, case studies can be used to highlight particular episodes of corrupt practice such as the Siemens bribery scandal (Blanc et al., 2019) or the Enron scandal (Beenen & Pinto, 2009; Stein & Pinto, 2011) or provide a comparative study of several disclosures in several organisations (Islam et al., 2015). Case study approaches can be used to focus on particular geographic contexts (Azim & Kluvers, 2019), industry contexts (Sarker et al., 2021) or a more fine-grained study of specific industries within a country context (Dogmus & Nielsen, 2020).

RQ1 Nature: On the nature of the phenomenon, case study-based research methods can provide a deep exploration of the nature of a phenomenon within a particular episode or context. Case studies have explored a range of different types of corruption. Within varying contexts, studies have explored bid-rigging (Fan & Stevenson, 2018), bribery (Blanc et al., 2019), extortion (Ertz et al., 2019), gift-giving (Hwang et al., 2009) and price-fixing (Baker & Faulkner, 1993). Case study-based research methods are therefore appropriate to explore the nature of boundary spanner corruption, although finding examples with sufficient data may be a challenge.

RQ3 Consequences: The richness of these sources can provide precise calculations of the consequences of corruption. Within explored contexts, they can detail the inflationary consequences of corruption within an industry (Fazekas, & Tóth, 2018) and provide a detailed account of the consequences of price-fixing behaviour (Baker & Faulkner, 1993). Within the limitations of generalisability, therefore, we can consider case study-based research methods an appropriate approach to explore the consequences of boundary spanner corruption.

RQ4 Motivators: Case studies are apt to describe motivating behaviour within shaping corrupt behaviour within a defined context. The richness of the case study-based research method can reveal cultural considerations that are motivating corruption from a societal perspective (Hwang et al., 2009), an inter-organisational perspective (Islam et al., 2015) or an inter-organisational agency perspective (Stein & Pinto, 2011). Case studies have indicated that personal factors are relevant in motivating corrupt behaviour (De Graaf & Huberts, 2008). Case studies can also provide an account of the organisational regimes that may facilitate the emergence of corruption (Dogmus & Nielsen, 2020). Conversely, case studies can also provide an account of oversight environments or technologies that can reduce the

opportunity for corruption's emergence (Sarker et al., 2021). Case study-based research methods therefore can be a means to explore the question of motivation in boundary spanner corruption.

RQ5 Mechanisms: In case study-based research studies, various mechanisms have been explored to understand the mechanisms that explain the emergence of corruption. These have covered a rich array of mechanisms, including contagion effects (Beenen & Pinto, 2009), networks effects (Baker & Faulkner, 1993), norms (Girard, 2021) slippery slope effects (De Graaf & Huberts, 2008), social ties effects (Hwang et al., 2009) and organisational subgroup effects (Stein & Pinto, 2011). Case study-based research methods are therefore an appropriate means of understanding the mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption.

Suitability for boundary spanner corruption: Case study-based research is an appropriate means to explore the nature, motivations, consequences and mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption, but these methods have limitations around exploring the prevalence of the phenomenon. Criticism of case study approaches points to the limited ability of the findings of case study-based research methods to be generalised to context beyond the parameters of the target case study (Fernando & Bandara, 2020). Some argue that they contain more context insight as opposed to a deep understanding of the concept under study (Ertz et al., 2019). That said, within the examination of targeted contexts case studies can provide a means to explore boundary-spanner relationships in-depth more easily than other methods (Fan & Stevenson, 2018). A practical limit is also raised by this method: accessing cases, which relate to sensitive topics can be difficult. In this research, I did attempt to access cases from the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau in Singapore, but access was not possible without permission from legal authorities. Therefore, despite the wide coverage of research questions offered by this method, it is not selected for this dissertation.

III.1.2.2 Content analysis-based research methods in corruption research

Content analysis is a means to identify, source and codify disparate sources of data into a singular analysis relating to a phenomenon (Guthrie & Abeysekera, 2006). Originally, studies on corruption were limited by access to documents. Early studies were reliant on letter-writing campaigns to companies, requesting examples of ethical codes and analysing a dozen of those responses (Hite et al., 1988; Stevens, 1997). With the advent of computer-assisted research, researchers can access databases, websites and press releases to obtain descriptive analyses over millions of words (Ritala et al., 2018).

Within the domain of corruption, researchers have analysed a range of publicly available information including company policies (Transparency International, 2015), codes of conduct (Gordon & Miyake, 2001) and sustainability statements (Branco & Matos, 2015). More broadly, these analyses can also pertain to legal statements made in respect of corruption prosecution actions (Ceresola, 2019). Wide access to data and analysis tools has also enabled the emergence of content analysis of wide data materials, such as press reporting, where researchers can analyse tens of thousands of articles relating to corruption-affected organisations (Hajdu et al., 2018).

RQ1 Nature: A limitation of content analysis-based research studies is their primary focus is on the document and not the phenomenon directly (Ceresola, 2019). That said, there are inferences about company documents that can be extended to practice. Company policies and ethical statements dedicate significant space to bribery and corruption, indicating the importance of these elements as facets of corruption (Stevens, 1997; Gordon & Miyake, 2001). Although inferential, content analysis-based research methods can be explored to examine the nature of boundary spanner corruption within a range of document types.

RQ3 Consequences: Content analysis-based research rarely explores the consequences of corruption. Press-based content analyses can provide some insight into consequences, although these are sporadic and only reveal publicly reported consequences (Ritala et al., 2018). Codes on corruption declare aspirations to irradicate corruption, but detail few consequences for transgression (Barkemeyer et al., 2018). We can therefore exclude content analysis-based research as a means to measure the consequences of boundary spanner corruption.

RQ4 Motivators: The existence of documents often indirectly provides an account for the motivation of a phenomenon's persistence. Codes of conduct exist, for example, to outline the parameters of acceptable behaviours, and thereby provide documentary evidence of practices that can give rise to corruption (Gordon & Miyake, 2001). These documents also provide different actions and precautions taken in different contexts which also suggests changing underlying motivating factors (Branco & Matos, 2015). Comparative content analysis has also enabled a greater understanding of the cultural impacts of corruption. The categorisation and framing of corruption within press reporting differs markedly in different countries (Hajdu et al., 2018). Societal culture has a significant impact on codes, power distance and masculinity are negatively associated with policies on bribery (Scholtens & Dam, 2007). Therefore, although inferential, content analysis-based research can also provide insights into the motivation of boundary spanner corruption.

Suitability for boundary spanner corruption: Content analysis-based research methods provide inferential insight into the nature and motivators of boundary spanner corruption, but cannot be appropriately used for the other research questions of this study. The studies examine the words employed in documents and not directly towards the phenomenon itself. Moreover, content analyses are excellent for tracking the change in language use over time,

for instance, to see how corruption is described, but these studies cannot reveal the context or deeper meaning (Ritala et al., 2018). On a more practical measure, the low severity type of boundary spanner corruption may be excluded by many content pieces, either in the media or within organisational documents. This may provide an excessively tight focus on the concept, which might exclude core aspects of its nature. Therefore, content analysis will be excluded from consideration for this dissertation.

III.1.2.3 Focus group-based research methods in corruption research

Focus group-based research methods allow for the assembly of informants within a research area of the socio-cultural context to capture qualitative data on the debate, discussion and dynamics in a group environment. In addition to this captured content, these studies allow for the collection of rich data, such as body language and other non-verbal communication (Brandt & Eiró, 2016). Interactions between the individuals within the group can also be observed and recorded (Torsello, 2016). Further, these interpersonal dynamics also allow researchers to gauge the degree of the support for an idea within a group (Elahi, 2013). The confined environment of a focus group enables the creation of a safe atmosphere in which participants feel less inhibited to share their experiences on sensitive topics, such as corruption (De Sousa et al., 2020). Within a corruption context, focus group research allows for a close examination of a particular corruption episode (Shepler, 2017) or a more structural account of the phenomenon (Grodeland et al., 1997). They can relate to more general discussions on corruption (Guerrero & Rodríguez-Oreggia, 2008) or focus on a corruption scenario (Lascoumes, 2014). Focus groups also enable the investigation of aspects of corruption that have largely been overlooked, such as private sector corruption (Johannsen et al., 2016). That said, compared to other research methods, focus groups are used sparsely within the literature, although they are more frequently deployed as a practitioner research

tool to understand the phenomenon in a local societal or organisational context (USAID, 2006; UNDP, 2015).

RQ1 Nature: The open discussion allows for a close examination of the perspectives on the nature of corruption within a particular context (Guerrero & Rodríguez-Oreggia, 2008). Group discussions can help build typologies around a phenomenon in which different facets of corruption can be categorised and structured (Apaydin & Balci, 2011). Focus groups can also enable exploration into individual or group notions of the seriousness of the nature of some of these sub-types of corruption, offering a classification of severity (Lascoumes, 2014). These accounts can ground the nature of corruption within the precise socio-cultural context in which they emerge and offer a highly relevant understanding of the phenomenon. This can contextualise the discussion on corruption within broader social contexts, in which conceptually distinct, but related in terms of social practice can be included to enrich the understanding of the concept, such as gift-giving (Grodeland et al., 1997).

RQ2 Prevalence: As with other discussed qualitative research methodologies, the ability to generalise findings from focus groups inhibits researchers from confidently concluding the prevalence of corruption. That said, informants can convey perceptions on prevalence within different parts of government, such as police, education, welfare, etc. and provide contrasting views of the extent of corruption prevalent between these organisations (Graycar, 2013). Despite this, gauging prevalence is not a primary objective of focus group-based studies into corruption.

RQ3 Consequences: Similarly, conclusions regarding the degree of consequences for corruption are difficult to infer from focus group studies. In contrast, personal testimony regarding the negative consequences of corruption can be surfaced in these discussions, as

well as debate on the group-level consequences (Walton, 2013). Individuals can provide direct accounts of how they have negatively been affected by corruption perpetuated by others (Budiman et al., 2013). This research method therefore can provide a means to collect the varying types of consequences that may follow corruption.

RQ4 Motivators: The varying motivators for corruption have been captured by focus group research. These have included factors such as work environments (Budiman et al., 2013), internal organisational pressure (Elahi, 2013) or broader socio-cultural motivators (Guerrero & Rodríguez-Oreggia, 2008). Further, the discussions within the group can enable researchers to compare and contrast these different motivators and gauge the importance of each of these factors.

RQ5 Mechanisms: The richness offered by group discussions can allow for debate on the explanatory factors by which corruption may be brought about. Relational mechanisms, such as trust, have been discussed to explain corruption (Walton, 2013). Personal mechanisms, such as the rationalisation mechanisms have also been uncovered, in which focus group participants describe how excessive work or delayed promotion can be 'compensated' through corruption (Budiman et al., 2013). Although causality is always challenging to directly ascribe in corruption research, the open forum of discussion offered by focus groups can allow for discussion on the mechanisms that may explain corruption's emergence.

Suitability for boundary spanner research: Despite the use of focus groups to address sensitive issues, the method still represents a personal risk for participants who may be unwilling to share potentially incriminating information about themselves in a group setting (Burduja & Zaharia, 2019). Although, this is a common issue in all corruption research, and participants are still comfortable providing testimony about general perceptions of corruption

(Grodeland et al., 1997). As with many other qualitative research methods, the difficulty the generalising findings beyond the narrow confines of the group discussion is challenging (Apaydin & Balci, 2011). Indeed, the small nature of groups (generally populated between 10-20 participants) can also limit potentially the findings to that small community. A practical constraint for this particular methodology is the requirement that participants' diaries coincide in availability. Many of those within the boundary spanner community are extremely busy, making coordinating schedules challenging. Therefore, for the outlined factors, this method will be excluded from consideration for this dissertation.

III.1.2.4 Interview-based research methods in corruption research

Interviews are a commonly employed method to extract rich data on corruption in the field. The depth of interview approaches is appropriate for largely unexplored topics (Campbell & Göritz, 2014). The close contact between researcher and informants can allow the extraction of data that is unavailable through other research methods (Collins et al., 2009). The source of interview-based research methods is as varied as the subjects which can include actual corrupt representatives (Teichmann, 2019) or agents that facilitate corrupt exchanges (Shepherd et al., 2021). Others interview practitioners, such as organisational leaders (Vu, 2021), government officials (Shepherd et al., 2021) or boundary spanners (Pedigo & Marshall, 2009).

RQ1 Nature: The richness delivered by interview-based research methodologies allows the researcher to obtain significant insights into the nature of a phenomenon. Interview-based research methods can detect the unique nature of corruption that can unfold in particular contexts (Bracking, 2013). They can also allow for an investigation regarding the blurred boundaries of different types of corruption, such as the difference between gift-giving and

bribery (Pedigo & Marshall, 2009). Interview-based research methods, therefore, are a suitable means to explore the nature of boundary spanner corruption.

RQ3 Consequences: Although often not a primary focus of interview-based research, studies can highlight the consequences of corruption. From an organisational perspective, interview subjects can directly state the consequences of risk (Giannakis & Papadopoulos, 2016). Inter-organisationally, interview subjects can reflect on the consequences of corruption between organisations and relational orientation (Ferrell & Ferrell, 2011). At an individual level, interview subjects can report the consequences of corruption on individual behaviours (Sturdy & Wright, 2008). Therefore, the interview-based approach can detail some of the richness of consequences of corruption.

RQ4 Motivators: Interview-based research methods have been frequently employed to explore various motivators for corruption. Interorganisationally, they find they explore motivators grounded in organisational leadership (Ferrell & Ferrell, 2011), organisational culture (Campbell & Göritz, 2014), internal complexity (David-Barrett et al., 2017) and control environments (Bush et al., 2007). In terms of cultural factors, they also explore the impact of motivators in different industries and examine the variance of behaviours between different sectors (Bracking, 2013). The gift-giving culture, present in many societies can also be facilitative of corruption (Millington et al., 2005). The personal nature of interviews allows researchers to examine individual motivators for corruption as well, such as personal value systems (Vu, 2021).

RQ5 Mechanisms: Interview-based research methods can allow researchers to investigate corruption relationships more broadly, and identify the circumstances that may give rise to corruption. These range from subtly collusive at one end of the spectrum (Campbell &

Göritz, 2014) and directly coercive at the other (Sundström, 2016). Many interview-based studies have explored the normalisation mechanisms that can give rise to corruption. They can surface those cultural mechanisms that prevail within an organisation that can also facilitate corruption (Campbell & Göritz, 2014). Interviews-based studies have investigated the close personal ties between boundary-spanner agents can facilitate corruption (Gu et al., 2008). The mechanisms have also been explored at the system level, where start-up organisations are inculcated into an institutional corruption system through normalisation mechanisms (Shepherd et al., 2021). The richness and depth of interview-based research methodologies, therefore, have the potential to explore the question of boundary spanner corruption mechanisms.

Suitability for boundary spanner research: Interview-based research methods have been employed to address the nature, motivators, consequences and mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption. Limitations to interview-based research methods have been identified, especially regarding their ability to generalise findings to alternative contexts (Varraich, 2016). The repeatability of these studies has also been questioned, as studies often pertain to specific contexts (Pedigo & Marshall, 2009). The objectivity of interviewers has also been challenged, as they also may unwittingly skew subject behaviour through their presence or even misreport statements (Blasius & Thiessen, 2021). However, interview-based research offers a richness and depth to the study that is unavailable to other research methodologies and will therefore be included in this dissertation's research design.

III.1.2.5 Structured literature review-based research methods in corruption research

Structured literature reviews are not a direct investigation into a phenomenon, but rather an analysis of other research studies that have explored the same concept. Although they do not speak directly to the phenomenon itself, the inferences provided by an exploration of extant

literature can provide indirect insight into a concept. Moreover, their methodological robustness can provide a "clear audit trail" and offer a transparent method that can be easily replicated (Denyer & Tranfield, 2009). Another advantage is that the transparency and objectivity of view remove any bias or error from the research (Colicchia & Strozzi, 2012). The advent of online databases and powerful search tools have also made structured literature review-based research easier to perform (Chan & Owusu, 2017).

RQ1 Nature: Structured literature reviews can provide a defendable inference on the nature of phenomena based on the literature that analyses them, although this is still epistemologically indirect. Structured literature reviews can explore the terms and manifestations associated with the concept that comprise its meaning. Certain studies deploy a broad conceptualisation (Khan et al., 2021; Quarshie et al., 2016) that includes "favouritism", "nepotism" or "fraud" in their word searches. Other papers, are more targeted in their searches, confining the word list to "corruption" or "bribe". Areas of conceptual exclusion can also be revealing. Carter & Easton's (2011) survey of 121 articles on sustainable supply chains does not include corruption, suggesting an exclusion of corruption issues from sustainability taxonomies, which may also indicate a practice in the field.

RQ2 Prevalence: Structured literature reviews do not directly provide evidence of the prevalence of phenomena. Rather, the breadth of studies in a field is indicative of the prevalence of that phenomenon in the field. This dissertation examined 14 systematic literature reviews exploring areas relevant to corruption, which covered a total of 1,030 titles (although some of these may be duplicate entries). Given the breadth of academic coverage directed towards the phenomena, one can infer that it is a widespread phoneme. That said, the structured literature review-based research method is not a suitable tool to gauge the prevalence of boundary spanner corruption.

RQ4 Motivators: Structured literature review-based research studies have tended to focus upon journal categories, which has therefore sharpened inferences to direct at a potential industry sector or organisational function. For example, in studies from the marketing literature, Javalgi & Russell (2018) find that of the 83 examined articles, culture and ethical questions were the most frequently occurring areas of interest. This again provides inferential motivation on the contexts that may give rise to corruption, but structured literature review-based research alone is not an appropriate means to assess the motivators of boundary spanner corruption.

Suitability for boundary spanner research: Although structured literature review-based research methods do not engage with the concept under study in the field, structured literature reviews can provide some inferential value to a phenomenon. This is primarily relevant to the questions of the nature and motivators of a concept. A major output of systematic literature reviews is their identification of future research programmes (Paul & Criado, 2020). The objectivity and replicability of this research process provide a solid foundation for future research agendas. In the context of boundary spanner corruption, structured literature review-based research studies have illuminated a pathway for future researchers to explore. However, given that this dissertation has already employed an unstructured literature review to develop an initial framework of boundary spanner corruption, this dissertation will focus on collecting primary data to further broaden the types of empirical research employed. Therefore, this method will be excluded from consideration for this dissertation.

III.2 Widest research question coverage for boundary spanner corruption research methods

The proceeding analysis of various research methods demonstrates the suitability of different approaches to different areas of corruption research. These findings are summarized in table 3.1. As we can see from table 3.1, there is no singular research method that provides full

coverage to answer all the questions identified in chapter II. We therefore must seek a mixed-methods approach to answer all of these questions. This section will discuss the practical benefits and limitations of each method to build a research programme for this study to fully explore boundary spanner corruption.

The type of data available is a significant factor in assessing a method's suitability for corruption research. Criminal practices are notoriously difficult to assess. Many research methods, such as econometric studies, event studies, case studies and content analyses are reliant on secondary data already extant in the field. There are some questions regarding the reliability of these data, as they may not represent the wholly available population of "self-concealing" acts (Bader et al., 2014: 14). This is an issue of particular concern for boundary spanner corruption. No studies have directly researched the issue, and, although there are episodic examines in the public domain, there are no codified studies. Primary methods would not be hampered by this challenge, but the availability concerns may derive from a reluctance of informants to reveal self-incriminating acts.

The quality of the data is another active concern. Ensuring that these factors are addressed is important in all areas of research, but it proves particularly an issue for investigations on sensitive topics. Corruption research unfortunately is subject to unreliable data. Quantitative-based approaches offer repeatable methods often on publicly available information, which ensures a degree of transparency within the process. But some studies have still been affected by data quality issues. For example, econometric studies on corruption have found examples of falsification of data manipulation (Blasius & Thiessen, 2021). Qualitative studies can offer anonymity in informant-based research, which improves the reliability of the testimony offered. Although interview studies are always questions regarding the reliability of informants in discussing socially undesirable content (Varraich,

2016). However, the richness offered by qualitative studies can provide detailed explorations into phenomena and can offer a depth in data that quantitative methods struggle to capture.

The objectivity of the research process is another concern for method selection. Quantitative studies prioritise objectivity and their engagement in a phenomenon is largely restrictive to data collection (although researchers are more active within experimental studies). By contrast, qualitative-based methods place the researcher in direct contact with their informants (excepting case studies and content analyses) which can affect testimony. Objectivity is a particular issue within corruption research. That the researcher may unduly impact the outcome of an already sensitive research topic is an active risk.

The generalisability is a further issue within corruption research. Many of the qualitative methods are focused upon a particular socio-cultural context. Indeed, some of the social perspectives using qualitative methods limit their definitions to the expression of corruption within a particular community. These studies are often more explorations into the discourse of corruption within that socio-cultural context, without necessarily seeking to draw conclusions applicable outside of that context (Smith, 2007). Therefore drawing broader lessons within qualitative studies and applying these to alternative contexts is challenging. In contrast, quantitative methods are designed to be repeatable in other contexts to reach cross-contextual conclusions. Their assumptions of universalistic behaviours focus on the key facets of a phenomenon and are often drawn from an account of a 'rational man' (Becker, 1968). However, many of those within the qualitative research community take exception to this notion of universal norms, and argue that they are seeking to generalise Western norms of corruption, that do not obtain in alternative contexts (Gupta, 1995).

This study will therefore use a mix of qualitative and quantitative methods to balance the limitations of both approaches in answering the research questions and thereby reduce the limitations of a singular method. Many factors must be borne in mind to select a set of research methods that appropriately map against the research questions. First, there is a practical limitation regarding the budgetary, time and other resource constraints that requires an economy in selecting appropriate methods. An ideal outcome would be to select all methods to provide both a deep and broad perspective upon boundary spanner corruption. Unfortunately, this idealised research programme is beyond the means of this study. Therefore only a handful of methods can be practically selected.

TABLE 3.1

RESEARCH METHODS AND THEIR COVERAGE OF BOUNDARY SPANNER

CORRUPTION

Methodologies		Key sources	Advantages	Limitations	Coverage of research questions				
					Nature	Prevalence	Motivators	Consequences	Mechanisms
Quantitative	Econometric analysis	Mauro, 1995; Ades & Di Tella, 1999; Breen et al., 2017	Objective research process, repeatable, generalisable.	Lack of generalisability, limited depth.			✓	✓	
	Event studies	Sampath & Rahman, 2018; Nunes, 2018; Kim & Wagner, 2020	Objective research process, repeatable, generalisable.	Subject to 'noise' of confounding events.				✓	
	Experiments	Abbink, et al., 2000; Abbink, 2004; Lambsdorff & Frank, 2010	Objective research process, repeatable, generalisable.	Lack of generalisability, objectivity and limited depth.			✓		✓
	Surveys*	World Bank, 2020; Association of Fraud Examiners, 2020; Transparency International, 2021	Objective research process, generalisable	Limited depth of study.	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Qualitative	Case studies	Baker & Faulkner, 1993; Fan & Stevenson, 2018	Deep, rich data.	Lack of generalisability.	✓	✓	✓		✓
	Content analysis	Gordon & Miyake, 2001; Branco & Matos, 2015; Transparency International, 2015	Objective research process, repeatable.	Indirectly related to the phenomenon.	✓		✓		
	Focus groups	Grodeland et al., 1997; Guerrero & Rodríguez-Oreggia, 2008	Deep, rich data.	Lack of generalisability.	✓		✓	✓	✓
	Interviews*	Anand et al., 2005; Millington, et al., 2005; Campbell & Göritz, 2014	Deep, rich data.	Lack of generalisability, repeatability, objectivity	✓		✓	✓	✓
	Structured literature review	Quarshie, et al., 2016; Javalgi & La Toya, 2018; Bautista-Beauchesne & Garzon, 2019	Objective research process, repeatable.	Indirectly related to phenomenon.	✓		✓		

Note: Selected as the most suitable to address research questions

Second, some of the particular methods require access to specialised resources (such as laboratory-based experimental methods) or access to specialised subjects (such as interviewing those prosecuted as corrupt boundary spanners). So the dissertation is limited to those methods (and sub-methods) within constrained access and budget. Given these constraints, the research design aims to deliver an economy of methods used to cover the widest range of research questions. Survey-based research methodologies provide a wide coverage of research questions. Indeed, four out of the five research questions can be covered, to a certain degree, by this method alone. Moreover, the relative ease of research design, implementation and analysis provides a straightforward and replicable study.

Another method that covers a wide range of questions is interview-based research methods, which provide insight into four of the five research questions. Moreover, the more qualitative nature of this research method provides a richer and deeper insight into the questions that quantitative-based research methods cannot. Interview-based research studies are also an appropriate match for exploratory research studies. They can provide depth and richness in the insight in helping explain the nature, motivators, consequences and mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption.

Case study-based methods also have the potential to cover many research questions. Although attractive in terms of scope, there are practical limitations of this research method that can demand high access to information or individuals that can be highly sensitive and relate to criminal matters (De Graaf & Huberts, 2008). Accessing such sources is difficult. Indeed, during this research, I requested access to the primary investigators of corruption in Singapore, namely the Corrupt Practices Investigation Bureau (CPIB). Despite multiple

requests through various channels, these appeals to access case study materials were denied. Other case studies rely on access to high-profile individuals who were engaged in a corrupt activity (Beenen & Pinto, 2009) which were also unfortunately out of reach for this study.

As a final comment on method selection, it must be noted that this research aimed to employ event-study methods to explore the consequences of boundary spanner corruption. Although the method has been used with some success in researching general corruption, the patchy coverage of boundary spanner corruption proved unreliable. It was difficult to confidently assure the impacts of these event types as isolated from other confounding deviant event types. As such, this study was abandoned.

III.3 Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to review the various research methods used in corruption research to assess their suitability for addressing the questions on boundary spanner corruption identified in chapter II. In general, quantitative-based research methods were found to provide a suitable means to address questions of the nature, prevalence and consequences of corruption. Although some tools have been used to tackle the motivators (such as surveys) and mechanisms (such as event studies) as well. The review also found that qualitative-based methods were effective in examining the nature, consequences, motivators and mechanisms of corruption. No single method could provide comprehensive coverage of all research questions, therefore a mix-method research project was designed. However, the review also identified several practical limitations in terms of resources in the conduct of this dissertation that inhibits the use of wide methods. Therefore surveys and interviews were selected as the tools most appropriate to cover all research questions.

Chapter IV will use an exploratory survey to focus on the questions of the nature, prevalence and consequences of corruption. Although chapter III review also uncovered the potential for a survey to answer questions of motivators, this focus upon addressing this question will be in Chapter V, where a theoretical model is proposed. Further, an examination of mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption will be conducted, which will also be subject to proposition-development.

IV.   The nature, prevalence and consequences of boundary spanner corruption: An exploratory study

Chapter II highlighted that questions on the nature (RQ1), prevalence (RQ2) and consequences (RQ3) of boundary spanner corruption were a gap in the literature streams. Chapter III determined survey research methods as suitable for answering these research questions. The current chapter reports the results of a practitioner survey study on those questions. For new or understudied phenomena, exploratory surveys can be effective in building knowledge (Åhlström, & Westbrook, 1999). Exploratory research aims "to develop insights rather than test firm hypotheses" (Busby & Pitts, 1997: 170). The primary purpose of this chapter therefore is not to confirm theories or models, but to use an exploratory survey to deepen our understanding of a largely understudied topic in respect of the three research questions (Giannakis & Papadopoulos, 2016).

Chapter II identified that corruption is difficult to detect. As a "self-concealing phenomenon" (Bader et al., 2014: 14) it can often be hidden behind other behaviours that can be considered ambiguously deviant (Heidenheimer, 1970). Given that this is an exploratory survey, and that it aims to capture all facets of an undeveloped phenomenon, respondents were asked open-ended questions and invited to respond in essay boxes. This ensures that even the borderline or 'grey' areas of consideration are also captured (*ibid.*). The survey, therefore, inquired about both less severe practices that violate organisation norms and more severe practices that not only violate organisation norms, but also contravene laws or regulations. This lens on severity is applied to all three research questions explored in this chapter. On the nature of boundary spanner corruption, respondents were requested to detail both less severe and more severe cases that they have observed in their industry (outlined more fully in section IV.1). In relation to the question of prevalence, respondents were asked with closed questions to report their view of the degree that low severity and high severity cases are widespread in their industry. In respect of the consequences of boundary spanner corruption, respondents were asked about the seriousness of the consequences for both low severity and high severity cases in both closed and open questions. In order to cast the net further still, respondents were also asked to provide views on the seriousness of both short-term and long-term impacts of these cases.

The subsequent sections of this chapter are organised into three main parts. First, it describes the employed method for surveying the three identified research questions. Second, it explores the results on the nature, prevalence and consequences of boundary spanner corruption as experienced by practitioners. Finally, the chapter concludes with a discussion on the results and their ability to answer the three research questions.[2]

IV.1 Method

This section discusses the research approach employed in this survey study. It first outlines the procedure of a pilot study, which sought to align the framing of the research questions with practitioner use and inform the design of the final survey. Second, the section outlines the method of survey design, sample selection, respondent guidance, data analysis and procedures to reduce social undesirability bias.

Pilot study. The study commenced with an exploratory pilot study, consisting of five interviews with practitioners who were members of a professional network. Four of these were primarily experienced in procurement roles, whereas the fifth had a role that spanned both procurement and sales functions. These informants had careers that covered a range of geographies (including Asia-Pacific, Europe and North America) and sectors (including finance, professional services and manufacturing). They were all senior-level (all director-level and above) and were highly knowledgeable on boundary spanner roles in the field. These interviews employed an open-ended technique and lasted between 40 – 60 minutes.

The purpose of the pilot study was twofold. First, to ensure that the topic, framing and concepts under study align to practitioner use in business relationships. Second, to inform design choices in the main survey. The referents of discussion that emerged from these pilot discussions related to two primary roles within the boundary spanner representative community: buyer representatives and seller representatives. These initial conversations confirmed that boundary

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[2] Given the sensitivity of the study topic, approval was sought by the QMUL Research Ethics Committee for activities relating to both chapter IV and chapter V research. The approval letter is attached in Appendix A.

spanner corruption was an active issue within different sectors and geographies. However, informants advised that the term 'corruption' or examples of corruption, such as 'bribery' may create a defensive attitude and unduly affect respondent behaviour. Informants recommended the use of more neutral terms, such as 'collaborative violations' and 'deviant practices' may provide less encumbered responses.

Further, the pilot study revealed themes that practitioners felt represent important elements within the topic. Firstly, the severity of instances was highlighted. Both high and low severity examples were reported anecdotally. The consequences of these instances were various and led to both positive as well as negative effects on the business. Several informants viewed the connection between these two severity types as important, evoking notions of the slippery slope in which practitioners graduate to more deviant behaviours. Secondly, informants agreed that the consequences of boundary spanner corruption were largely negative, they were unsure as to the longevity of these effects (they may give only short-term consequences as opposed to long-term) or the seriousness (they may only be deemed trivial as opposed to very serious). These aspects directly informed the design of the main survey.

Survey design: The survey explores the three major research questions of this chapter, namely the nature (RQ1), prevalence (RQ2) and consequences (RQ3) of boundary spanner corruption. The flow of the survey questions reflects this order. However, in addition, there are three question types that shape the survey. First, a round of closed sample verification questions that confirms the respondent's suitability for the survey (this will be laid out in the sample selection section). Second, a set of closed questions. Third, a set of open questions. See Appendix B for the complete survey.

The closed questions relate to the research questions and apply a lens on severity for each. These are comprised of Likert-scaled questions, which are deployed to provide an estimate of scale on the areas under study common for exploratory surveys (Busby & Pitts, 1997). These also relate to the themes that emerged from the pilot study. The survey applies the notion of severity across the three research questions to examine the concept of the 'slippery slope' which emerged in both the pilot study and the literature review in Chapter II. Given the pilot study's informants' uncertainty over the

time-horizon and the seriousness of the consequences, two further dimensions are applied. One, in respect of the short-term or long-term consequences, the survey explores the longevity of the impacts of boundary spanner corruption. Two, the survey explores the seriousness of these consequences in terms of their impact on organisations.

The open questions also focus upon the three research questions, but as an exploratory survey, the intention is to reveal a wide range of facets that emerge from the field without excluding relevant phenomena that may not have surfaced in the literature review (Åhlström & Westbrook, 1999). Therefore, open questions are also integrated into the survey to allow for reporting on additional areas or aspects that the closed questions may have missed (Yamashita & Moonen, 2013). Open-ended questions also provide an opportunity for further quality checks and were used as another means to validate responses (which is outlined in the sample selection section).

Sample selection: To obtain a sample, Qualtrics, a panel service provider and survey platform, was engaged. Qualtrics provided the sample in addition to hosting the survey instrument. It managed the sourcing and recruitment of participants, who were remunerated. The selection criteria were as follows. Firstly, respondents were currently employed as boundary spanners across different industries. Given this was a practitioner survey, the most prominent roles were selected, namely: purchasing/procurement/supply chain managers (hereafter "buyer representative") and sales/account/marketing managers (hereafter "seller representative"). Those that were employed in other functions were removed from the survey. Seller representatives who were solely occupied in a business-to-consumer capacity were similarly excluded. Secondly, the USA was chosen as a sample population. This was made for several reasons, one, it enjoys a large population of boundary spanners from which to sample. Two, the country has strong institutions that discourage both private-to-public and private-to-private corruption (Transparency International, 2021b). Those that were not currently based in the USA, were removed from the study. Thirdly, companies of appropriately large sizes were selected. Boundary spanners in smaller companies may have more divided responsibilities that may undermine the reliability of their responses. Those respondents who currently worked for companies with fewer than 20 employees were therefore excluded from the study. In order to confirm the

appropriateness of the practitioner for the research, respondents were asked about their knowledgeability of management of business-to-business relationships in their industry. The mean average knowledgeability rating stood at 5.8 (buyer representative) and 5.2 (seller representative) on a scale from 1 (not knowledgeable at all) to 6 (extremely knowledgeable). Respondents scoring below 3 on this scale were removed from the study. Participants under the age of 18 were similarly excluded. A wide range of sectors, tenure, organisation size and experience level were sought to capture a breadth of insights from various contexts.

The respondents' attentiveness was verified throughout the survey through the use of active response questions or attention checks. This included questions such as 'select answer C' in order to continue taking the survey. Further, respondents who progressed through the tool at a pace that unrealistic for diligent completion were also excluded (a process designed and administered by Qualtrics). A total of 173 responses were received. 75 observations were removed as they were regarded as unreliable due to reasons of excessive speed or the use of dummy or repeat text. This yielded a total of 98 respondents, 49 buyer representatives and 49 seller representatives. Full respondent details are listed in table 4.1. These reflected a mix of seniority levels, firm size and industry representation to further broaden data capture.

TABLE 4.1

SURVEY RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Respondent Characteristics	n	Firm Characteristics	n
Respondent Function		**Firm Size (employees)**	
Customer-facing	49	20 to 50	3
Supplier-facing	49	51 to 100	12
Respondent Tenure		101 to 250	12
Function		251 to 500	12
1 to 2 years	12	501 to 1000	16
3 to 5 years	15	1001 to 5000	28
6 to 10 years	28	More than 5000	15
11 to 20 years	40	**Firm Industry**	
More than 20 years	3	Accommodation and food service activities	6
Industry		Administrative and support service activities	7
1 to 2 years	10	Arts, entertainment and recreation	1
3 to 5 years	37	Construction	6
6 to 10 years	12	Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply	1
11 to 20 years	27	Financial and insurance activities	9
More than 20 years	12	Human health and social work activities	4
Respondent Hierarchy Level		Information and communication	11
Top Management (C-Suite)	19	Manufacturing	26
Senior Management	26	Mining and Quarrying	1
Middle Management	29	Professional, scientific and technical activities	11
Junior Management	19	Real estate activities	1
Other	5	Transportation and storage	5
		Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles	9

FIGURE 4.1
SURVEY RESPONDENT GUIDANCE ON BOUNDARY SPANNER CORRUPTION
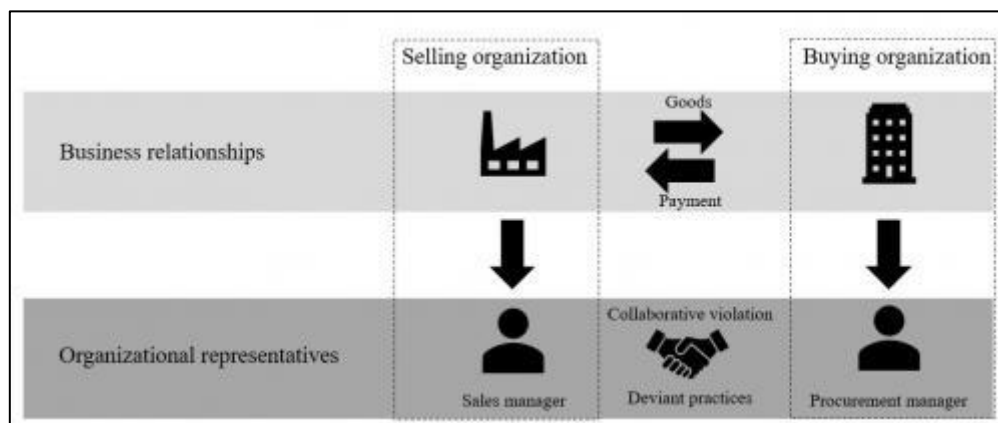
Respondent guidance: Given the conceptual complexity of the survey, respondents were guided into relating their experiences to boundary spanner corruption, which can be easily confused with other aspects of the nested concept of corruption. Based upon insights gleaned from the pilot study, this was framed as "collaborative violations" and "deviant practices" between organisational representatives. This was also graphically represented to ensure clarity (see figure 4.1). A further list provided to respondents sought to define the types of less severe types of boundary spanner corruption. This was presented as follows: "Such **deviant practices** may include unreasonable or unauthorized discounts, disclosure of confidential company information without authorisation, excessive social entertaining/gift-giving between the representatives, or use of their positions in their organisations to provide personal favours to each other." In respect of high severity cases, respondents were provided with the following guidance: "Deviant practices may also relate to high severity cases such as bribery, extortion, kickbacks and bid-rigging, as well as fraud, theft, and embezzlement if engaged in collusively by representatives from different organisations. This includes appropriating company resources for their own benefit or working out deals that are best for each other personally rather than the organisations they represent. Such severe cases often also contravene interests, laws or regulations of the broader society." Neither list was framed as exhaustive. Reminders of this guidance were frequently dispersed throughout the survey.

Social desirability bias: It is common for surveys relating to ethical matters to suffer from social desirability bias, that is under-reporting by respondents due to factors relating to perceived norms of appropriate or correct behaviour (Richards, 2016). This study requested that respondents do not relate to their personal or individual experiences, but rather generalise their response to refer to their observations of industry practice to lessen individual exposure (Arnold et al., 2012). This was framed in the survey as follows: "You are under no obligation to name any individual or company. We are interested in understanding such practices in general in your industry. We would like to know about the types of behaviours you have heard about from your industry in the USA within the last 5 to 10 years." Given the sensitivity of the topic, the survey assured complete anonymity and de-identified respondents and companies. Indeed, no respondent names, employees or other identifying personal data was used in this research. Respondents also actively confirmed their consent for their response to be included in this research.

Data analysis: Two types of data were collected in the survey. First, responses to closed questions, and second, responses to open questions. On the former, descriptive bar charts were used to compare responses between buyer and seller representatives. These were asked in respect of questions on the nature, prevalence and consequences of boundary spanner corruption. Descriptive cross-tabulation analysis compared the different practitioner groups' views on the other dimensions used in this study: severity, seriousness and time horizon.

For open questions, examples were collected for all question times to provide relevant practitioner illustrations. On the nature and consequences of boundary spanner corruption, given the more discursive characteristics of those research questions, examples were requested in essay boxes. For responses on the nature of boundary spanner corruption, both high severity and low severity examples were coded and organised into similar manifestation types for both severity types. Similarly, for exploring consequences, respondents were invited to provide examples of witnessed consequences of both severity types. These were coded and organised into similar types. The number of instances

and relative frequency between buyer and seller representatives were compared to both severity types (Bush et al., 2007).

IV.2 Survey results

This section shares the findings of the survey. The analysis will explore the results in respect of the three main research questions relating to the nature, prevalence and consequences of boundary spanner corruption.

IV.2.1 Results on the nature and prevalence of boundary spanner corruption

This section will explore survey answers to issues related to questions about the nature and prevalence of boundary spanner corruption. Many of the comments and responses to the nature of boundary spanner corruption suggested a prevalence. Therefore, reporting for these two different questions is combined as the interrelated aspects of the data that emerged saw overlap in responses.

The survey explored the types of boundary spanner corruption in the experience of the sample. All respondents were asked to provide examples in an open-field text box of low severity and high severity corruption types that they witnessed in their industry (using the guidance outlined in section 4.1). These items were then coded into like items (see tables 4.2 and 4.3) and the number of instances counted (Bush et al., 2007). Given the criminal nature of blackmail, bribery, extortion and fraud, these items were all coded as high severity regardless of the original respondent classification. In total, this applied to 26 coded items. The remaining items of gift-giving and lavish entertainment, insider trading, personal favours and theft / embezzlement all retained their original coding that was divided between low severity and high severity examples. Between the severity levels, certain corruption items were regarded by the sample as more severe than others. For example, 75% of all the gift-giving and lavish entertainment examples were labelled as low severity. Whereas 71% of the theft / embezzlement items were regarded as high severity examples. This section will now discuss the

most frequently occurring manifestations, with a reference to how they apply to the employed definition of boundary spanner corruption.

Bribery. The most commonly occurring high severity examples relate to bribery. In reference to boundary spanner corruption, this describes an act where a representative of an organisation pays a secret inducement to another representative in order to obtain an advantage, often to the detriment and against the norms of the organisation. As an example, a seller representative pays a bribe to a buyer representative in order to influence the outcome of a contract award. 34% of all the items of this severity level are related to this type. Bribery, within the sample response, covered bid-rigging, bribery and kickbacks. 16 of the 26 total bribery-related instances referred to kickbacks, which comprised 62% of such types. Both buyer representatives and seller representatives noted that this was an issue. Two provide examples of witnessed bribery-related exchanges in their respective domains:

> Our sales director would regularly give cash kickbacks to the buyer's agent for the business that he brought to our company.
>
> Seller representative

> Bid rigging appears to be more and more prevalent within our industry, but only after the fact.
>
> Buyer representative

27% of buying representative-related examples referred to bribery, compared to 21% of seller representatives who reported corruption. Despite this, bribery was actually the second-most identified example for seller representatives, whereas fraud was the leading corruption type witnessed by this group.

Fraud. Fraud comprised 31% of the total high severity types and 22% of total corrupt event types. In the boundary spanner context, this would relate to instances where a representative, in collusion with another, behaves fraudulently against the norms and interests of the organisation. From the sample, these instances cover a broad spread of items, including corporate card abuse, deception, fraudulent

orders, mispresenting accounts, money laundering, padding orders, quality reduction and tax evasion. As mentioned in the bribery section, seller representatives report a higher instance of fraud, with 27% of their total examples relating to this, compared to 18% of buying organisations. A respondent provides one example:

> Mostly I have heard about smaller violations, such as company employees purchasing goods from a supplier using company channels, and then returning goods to the supplier to have funds transferred to the employee personally. This practice would require a certain type of relationship with the supplier representative.
>
> Buyer representative

Gift-giving and lavish entertainment: Within the boundary spanner context, it would involve a representative giving a gift to another representative, where respondents were requested only to list such examples where they were against the norms and interests of the organisation. From the sample, respondents share that this item covers both direct giving of gifts as well as ancillary activities, such as entertaining. These corruption examples are the third-most frequently occurring instance within this survey. As one flatly observes:

> I would say, to some degree, the practice of gift-giving is very prevalent throughout the industry.
>
> Buyer representative

However, of the 16 total examples, 12 (75%) were considered low severity, compared to 4 (25%) which were regarded as high severity. This speaks to the uncertainty that many have in relation to boundary spanner corruption. Others mention tickets to sporting events, hotel rooms and vacations gifted in the course of a business relationship. It is often difficult to draw the line between conventional relationship-building activities and corruption, as the informant below testifies:

> The over-indulgence of perks to the customer. More than average lunch visits, golf rounds on the weekends, and above-average Christmas gifts.
>
> Seller representative

Both buyer and seller representatives report examples of this incident type. However, seller representatives report 10 such instances (19% of their total examples) compared to buying organisations at 6 (11% of theirs) suggesting this may be more of an issue for seller representatives.

Theft / embezzlement. Drawing from our definition in chapter I, theft/embezzlement relates to collusion between two representatives to steal or embezzle from their organisations. The sample relates it to collusive theft or lead selling whereby individuals steal companies' assets for personal gains. These 14 examples related to 13% of the total, although 10 (71%) were classified as 'high severity' compared to 4 (29%) as 'low severity'. This labelling reflects the magnitude of the corruption (theft) and the potential penalties for detection (imprisonment). Both seller and buyer representatives witnessed this type of corruption:

> I have heard about a few cases where someone was able to embezzle a large amount of money through the use of business relationships over a long period of time.
>
> Buyer representative

> I heard of an employee selling personal client accounts to a representative to reach their quota to get a bonus which caused that company to lose high paid clients and fraudulent charges.
>
> Seller representative

Personal favours. In relation to boundary spanner corruption, we can understand personal favours as conveyed between representatives which stand outside organisational norms and threaten organisational interests. From the sample, this manifestation type is one of the most diverse, as it covers a wide spread of activities, namely: employees taking illicit substances, fast-tracking deals, favouritism, personal favours and sexual favours. This diversity of action reflects the divided opinion on the severity of these types of behaviours. Of the 12 examples fielded in this study 5 (42%) were regarded as low severity, compared to 7 (58%) for high severity instances. The buyer representatives reported higher frequencies of personal favours, 8 (60%) shared by this group, compared to 4 (40%) seller representatives that experienced this as a problem. One case is described below:

> Awarding bids to individuals because of who you know.

Extortion. Related to bribery, this item describes a situation where a bribe is extorted by a representative, against the norms and interests of the organisation. The definition also requires that these behaviours are voluntary and either party can disengage, so extortion under boundary spanner corruption will be less stringent compared to other forms of extortion. In the survey, 4% of the total instances recorded relate to extortion-type events, which include direct demands for favours or less direct 'pay to play' situations. All four recorded examples were classified as high severity. Three of the four instances were all reported by seller representatives, with the remaining one provided by the buyer representative. One seller representative witnessed an example of a 'pay to play' occurrence.

Insider trading. In the boundary spanner context, inside trading describes a situation where market-sensitive information is shared between representatives against the norms and interests of the organisation. Four examples of insider trading were observed in the survey, representing 4% of the total instance recorded. These were divided evenly between instances that were considered low severity against those that were regarded as high severity. Although three were provided by buying organisations, against a single example from a seller representative. These were lightly discussed, with respondents describing brief observations of employees trading stocks, such as the following:

> One example is the insider trading incident that happened with a certain technology company that produces computer processors.

Unauthorised discounts. Between boundary spanners, unauthorised discounts can be offered by a representative to another in a way that contravenes the norms and interests of the organisation. Three examples of unauthorised discounts were offered, representing 3% of the total instances. All examples were labelled as low severity. These examples were less clear cut for the respondents, one seller representative noticed that clients were offered discounts "without obvious reason". A typical example is expressed in the following quote:

> Unreasonable discounts based on business volume.

<div align="right">Seller representative</div>

Unauthorised information release. Within a boundary spanner context, unauthorised information released is also regarded as deviant, if they are outside the norms and interests of the organisation. Three respondents provided examples of unauthorised information releases. All three were classified as non-severe and were observed by buyer representatives. Such examples included IP loss or other unauthorised information sharing. One informant provides an example:

> Sharing of company information without authorisation or notification.

<div align="right">Buyer representative</div>

Role differences in boundary spanner corruption: As a general observation, buyers listed more cases of corruption (56 in total) compared to seller representatives (52), which may reflect the sensitivity of the procurement to the 'temptations' of the role. This may also indicate that seller representatives do not stress the importance of anti-corruption training in their roles or that it may be considered more integral to buyer representatives' role descriptions. This difference was noticeable in respect of bribery in which 15 cases emerged from the buyer representatives, compared to 11 for seller representatives. An exception to this general observation relates to fraud (14 seller representative cases compared to 11 buyer representatives) and gift-giving (10 compared to 6). For fraud, we see broader and more numerous areas of concern for seller representatives, including deception and padding orders. A similar finding was found in gift-giving, indicating a different nature of the 'supply side' of boundary spanner corruption compared to the 'demand side' of buyer representative concerns. This finding suggests that either side of the boundary spanner relationship has a differing understanding of the nature of deviance in their relationship. Indeed, acceptable practices for seller representatives may be deviant to buyer representatives. Much of the past practitioner surveys that have explored general corruption have tended to focus on one side of the boundary spanner community (an exception being dyadic studies, such as Carter (2000)). However, many studies do not provide the dyadic perspective of both boundary spanner views and may miss the wide range of facets

included in boundary spanner corruption. This underlines the requirement for dyadic, or at least

different role perspectives, data capturing to provide full coverage of the nature of boundary spanner

corruption.

TABLE 4.2

MANIFESTATIONS OF BOUNDARY SPANNER CORRUPTION BY SEVERITY

Corruption type	High severity		Low severity		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Blackmail	**2**	**3%**			**2**	**2%**
Blackmail	2	3%			2	2%
Bribery	**26**	**34%**			**26**	**24%**
Bid-rigging	5	6%			5	5%
Bribery	5	6%			5	5%
Kickbacks	16	21%			16	15%
Extortion	**4**	**5%**			**4**	**4%**
Extortion	3	4%			3	3%
Pay to play	1	1%			1	1%
Fraud	**24**	**31%**			**24**	**22%**
Corporate card abuse	1	1%			1	1%
Deception	6	8%			6	6%
Fraudulent orders	7	9%			7	6%
Misrepresenting accounts	1	1%			1	1%
Money laundering	1	1%			1	1%
Padding orders	1	1%			1	1%
Quality reduction	6	8%			6	6%
Tax evasion	1	1%			1	1%
Gift-giving and lavish entertainment	**4**	**5%**	**12**	**39%**	**16**	**15%**
Gift-giving	3	4%	8	26%	11	10%
Lavish entertainment	1	1%	4	13%	5	5%
Insider trading	**2**	**3%**	**2**	**6%**	**4**	**4%**
Insider trading	2	3%	2	6%	4	4%
Personal favours	**5**	**6%**	**7**	**23%**	**12**	**11%**
Employees taking illicit substances	2	3%		0%	2	2%
Fast-tracking deals		0%	2	6%	2	2%
Favouritism		0%	1	3%	1	1%
Personal favours		0%	3	10%	3	3%
Sexual favours	3	4%	1	3%	4	4%

Theft / embezzlement	**10**	**13%**	**4**	**13%**	**14**	**13%**
Employee theft	7	9%	3	10%	10	9%
Employer theft	1	1%	1	3%	2	2%
Selling leads	2	3%		0%	2	2%
Unauthorised discounts			**3**	**10%**	**3**	**3%**
Unauthorised discounts			3	10%	3	3%
Unauthorised information release			**3**	**10%**	**3**	**3%**
IP loss			1	3%	1	1%
Unauthorised information sharing			2	6%	2	2%
Total	**77**		**31**		**108**	

TABLE 4.3

MANIFESTATIONS OF BOUNDARY SPANNER CORRUPTION BY ROLE

Corruption type	Seller representative		Buyer representative		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Blackmail	**1**	**2%**	**1**	**2%**	**2**	**2%**
Blackmail	1	2%	1	2%	2	2%
Bribery	**11**	**21%**	**15**	**27%**	**26**	**24%**
Bid-rigging	2	4%	3	5%	5	5%
Bribery	2	4%	3	5%	5	5%
Kickbacks	7	13%	9	16%	16	15%
Extortion	**3**	**6%**	**1**	**2%**	**4**	**4%**
Extortion	2	4%	1	2%	3	3%
Pay to play	1	2%		0%	1	1%
Fraud	**14**	**27%**	**10**	**18%**	**24**	**22%**
Corporate card abuse	1	2%		0%	1	1%
Deception	5	10%	1	2%	6	6%
Fraudulent orders	2	4%	5	9%	7	6%
Misrepresenting accounts		0%	1	2%	1	1%
Money laundering	1	2%		0%	1	1%
Padding orders	1	2%		0%	1	1%
Quality reduction	3	6%	3	5%	6	6%
Tax evasion	1	2%		0%	1	1%
Gift-giving and lavish entertainment	**10**	**19%**	**6**	**11%**	**16**	**15%**
Gift-giving	6	12%	5	9%	11	10%
Lavish entertainment	4	8%	1	2%	5	5%
Insider trading	**1**	**2%**	**3**	**5%**	**4**	**4%**
Insider trading	1	2%	3	5%	4	4%
Personal favours	**4**	**8%**	**8**	**14%**	**12**	**11%**
Employees taking illicit substances		0%	2	4%	2	2%
Fast-tracking deals	2	4%		0%	2	2%
Favouritism		0%	1	2%	1	1%
Personal favours	2	4%	1	2%	3	3%
Sexual favours		0%	4	7%	4	4%

Theft / embezzlement	**7**	**13%**	**7**	**13%**	**14**	**13%**
Employee theft	4	8%	6	11%	10	9%
Employer theft	1	2%	1	2%	2	2%
Selling leads	2	4%		0%	2	2%
Unauthorised discounts	**1**	**2%**	**2**	**4%**	**3**	**3%**
Unauthorised discounts	1	2%	2	4%	3	3%
Unauthorised information release		**0%**	**3**	**5%**	**3**	**3%**
IP loss		0%	1	2%	1	1%
Unauthorised information sharing		0%	2	4%	2	2%
Total	**52**		**56**		**108**	

A further research question of this study was to explore the prevalence of corruption in boundary spanner relationships. This section outlines the responses from the sample on this question. As noted in section IV.1, a distinction between low severity and high severity cases was made in order to widen the net of data capture. Again, respondents were guided in the distinction between these types through examples outlined in section IV.1.

Less severe boundary spanner corruption. The survey asked, 'On a scale from 1 (not widespread at all) to 6 (extremely widespread): How widespread are less severe cases of deviant practices in business relationships in your industry'? 65% of buyer representatives and 45% of seller representatives report widespread less severe boundary spanner corruption in their industries (4 or higher on the 6-point scale) (see figure 4.2).

High severity boundary spanner corruption. The survey asked, 'On a scale from 1 (not widespread at all) to 6 (extremely widespread): How widespread are more severe cases of deviant practices in business relationships in your industry'? 45% of buyer representatives and 35% of seller representatives report widespread more severe boundary spanner corruption in their industries (4 or higher on the 6-point scale) (see figure 4.3).

Interestingly, both low severity and high severity boundary spanner corruption were considered widespread by both buyer and seller representatives - see table 4.4. Although support for

the widespread prevalence of high severity cases was lower. The results of this survey affirm the prevalence of boundary spanner corruption. Further, it underlines that even in a well-regulated and open economy such as the United States, there are instances of deviance that occur, although, given the focus of past research on high severity examples, the low severity instances may be overlooked.

The sample also observed that low severity was more prevalent than high severity examples. This was reported by both buyer and seller representatives. On the face of it, we may assume that more severe types of boundary spanner corruption are relatively rare within the sample. The findings may also indicate that, given the seriousness of more severe types, perpetrators are more likely to conceal their actions, making colleagues within an organisation or industry less aware. Whereas less severe types (such as gift giving) still occupy a space of uncertainty, where assigning deviance is debatable, and individuals are less anxious to hide their activities. This further underlines the potential impact of social desirability bias, which may also lower, or distort, the actual prevalence of boundary spanner corruption.

Although there was general agreement between the two representative groups on high severity examples, there is a difference of view on low severity boundary spanner corruption. Buyer representatives generally regard boundary spanner corruption as more prevalent than seller representatives. This suggests that buyer representatives are more sensitive to these behaviours compared to their seller counterparties. Conversely, it may also raise questions about whether seller representatives believe that engaging in low severity corruption may be normalised as routine (Anand et al., 2004).

FIGURE 4.2
HOW WIDESPREAD ARE LOW SEVERITY CASES OF BOUNDARY SPANNER
CORRUPTION IN YOUR INDUSTRY?

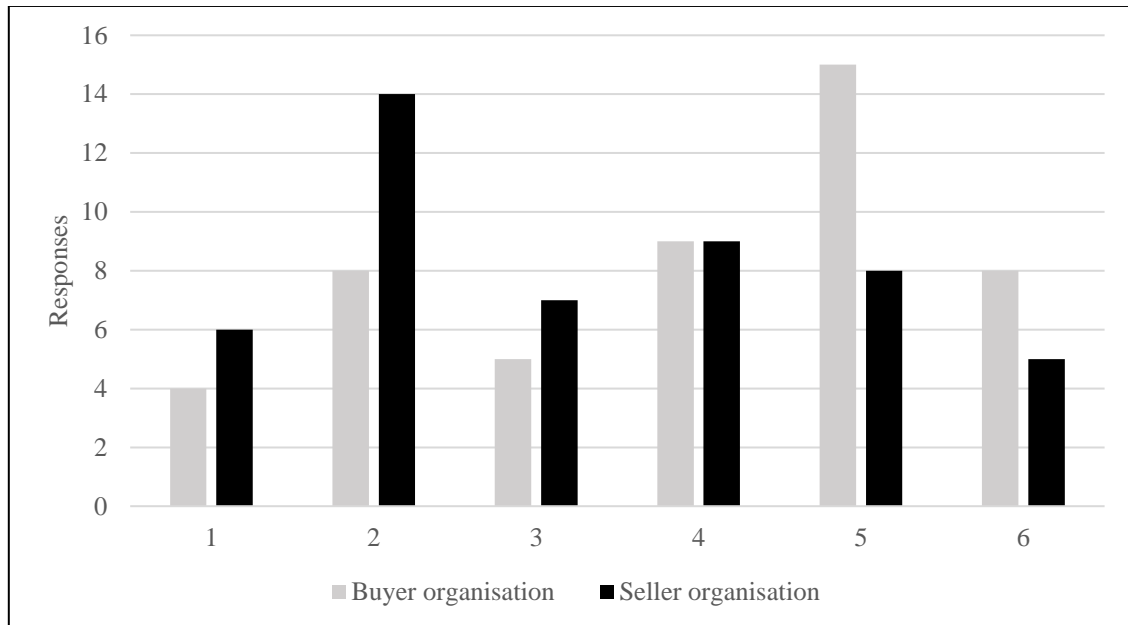(Where (1) is not at all widespread; and (6) is very widespread.)

FIGURE 4.3
HOW WIDESPREAD ARE HIGH SEVERITY CASES OF BOUNDARY SPANNER
CORRUPTION IN YOUR INDUSTRY?

(Where (1) is not at all widespread; and (6) is very widespread.)
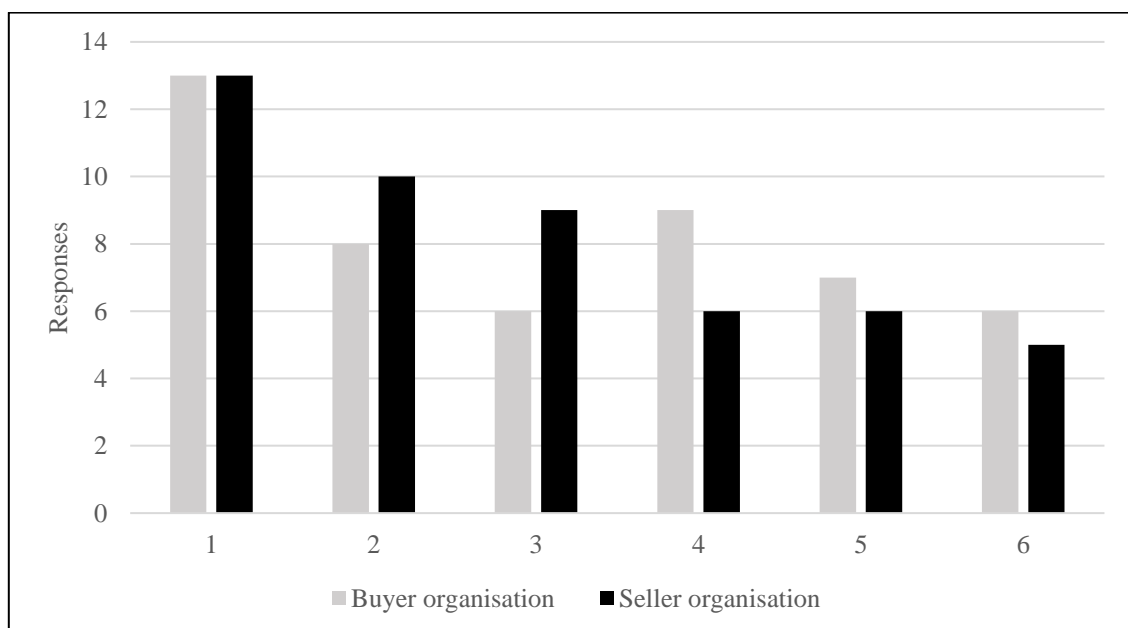
TABLE 4.4

THE PREVALENCE OF LOW AND HIGH SEVERITY

BOUNDARY SPANNER CORRUPTION

Widespread scale*	Low severity		High severity	
	Buyer representatives	Seller representative	Buyer representatives	Seller representative
1	8%	12%	27%	27%
2	16%	29%	16%	20%
3	10%	14%	12%	18%
4	18%	18%	18%	12%
5	31%	16%	14%	12%
6	16%	10%	12%	10%

Note*: Where (1) is not at all widespread; and (6) is very widespread.

IV.2.3 Results on the consequences of boundary spanner corruption

The final research question explored by this survey relates to the consequences of boundary spanner corruption. As with other questions, severity was a lens used to capture a wide range of consequences. To further broaden data collection, two additional lenses were introduced relating to the time horizon and the seriousness of the listed consequences. This section describes the consequences of both less and more severe boundary spanner corruption cases. It also describes the different types of consequences provided by the sample. These types and victims of these consequences were described in open-text boxes.

Low severity boundary spanner corruption: The survey asked, 'On a scale from 1 (no short-term/long-term negative consequences) to 6 (very serious short-term/long-term consequences): To what extent have companies in your industry suffered negative consequences due to less severe cases of deviant practices in business relationships?' In relation to short-term consequences, 59% of respondents from buyer representatives reported negative consequences in their industry (4 or higher on the 6-point scale); compared to 49% from the seller representatives (see figure 4.4). On long-term

consequences, 59% of managers in buyer representative roles and 45% of managers in seller

representative roles report long-term negative consequences of less severe boundary spanner

corruption in their industry (see figure 4.5).

FIGURE 4.4
TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE COMPANIES IN YOUR INDUSTRY SUFFERED **SHORT-TERM NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES** DUE TO **LOW SEVERITY** BOUNDARY
SPANNER CORRUPTION?

(Where (1) is no **short-term** negative consequences; and (6) is very serious **short-term** consequences.)

FIGURE 4.5
TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE COMPANIES IN YOUR INDUSTRY SUFFERED **LONG-TERM NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES** DUE TO **LOW SEVERITY** BOUNDARY SPANNER CORRUPTION?

(Where (1) is no **long-term** negative consequences; and (6) is very serious **long-term** consequences.)
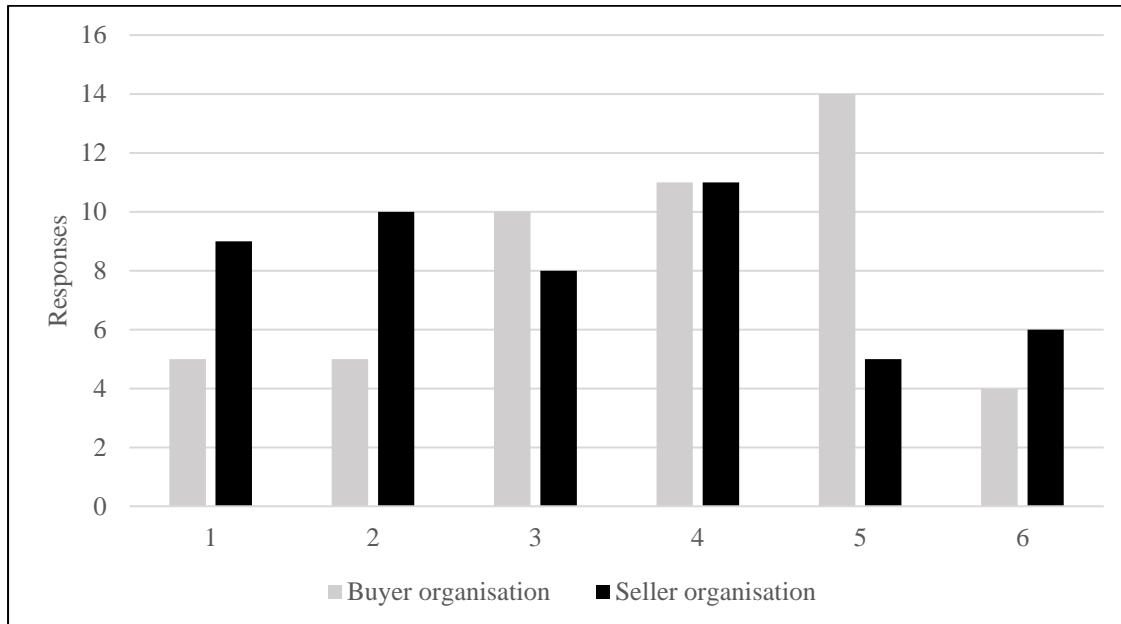
Buyer representatives saw more serious consequences for less severe boundary spanner corruption cases, compared to seller representatives (see table 4.5). This relates to both short-term and long-term consequences. Buyer representatives did not distinguish a difference in the short-term or long-term effects of less severe boundary spanner corruption, whereas seller representatives reported more seriousness in short-term consequences. Interestingly, 59% of buyer representatives scored the long-term consequences of less severe corruption over 4 on a 6-point scale. Seller representatives afforded 45% support to the same notion. This suggests an insidious effect of long-term exposure to less severe boundary spanner corruption.

TABLE 4.5

THE SERIOUSNESS OF SHORT-TERM CONSEQUENCES AND LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES OF LESS SEVERE BOUNDARY SPANNER CORRUPTION

Seriousness scale*	Short-term consequences		Long-term consequences	
	Buyer representatives	*Seller representative*	*Buyer representatives*	*Seller representative*
1	10%	22%	10%	18%
2	16%	16%	10%	20%
3	14%	12%	20%	16%
4	29%	27%	22%	22%
5	12%	14%	29%	10%
6	18%	8%	8%	12%

Note*: Where (1) is not at all serious; and (6) is very serious.

FIGURE 4.6
TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE COMPANIES IN YOUR INDUSTRY SUFFERED **SHORT-TERM NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES** DUE TO **HIGH SEVERITY** BOUNDARY SPANNER CORRUPTION?

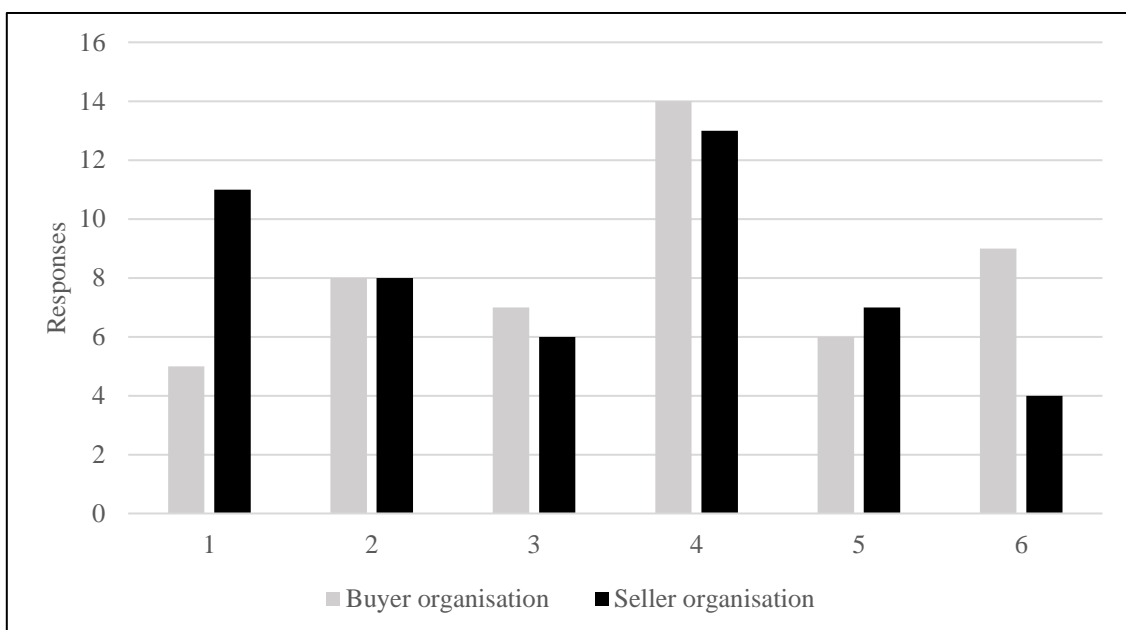(Where (1) is no **short-term** negative consequences; and (6) is very serious **short-term** consequences.)
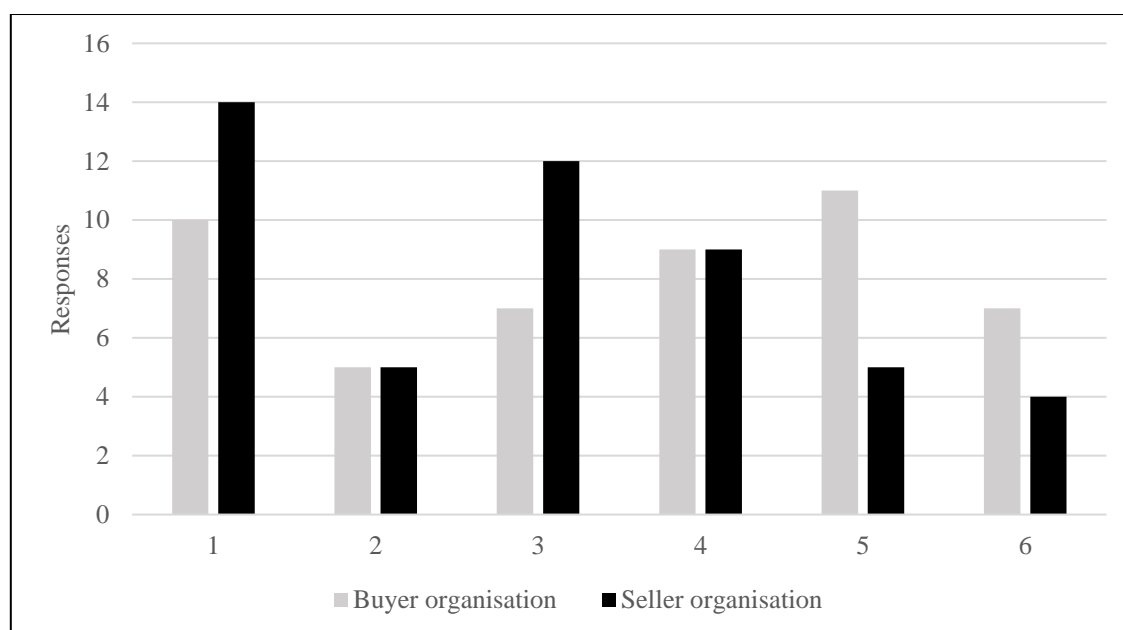
FIGURE 4.7
TO WHAT EXTENT HAVE COMPANIES IN YOUR INDUSTRY SUFFERED LONG-TERM NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES DUE TO HIGH SEVERITY BOUNDARY SPANNER CORRUPTION?

(Where (1) is no **long-term** negative consequences; and (6) is very serious **long-term** consequences.)
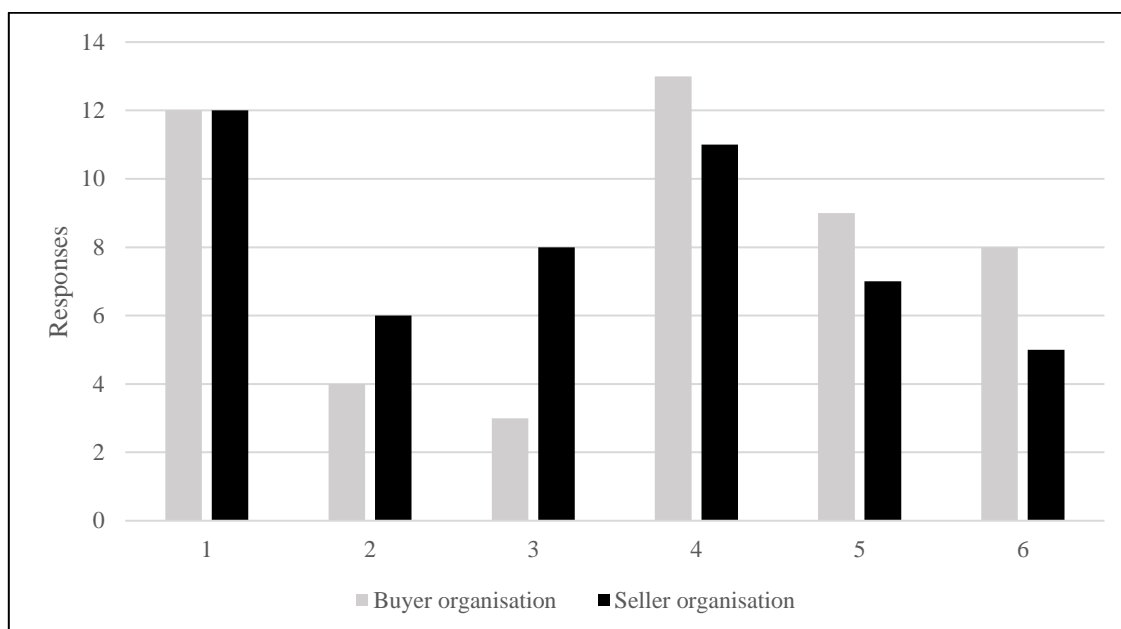
TABLE 4.6

THE SERIOUSNESS OF SHORT-TERM CONSEQUENCES AND LONG-TERM CONSEQUENCES OF HIGH SEVERITY BOUNDARY SPANNER CORRUPTION

Seriousness scale*	Short-term consequences		Long-term consequences	
	Buyer representatives	Seller representative	Buyer representatives	Seller representative
1	10%	10%	8%	12%
2	14%	24%	6%	16%
3	18%	18%	27%	22%
4	22%	10%	18%	14%
5	14%	8%	16%	10%
6	10%	10%	8%	12%

Note*: Where (1) is not at all serious; and (6) is very serious.

High severity boundary spanner corruption. For high severity examples, for short-term consequences, 55% of respondents from buyer representatives reported negative consequences in their industry (4 or higher on the 6-point scale); compared to 37% from the seller representatives (see figure 4.6). On long-term consequences, 61% of managers in buyer representative roles and 47% of managers in seller representative roles report long-term negative consequences of less severe boundary spanner corruption in their industry; (see figure 4.7). Given the higher prevalence rates witnessed by buyer representatives, we also see higher consequences for this community both in respect of severity and time horizon.

Buyer representatives saw more serious consequences for high severity boundary spanner corruption cases, compared to seller representatives (see table 4.6). This was related to both short-term and long-term consequences. However, both buyer and seller representatives agreed that longer-term consequences were more serious, suggesting a significant compounded effect of long-term exposure to high severity boundary spanner corruption.

Time horizon of boundary spanner corruption: In terms of the time horizon, the sample reported both short-term and long-term consequences of boundary spanner corruption. For example, 59% of buyer representatives scored the long-term consequences of less severe corruption over 4 on a 6-point scale. For high severity types, the same group afforded a 45% support level of seriousness. This suggests an insidious effect of long-term exposure to less severe boundary spanner corruption that may be greater in its seriousness than high severity corruption. This may be a result of a volume effect, in which the more prevalent less severe types cumulant in impact. It may also reveal the corrosive effect of less severe corruption that undermines the norms of conventional business practice daily.

Seriousness of boundary spanner corruption: As we saw in respect of the other explored questions, the buyer and seller representative groups differed in their assessment of the seriousness of the consequences of boundary spanner corruption. Buyer representatives are of the view that both the short-term and long-term consequences are greater for both high and low severity types compared to the seller representative group. This is reflective of a broader finding in these data that buyer representatives are more sensitive to corruption, which may in part derive from a concern for the

seriousness of the consequences for the organisation. Seller representatives were more likely to see employee consequences than buyer representatives. Whereas buyers witnessed greater operational, commercial and human capital inefficiencies.

Types of corruption consequences. Respondents were asked to describe the consequences of the examples they previously provided, in relation to both low severity and high severity boundary spanner corruption (outlined in section 4.2). These were then coded and organised into two tables (see table 4.7 and table 4.8). These negative consequences range from bankruptcy and fines at the most significant end to undermining the commercial and operational performance of the firm. Of the 124 negative consequences listed, 98 pertained directly to the organisation itself. Consequences felt by the employees were also detected, with 26 such cases reported. That said, some felt that the consequences of exposed episodes are limited as the existence of such an episode itself is suppressed:

> There really aren't any [negative consequences to low severity corruption]. Anything negative gets swept under the rug, and everyone forgets a month later, it's sad that no one is punished.
>
> Buyer representative

This itself may be an indication of further corruption where boundary spanner practitioners can subvert the internal control and reporting processes. The survey explores the negative consequences resulting from boundary spanner corruption. These are discussed below.

Negative employee consequences: Consequences of boundary spanner corruption ranged from demotion, pay reduction, to termination of employment to legal prosecution. Of the 26 examples provided 15 (57%) were in relation to low severity cases and 11 (43%) were linked to high severity cases. Interestingly, 12 out of the 15 low severity cases resulted in the termination of employment (80%), compared to just 5 of the 11 (45%) of the high severity cases. 15 (57%) cases were reported by seller representatives, and 11 (43%) by the buyer representatives. Of the 17 cases of employee termination, 11 (65%) were recorded by the seller representatives. The only legal prosecution cases (5) were witnessed by the buyer representatives, suggesting that the individual risk for engaging in boundary spanner corruption may be higher for those in the buying organisation function. Two typical examples are presented below:

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> I heard that the two people who were involved in taking money out of the deal a company in my industry had with a medical supplier industry and they were arrested.
>
> Buyer representative

> I know of one company that let their sales team go because they were getting kickbacks.
>
> Seller representative

Interestingly, harsher punishments were issued to low severity cases compared to high severity cases. Cases of less severe corruption were more likely to result in termination than more severe instances. This is a counter-intuitive finding as more severe punishments would ordinarily be expected to result from more severe contraventions. The gravity of high severity cases may indicate that it is not a rogue 'bad apple', but a more structural problem of a 'bad barrel'. Others believed that there were rarely any consequences for less severe corruption, as, for one buyer representative, it was mostly "swept under the carpet". This may indicate that many such cases (as well as their consequences) are underreported not only in this survey, but in other similar assessments of boundary spanner corruption.

Negative organisational consequences: The following section reports manifested negative organisational consequences: namely, organisational reputational risk, operational inefficacies, commercial inefficiencies, fines, competitive inefficiencies, human capital inefficiencies and bankruptcy. These are organised by frequency of occurrence.

Organisational reputational risk: The most commonly occurring negative consequence of corruption for the organisation is related to the reputational consequence. These included factors such as loss of trust, organisational reputational risk and loss of customers (tangible loss of revenues were labelled as 'commercial inefficiencies'). 24 of these cases were recorded, representing 19% of the total instances. 17 of these were in relation to low severity cases (70% of all the instances) with the remaining 7 (30%) connected with the high severity instances. Both buyer representatives and seller representatives encountered such consequences, both functions recording 12 instances each. This loss of trustworthiness can affect both individual and market reputation, as the two quotes below testify:

> There is a loss of trust between supplier and customer, it can put pressure on the company to keep doing business with them under false pretences.

You lost trust, so you lose the vendor and word gets around about what kind of unethical practices you make.

<div align="right">Seller representative</div>

Despite this loss of trust, the factors can potentially culminate to create deeper negative consequences for the organisation, as one informant states:

A negative consequence of these deviant practices is that companies can lose trust in a certain supplier. Another one is that we are less likely to do business with them in future, and it could cost us money in the long run because they could have higher quality products that we need and now we will have to go elsewhere to get a lower quality item. So, to sum it up, negative items are distrust, loss of money, and decreased quality overall if trust is broken between supplier and customer.

<div align="right">Buyer representative</div>

Operational inefficiencies: 22 (18%) of the total negative consequences related to operational efficiencies. This was a diverse category, including examples such as increased lead-time, reduced product quality and data losses among other factors. 17 (72%) of recorded instances related to low severity corruption types. Of the five consequences of high severity corruption, three identified greater administrative burdens in corrective measures. 16 of the total instances were reported by the buyer representative group (72%) with the remaining 6 (28%) witnessed by the seller representatives. Two typical examples of these operational efficiencies are described below:

Reduction in the life cycle of our product development with our consumers for the long term. Lack of trust in our main products because of delays in essential product delivery. Not being able to complete necessary orders because of delays.

<div align="right">Buyer representative</div>

Wrong product mix due to relationship buying rather than product buying

<div align="right">Seller representative</div>

The additional controls, processes and administrative task that follow in the wake of an exposed instance of boundary spanner corruption increases the work volume. These are particularly experienced by the buyer representative group, who are responsible for complying with the policies in the procurement process, as the example below demonstrates:

The best example of a negative consequence is the companies having to incorporate many new processes into the procurement areas that are more time-consuming and make it more cumbersome for honest people to get things done.

<div align="right">Buyer representative</div>

These types of cases in a large company such as mine create more work for everyone because more levels of approval, more checks and balances, etc. during the procurement process to make sure incidents that have happened in the past cannot be recreated in the future.

<div align="right">Buyer representative</div>

Commercial inefficiencies: 20 of the total recorded negative consequences of corruption relating to commercial inefficiencies, which covered 16% of the total response. Examples of which include increased costs, loss of budget, loss of profit and loss of revenue. These were evenly distributed between high and low-severity corruption types. 12 (60%) of the responses were recorded by buyer representatives, with 8 (40%) shared by the seller representative group. 6 of the 8 seller representative responses related to a loss of revenue representing 75% of their total responses to this category. Whereas, buyers were more focused on the internal consequences, with only 4 (33%) of this group experiencing a loss of sales. The financial consequence of these interactions can be material, as the following examples demonstrate:

After an investigation into the unfair practices of our competitors, we have determined that our loss of gross margin was directly attributed to unfair bid placement.

<div align="right">Buyer representative</div>

The contract extension this individual got approved resulted in higher than necessary freight cost being absorbed and passed on to our customers.

<div align="right">Buyer representative</div>

The company didn't realise it at first and it kept on building up and lost hundreds and thousands of dollars.

<div align="right">Seller representative</div>

Moreover, the cumulative consequence at the industry level may also be just as significant as the firm-level consequences, as one respondent noted:

The loss of business in our industry is prevalent because of these practices.

<div align="right">Seller representative</div>

Fines: 13 of the examples of negative consequences related to fines, which covered 10% of the total. 8 of these related to high severity cases, representing two-thirds of the total. These were reasonably well-distributed between the groups, with seller representatives reporting 7 (54%) and buyer representatives providing 6 examples (46%). A typical example observes that:

Companies that have ripped off customers had to pay fines.

<div align="right">Seller representative</div>

Competitive inefficiencies: Seven cases where companies have lost overall competitiveness in the marketplace were also listed. These are related to inaccurate pricing and a reduced supplier pool. Of these, four (57%) were associated with high severity corruption and three (43%) with low severity types. Four were expressed by seller representatives and three by the buyer representative. All three examples for buyer representatives are related to a reduced supplier pool. These consequences may only have limited consequences:

It prices us out of short-term deals, mostly - but these practices and situations are generally single-deal based violations so they only have short term consequences for my organisation and generally don't ripple out to other teams.

<div align="right">Seller representative</div>

Respondents also note that boundary spanner corruption reduces the competitiveness of the marketplace, suggesting there are more longer-term consequences on organisational competitiveness:

Once you start down the path of discussing pricing practices, it's hard to reel that back in; you can't unhear what you hear. In the short term, this can damage a company's ability to be profitable in the short term and damage future short term negotiation capabilities.

<div align="right">Seller representative</div>

Human capital inefficiencies: Seven negative consequences at the organisation level were also identified, representing 6% of the total observed instanced. These factors relate to a loss of employee morale, loss of employee productivity, loss of employees and worsened employee relations. Four of these were associated with high severity corruption; three were connected to low severity. All three

instances of loss of employee morale were associated with high severity examples. A key differentiator between the negative consequences expressed by the seller representative roles reflects the internal consequence on human capital. No seller representatives stated this as an issue, reflecting the more operational or internal focus of buyer representative boundary spanner practitioners. Examples provided also speak of the insidious nature of corruption, in that it erodes at employee morale and integrity:

> There's a lot of back-patting if you know what I mean - money changes hands and it undermines employee integrity and product integrity.
>
> Buyer representative

> It can lead to weak social structures.
>
> Buyer representative

Bankruptcy: The most extreme consequence for an organisation of boundary spanner corruption is falling into insolvency. This is a relatively rare occurrence in this research, with only five instances reported, representing 4% of the total sample. Two were connected to high severity types, with the remaining three relating to low severity types. Three were witnessed by seller representatives; two by the buyer representatives. The examples provided also underline the significance of these consequences:

> Companies going out of business with higher-ups going to prison.
>
> Buyer representative

> There was a severe case I recall a while back that eventually led to the complete bankruptcy of a company. It was in the news and got a lot of national attention.
>
> Seller representative

that undermine the performance of the organisation. It may also reflect that, where buyer representatives are exposed as corrupt, the individual consequences may fall more heavily upon them. For example, the only individual legal prosecutions resulting from these cases were observed by buyer representatives. Again, this underlines the importance of engaging with both groups of the boundary-spanner community in order to fully explicate the understanding of the phenomenon.

TABLE 4.7

CONSEQUENCES OF BOUNDARY SPANNER CORRUPTION BY SEVERITY

Consequence type	High severity No	High severity %	Low severity No	Low severity %	Total No	Total %
Bankruptcy	**2**	**4%**	**3**	**4%**	**5**	**4%**
Bankruptcy	2	4%	3	4%	5	4%
Commercial inefficiencies	**10**	**20%**	**10**	**14%**	**20**	**16%**
Increased costs	4	8%	2	3%	6	5%
Loss of budget			1	1%	1	1%
Loss of profit	2	4%	1	1%	3	2%
Loss of revenue	4	8%	6	8%	10	8%
Competitive inefficiencies	**4**	**8%**	**3**	**4%**	**7**	**6%**
Inaccurate pricing			2	3%	2	2%
Reduced supplier pool	4	8%	1	1%	5	4%
Fines	**8**	**16%**	**5**	**7%**	**13**	**10%**
Fines	8	16%	5	7%	13	10%
Human capital inefficiencies	**4**	**8%**	**3**	**4%**	**7**	**6%**
Loss of employee morale	3	6%			3	2%
Loss of employee productivity			1	1%	1	1%
Loss of employees			1	1%	1	1%
Worsened employee relations	1	2%	1	1%	2	2%
Negative employee consequence	**11**	**22%**	**15**	**21%**	**26**	**21%**
Employee demotion	2	4%	1	1%	3	2%
Employee legal prosecution	4	8%	1	1%	5	4%
Employee pay reduction			1	1%	1	1%
Employee termination	5	10%	12	16%	17	14%
Operational inefficiencies	**5**	**10%**	**17**	**23%**	**22**	**18%**
Data loss			3	4%	3	2%
Greater administrative burden in corrective measures	3	6%	2	3%	5	4%
Increased lead-time			2	3%	2	2%
Irregular process followed			1	1%	1	1%

Loss of material			2	3%	2	2%
Operational inefficiencies			4	5%	4	3%
Reduced product quality	1	2%	3	4%	4	3%
Use of unlicensed software	1	2%			1	1%
Organisational reputational risk	**7**	**14%**	**17**	**23%**	**24**	**19%**
Loss of customers	4	8%	3	4%	7	6%
Loss of trust	2	4%	7	10%	9	7%
Organisational reputational risk	1	2%	7	10%	8	6%
Total	**51**		**73**		**124**	

TABLE 4.8

CONSEQUENCES OF BOUNDARY SPANNER CORRUPTION BY ROLE

Consequence type	Seller representative		Buyer representative		Total	
	No	*%*	*No*	*%*	*No*	*%*
Bankruptcy	**3**	**5%**	**2**	**3%**	**5**	**4%**
Bankruptcy	3	5%	2	3%	5	4%
Commercial inefficiencies	**8**	**15%**	**12**	**17%**	**20**	**16%**
Increased costs	2	4%	4	6%	6	5%
Loss of budget			1	1%	1	1%
Loss of profit			3	4%	3	2%
Loss of revenue	6	11%	4	6%	10	8%
Competitive inefficiencies	**4**	**7%**	**3**	**4%**	**7**	**6%**
Inaccurate pricing	2	4%		0%	2	2%
Reduced supplier pool	2	4%	3	4%	5	4%
Fines	**7**	**13%**	**6**	**9%**	**13**	**10%**
Fines	7	13%	6	9%	13	10%
Human capital inefficiencies			**7**	**10%**	**7**	**6%**
Loss of employee morale			3	4%	3	2%
Loss of employee productivity			1	1%	1	1%
Loss of employees			1	1%	1	1%
Worsened employee relations			2	3%	2	2%
Negative employee consequence	**15**	**27%**	**11**	**16%**	**26**	**21%**
Employee demotion	3	5%		0%	3	2%
Employee legal prosecution			5	7%	5	4%
Employee pay reduction	1	2%		0%	1	1%
Employee termination	11	20%	6	9%	17	14%
Operational inefficiencies	**6**	**11%**	**16**	**23%**	**22**	**18%**
Data loss	1	2%	2	3%	3	2%
Greater administrative burden in corrective measures	2	4%	3	4%	5	4%
Increased lead-time	1	2%	1	1%	2	2%

Irregular process followed			1	1%	1	1%
Loss of material	1	2%	1	1%	2	2%
Operational inefficiencies			4	6%	4	3%
Reduced product quality	1	2%	3	4%	4	3%
Use of unlicensed software			1	1%	1	1%
Organisational reputational risk	**12**	**22%**	**12**	**17%**	**24**	**19%**
Loss of customers	5	9%	2	3%	7	6%
Loss of trust	4	7%	5	7%	9	7%
Organisational reputational risk	3	5%	5	7%	8	6%
Total	**55**		**69**		**124**	

IV.3 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the prevalence, nature and consequences of boundary spanner corruption. The survey has found widespread evidence of boundary spanner corruption, especially as experienced by the buyer representatives. It has also uncovered rich examples of the nature and consequences of these phenomena as they affect boundary spanner practitioners.

RQ1 Nature of boundary spanner corruption: As we saw in chapter II, varying perspectives on general corruption detail different facets and manifestations of general corruption (Dimant & Schulte, 2016). When studies touch upon boundary spanner corruption, the nature of the phenomenon that they describe varies markedly. They can include gift-giving (Tengilimoglu et al., 2004), bribery (Arnold et al., 2012) and collusive fraud (Association of Fraud Examiners, 2020). An objective of this chapter, therefore, is to explore the nature of boundary spanner corruption by investigating the facets and manifestations of the phenomenon as they emerge in the field. Respondents provided a wide range of less severe cases of boundary spanner corruption. Even in a relatively small sample (fewer than 100 responses), the examples provided are diverse. These related to highly personalised relationships between representatives (such as offering personal favours and even sexual relationships) to more substantive cases (such as collusive theft, offering unauthorised discounts or unauthorised information sharing). For many studies, the focus is simply on 'corruption' or 'abuse of office', without detailing any sub-categories of behaviour (Transparency International, 2021). Where more detailed facets are included, they tend to only focus on severe examples, such as bribery and fraud (ACFE, 2020). By excluding non-severe these types of boundary spanner corruption, past research is potentially missing a major facet of the phenomenon. Moreover, the potential for deviant practices to move to increasingly more severe types is a factor, as the 'slippery slope' of less severe types may lead to more severe types later (Gino & Bazerman, 2009; Bandura, 2017). Capturing low severity examples may provide a deeper understanding of the antecedents to more severe boundary spanner corruption. However, many research methods reviewed in chapter III may struggle to study this detailed nature of the phenomenon which itself may account for its omission. This may also suggest that more

qualitative methods – such as interviews – may be the most suitable means by which the richness of boundary spanner corruption can be captured. Chapter V will further enrich the above typology by collecting interview data from boundary spanner representatives and expert informants.

Prevalence of boundary spanner corruption: This research detected significant evidence of boundary spanner corruption. Despite the use of a sample drawn from a country where general corruption levels were low. The USA consistently ranks well in international studies on general corruption (Transparency International, 2021a). Such is the relatively low levels of general corruption that there are relatively few examples of studies on corruption within the county, for example, Transparency International's *Corruption Barometer* series omits the country from its surveys. However, in this chapter, widespread instances of boundary spanner corruption are detected, especially those of a low severity level. This finding may also suggest that the research on private-to-public corruption may miss some of the less apparent private-to-private corruption or indeed boundary spanner corruption that may in fact be endemic to industry.

Consequences of boundary spanner corruption: Significant negative consequences for companies suffering boundary spanner corruption were also revealed. These related to the catastrophic (e.g. bankruptcy) to frustrating (e.g. loss of operational efficiency). Most of the consequences reported were felt directly by the organisation. This underlines the aspect captured in the definition of boundary spanner that the corrupt behaviour has the potential to threaten the interests of the organisation. In this instance, there is compelling evidence that this potential threat is actually felt as actual harm. Even less severe cases were found to have led to serious consequences that inflict tangible harm on the organisation. Even when there are no immediate operational or financial consequences, relational consequences were evident. 70% of the reputational risk consequences were drawn from less severe types, indicating that even smaller violations can erode an organisation's standing. Chapter II identifies that there is often a divided interpretation of the consequences of general corruption. Some argue that corruption *greases* the wheels of commerce and thereby generates positive consequences for general corruption (Huntington, 1970), others – and the overwhelming majority of researchers – find that corruption operates as *grit* to slow the workings of

the machine (Mendoza et al., 2015). The evidence of the negative consequences of corruption is not uniform. Some point to corruption as associated with higher levels of business profitability (Bolarinwa & Soetan, 2019; Mongid & Tahir, 2011). Whereas other studies demonstrate that a corrupt environment undermines the performance of businesses' competitiveness (Ades & Di Tella, 1999). In respect to boundary spanner corruption, few studies provide a clear answer on its consequences. This chapter provides evidence of the negative consequences of boundary spanner corruption that may befall both the organisation and individuals. Moreover, this chapter offers a list of consequences provided by boundary spanner practitioners that have directly experienced the impact of the phenomenon.

V.   Motivators and mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption: A theoretical model

Chapter I proposed research questions for the nascent concept of boundary spanner corruption. Chapter II identified gaps in the literature in answering these questions. A research strategy was developed in chapter III, identifying surveys and interviews as the most appropriate research methods to address these research questions. Chapter IV explored the nature (RQ1), prevalence (RQ2) and consequences (RQ3) of boundary spanner corruption. Chapter V – the current chapter – explores questions on the motivators (RQ4) and mechanisms (RQ5) of boundary spanner corruption using an interview-based research method. Similar to chapter IV, which was predominately exploratory in nature, chapter IV employs seeks to both explore practitioner information as well as develop a theoretical model for boundary spanner corruption. Chapter II also provided literature-based insights on the importance of relational and external factors as key motivators of boundary spanner corruption. The literature review also highlighted the social cocoon as a mechanism to explain boundary spanner corruption. This chapter, therefore, presents a model of boundary spanner corruption, with particular reference to explicating the motivators and mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption, building on the initial model proposed in chapter II (figure 2.3). Although chapter IV addresses the research questions of nature, prevalence and consequences of boundary spanner corruption, the interviews and literature highlighted the realised and unrealised costs of the consequences. Therefore, chapter V also explores answers to the RQ3 question through further insight gleaned from practitioners. The data collected in this research do not serve to confirm theory, but rather the informant testimony was to explore the research questions and provide insight as propositions are developed (Grewal et al., 2007; Workman et al., 1998). The propositions presented in this chapter model relational and

external motivators that drive corruption, within a theoretical framework. The model employs a social cocoon mechanism to explain boundary spanner corruption.[3]

This chapter will first present the research method and analysis approach of the interview-based research study. It then discusses the results of these interviews in the context of proposition development. Lastly, the chapter concludes by outlining the complete theoretical model which integrates these propositions to conceptualise an initial framework of boundary spanner corruption.

V.1 Method of qualitative field interviews

This section discusses the research approach employed in this interview study. The section outlines the method in interview design, sample selection, respondent guidance, data analysis and procedures to reduce social undesirability bias.

Interview design: The interviews explore the two remaining unanswered research questions relating to the motivators and mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption. They will also explore issues relating to the consequences of boundary spanner corruption. The purpose is to both explore the research questions as well as to build a theoretical model. Although the interviews are structured around the different levels of the initial theoretical framework developed from the review of literature streams in chapter II and their roles in boundary spanner corruption, informants had the opportunity to discuss additional aspects they considered important. Each interview began with general questions that covered various aspects of close business relationships and the deviant behaviour of boundary spanners.

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[3] [3] An earlier version of this chapter was published in the *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* (Forkmann, Webb, Henneberg & Scheer, 2022). There are some additive materials in this chapter that builds upon the model presented in the journal article. Namely, further conceptual development and qualitative research has been conducted within the socio-cultural aspects of the models, culminating in a new proposition. Further, additional informants were interviewed, notably expert informants, in order to further explicate this new proposition in the model.

Follow-up questions elicited further details, both in terms of facts as well as the informant's perceptions of boundary spanner corruption. Interviews were concluded when no further insights emerged from the last field interviews. Interviews lasted between 40 and 60 minutes. Interviews were conducted with reference to an interview guide. The first round comprised 10 interviews, the second round involved a further 20 and the final round consisted of a further 11 interviews. From these multiple rounds of interviews and iterative conceptual research phases, a refined theoretical model was developed. In the first instance, an initial guide was developed based upon the conceptual research, which pertained to the first 10 interviews. This was later revised and redeveloped based on the observations of the subjects into a revised interview guide which was used for the second round of interviews (see Appendix C). The third round was focused on theory building and refinement, sharing with the subjects the models for feedback and critique. Although the research was exploratory in nature, the subsequent rounds of conceptual research and secondary interviews afforded opportunities to enhance theory. This took inspiration from some of the methods of grounded and abductive research to refine, enhance and deepen the theoretical constructs under study as a reiterative activity during the investigations (Dubois & Gadde, 2002; Grewal et al., 2007).

The findings from the qualitative analysis were used in conjunction with the theoretical framework and an extensive review of the associated literature to develop detailed propositions about boundary spanner corruption. Combining the conceptual work with the qualitative findings was an iterative process (Grewal et al., 2007), with the field interviews providing both breadth and depth for proposition development. The qualitative data enabled a means to gauge the criticality of, and linkages between, themes relating to each proposition.

Sample selection: A purposeful sampling strategy was used to recruit informants from firms of different sizes, geographies and industries (Homburg et al., 2014). Practitioner informants

were selected from members of a professional network (see table 5.1 for more details). The criteria for selection rested upon individual experience as professional boundary spanners or experts who are familiar with the activities of boundary spanners. In order to enhance the breadth of data capture, the research aimed to maximise the diversity of industries represented and role types (Homburg et al., 2014; Homburg et al., 2000). Informant selection also focused on senior individuals, that could speak for several industry sectors. To further ensure the generalisability of the responses, informants that had worked and lived in different countries and cultures were selected. No approached individual refused an interview. Of the 30 informants interviewed, 14 were primarily supplier-facing in orientation (in that they worked in a procurement function); 10 were customer-facing (in that they worked in a sales or marketing function); three worked in both supplier-facing and buyer-facing roles; and the remaining three had more expert experience. The expert informants were involved in internal compliance or external audit and had direct experience of boundary spanner corruption. 28 interviews were conducted in-person, but, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 13 were held on video calls. 27 of the informants were male and four were female. Of these informants, 23 were interviewed once, six were interviewed twice and two were interviewed three times. In total 41 interviews were conducted.

TABLE 5.1
SURVEY INFORMANT CHARACTERISTICS

ID	Informant perspective	Seniority	Nationality	Industry experience***	Firm size****	Interview Format
1**	Buyer representative	C-level	UK/HK	Financial and insurance activities	200,000	In-person & Video call
2*	Buyer representative & Seller representative	C-level	France	Financial and insurance activities & information and communication	120,000	In-person & Video call
3	Buyer representative	Director-level	France	Manufacturing	100,000	In-person
4*	Buyer representative	C-level	UK	Human health and social work activities & manufacturing	100,000	In-person
5*	Buyer representative	C-level	Singapore	Transportation and storage	10,000	In-person
6**	Buyer representative	Director-level	Singapore	Construction & Mining and Quarrying	50,000	In-person
7	Seller representative	C-level	Singapore	Commodities and technology	10	In-person
8*	Buyer representative & Seller representative	Director-level	USA	Professional, scientific and technical activities	30,000	In-person
9*	Seller representative	Manager-level	UK	Real estate activities	90,000	In-person
10	Buyer organisation	C-level	Denmark	Manufacturing	10,000	In-person
11	Seller representative	C-level	UK	Technology	30	In-person
12	Seller representative	Director-level	Australia	Financial and insurance activities	10	In-person
13*	Seller representative	C-level	Australia	Mining and Quarrying	100,000	In-person & Video call
14	Seller representative	Manager-level	UK	Manufacturing	10,000	Video call
15	Seller representative	Director-level	UK	Professional, scientific and technical activities	100	In-person
16	Seller representative	Director-level	UK	Professional, scientific and technical activities	100	In-person
17	Buyer representative & Seller representative	Director-level	Australia	Mining and Quarrying	80,000	Video call
18	Seller representative	Manager-level	UK	Transportation and storage	150	In-person
19	Buyer representative	C-level	Singapore	Financial and insurance activities	300	In-person
20	Buyer representative	Director-level	Italy	Human health and social work activities	110,000	In-person
21	Buyer representative	Director-level	New Zealand	Real estate activities	100,000	In-person
22	Buyer representative	Director-level	France	Human health and social work activities	100,000	Video call
23	Buyer representative	C-level	China	Professional, scientific and technical activities	24,000	In-person
24	Expert representative	Director-level	Australia	Mining and Quarrying	80,000	Video call
25	Buyer representative	Director-level	South Africa	Information and communication	1,000	Video call
26	Seller representative	Manager-level	Singapore	Information and communication	14,000	In-person
27	Expert representative	Director-level	UK	Financial and insurance activities	84,000	In-person
28	Buyer representative	Director-level	India	Information and communication	25,000	Video call
29	Buyer representative	Director-level	Singapore	Manufacturing	12,600	Video call
30	Expert representative	Director-level	Singapore	Financial and insurance activities	250,000	In-person

* Denotes two interviews with the same informant.
** Denotes three interviews with the same informant.
*** Most recent industry experience listed first.
**** Number of employees of current employer.

Data analysis: In the first round of interviews, theoretical sampling was used, in which data were extracted from all participants. The data from the first round was decomposed into theoretical areas (Grewal et al., 2007) that related to the core areas under study. This was used to broaden the conceptual model and include more fine-grained detail around emergent phenomena. The analysis of the interview transcripts was carried out through several coding steps. Initially, words or phrases of interest were tagged through a line-by-line analysis of each transcript. This process was guided by a conceptual understanding of boundary spanner corruption, but also allowed for new aspects to emerge. Next, for each transcript, similar tagged words and phrases were grouped into zero-order categories, which capture their general essence of meaning (Yin, 2009). As individuals often use different terminology to refer to the same underlying concepts, the 521 zero-order categories were examined and aggregated into first-order categories representing similar concepts despite divergent terminology (Homburg et al., 2000). This process resulted in 102 descriptive first-order categories. Next, related first-order categories were grouped into higher-level second-order categories. While the first-order categories are descriptions formed from informants' considerations, the second-order categories have been synthesised using the literatures on deviance in service and sales organisations and the dark side of marketing relationships (Homburg et al., 2017). This process resulted in 20 second-order categories (see coding tree Appendix D). These second-order categories were then related to the theoretical framework of boundary spanner corruption (Grewal et al., 2007). The trustworthiness of the coding process was enhanced by recontacting informants, and asking them to relate specific examples from their initial interviews to the final framework (Homburg et al., 2014). There was strong agreement that the framework is aligned with actual practices.

Social desirability bias: A variety of venues was used to host interviews, including formal venues (subject place of work) and informal venues (cafes and restaurants), which also

enabled less guarded and more open conversation. This approach also enhanced the trustworthiness of the findings by allowing participants to relax more and reflect on a wide range of experiences (Flint, 2002). Interviews also employed unobtrusive and nondirective questions, avoiding active listening. Given the social undesirability bias of the topics under study (corruption) an open, friendly form of discussion was encouraged (Varraich, 2016). Participants were reminded that their personal identities and employers' details would be anonymised. Identities are only known by the researcher conducting the interviews. In order to further ensure the trustworthiness of findings, member checks were used in order to ensure that interviewee contributions were accurately captured. Participants were not compensated but were offered a coffee or a meal as a gesture of thanks. All interviews were recorded (save one, where the subject requested anonymity, but notes were made and later transcribed).

V.2 Consequences of boundary spanner corruption

Chapter IV uncovered significant negative consequences of boundary spanner corruption relating to both individual and organisational costs. Within the literature, boundary spanner corruption generates immediately realised costs, opportunity costs, and latent risks that harm the representatives' organisations (Luo, 2005). With regard to realised costs, boundary spanner corruption inherently inflicts immediate harm to at least one firm, as its representative acts contrary to the role as an agent of the firm. For example, a salesperson may sell to a complicit buyer at a lower price than the customer would have been willing to pay or a buyer may misuse company funds to acquire the desired supply relationship. The interviews conducted as a part of this chapter reveal a similar dynamic. One informant describes how excess inventory can be procured below market price through boundary spanner corruption:

It's called a "broker fee" which will probably be paid in cash.

Seller representative[4]

Boundary spanner corruption also may cause immediate harm to both firms as it results in

misallocated resources, leads to sub-optimal decisions, and harms the productivity of the

firms' business relationship (Della Porta & Vannucci, 2017). One informant describes how

boundary spanner corruption can lead to doing business with sellers for which no business

case exists:

> The team in procurement was channelling money to certain suppliers who could then arrange structures in the distribution network to enhance or influence sales. The mix of preferred suppliers was changing dramatically, and there is nothing wrong with that, if there is a good business case to do it, but there wasn't. There were examples of non-preferred suppliers, who hadn't, as it transpired, gone through an onboarding process who were basically being charmed business.
>
> Buyer representative

Such sub-optimal decisions generate opportunity costs associated with the foregone

alternative course of action displaced by the corrupt activity; the marginal benefits of the

decision that would have been made on the merits, in the absence of corruption, are forfeited.

It can undermine employee morale and productivity or damage development of

organisational capabilities (Luo, 2004). Boundary spanner corruption has the potential to

dissuade future relationship-specific investments and interfirm cooperation, consequently

undermining both organisations' ability to obtain full value from the relationship. In

compound or multiplex relationships (Ross & Robertson, 2007; Tuli et al., 2010), this may

affect and create risks for other ventures between the partner firms, such as R&D or

marketing alliances, joint ventures, or licensing agreements. Due to the resulting loss of

interorganisational trust, such other ventures may not come to fruition at all, may be

discontinued or faded out, or their governance may change to rely on contracts and controls

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[4] To protect the anonymity of the respondents further, respondents details including identification numbers are concealed.

that create additional transaction costs as well as stifling the value-creation potential of these ventures.

Even if one firm receives short-term financial benefits from a representative's corrupt behaviour, both firms inherently incur increased latent financial risk of potential exposure (Palmatier et al., 2007a). "Even when the actors ostensibly direct the corrupt behaviour on behalf of rather than against the organisation, the behaviour may ultimately impede the organisation's ability to accomplish its legitimate purpose and may threaten its very survival" (Lange, 2008, p.710). Firms face increased potential for public relations damage, marring of brand image, loss of sales, and extensive direct costs associated with audits, fines, and penalties—all of which are realised if the corruption is publicly exposed (Johnson et al., 2018), as exemplified by:

> It is not an individual career risk anymore. It is the organisation you represent. The reputation risk is so high, you don't want to be investigated and appear on the front page of international newspapers saying "this organisation has been involved in forging transactions".
>
> Buyer representative

In the GlaxoSmithKline scandal, for example, GSK not only suffered a severe loss of sales in China. Its brand reputation was damaged worldwide. U.S. prosecutors initiated actions under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. Beyond reputational damage, legal authorities in many jurisdictions mandate that firms police their representatives. Failure to prevent corruption can result in large fines or serious legal ramifications (Luo, 2005), such as the $6 billion in fines for banks involved in the LIBOR scandal. Under the newly implemented UK Bribery Act, organisations can be prosecuted for their representatives' corruption, even if the organisations were unaware of the activity (Nicholls et al., 2011). Given the findings of chapter four, and the costs outlined by the interview informants, we can situate the conclusion as a proposition within the broader model as follows:

Proposition 1:   Boundary spanner corruption between representatives of different firms in a business relationship increases organisational and relational costs, which negatively impacts each firm's performance.

V.3 The motivators and mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption

The following section will detail how motivators and mechanisms for boundary spanner corruption can be theorised into a model. This shall be generated through a combination of theory-building through consulting the literature and drawing insight from the interviews with informants.

V.3.1 Boundary spanner interpersonal trust & boundary-spanning social cocoon development

That trust in business relationships can pay substantial dividends has long been acknowledged in both academic research and the popular press. Nearly 25 years ago, a meta-analysis revealed that "the effect of trust on satisfaction and long-term orientation is even substantially larger than the direct effect of economic outcomes" (Geyskens et al., 1998: 242). Trust is highly prized because, as noted in the January 31, 2020, *Harvard Business Review*: "Trust is the social glue that holds business relationships together. Business partners who trust each other spend less time and energy protecting themselves from being exploited, and both sides achieve better economic outcomes in negotiations" (Brett & Mitchell 2020: 2).

Relationship-building practices that are inherent to the boundary spanner role require the establishment of personal relationships and frequently include the exchange of personal benefits such as meals and gifts (Palmatier et al., 2009). Some of these interactions evolve into friendships (Haytko, 2004; Heide & Wathne, 2006). The autonomy afforded to the firm's representatives (Perrone et al., 2003; Zaheer et al., 1998) and their frequent, intensive interactions (Doney & Cannon, 1997; Palmatier, 2008, Rousseau et al., 1998) engenders an environment in which strong, mutual interpersonal trust can develop across organisational

boundaries (Richter et al., 2006). Mutual interpersonal trust drives the development of bilateral relational norms, such as solidarity, mutuality, and flexibility (Palmatier et al., 2007b), which allow boundary spanners to negotiate more effectively and interact more efficiently, improving relationship performance and organisational outcomes (Palmatier et al., 2006; Weitz & Jap, 1995). Nearly all informants espoused similar perspectives, such as:

> There needs to be personal trust there, that enables the clearing of all the red tape, all the processes and hurdles in order to ideate and come up with the new processes and new innovations that would generate value for both companies.[1]
>
> Seller representative

However, mutual interpersonal trust also can enable the development of a boundary-spanning social cocoon. Social cocoons facilitate the evolution of new intra-cocoon norms valid only within the cocoon (Anand et al., 2004; Gambetta, 1993; Husted, 1994). Through encapsulation processes, cocoon members become increasingly close to each other and more isolated from their own firms. The resulting social cocoon can create and sustain a new set of norms that differ from or conflict with those espoused by their firms. To understand the link between mutual interpersonal trust and boundary-spanning social cocoons, this chapter first discusses the encapsulation mechanisms that contribute to the initial formation of a social cocoon and subsequently relates mutual interpersonal trust to such encapsulation.

Boundary-spanning cocoons are cultivated through social, physical, and ideological encapsulation (Greil & Rudy, 1984). Boundary spanners are particularly vulnerable to *social encapsulation*, adopting behaviours that manifest micro-culture solidarity with their counterparts such as dress code, jargon, non-business activities, or interactions on social media. Indeed, individuals are often selected for boundary spanner

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[1] To maintain the confidentiality of informants due to the sensitivity of the topics discussed, all quotes have been identified and unconnected from informant identification numbers. Although, role function is retained for consistency.

positions based on their sensitivity to social cues and ability to adapt to other

organisational cultures (Caldwell & O'Reilly, 1982). Training encourages mirroring

behaviours such as reflecting a counterpart's body language, tone, or mood to build

rapport (Gremler & Gwinner, 2000). In the words of one informant:

> [W]e have ... a negotiation course, which is around building rapport and starting the relationship. Finding what you have in common and finding the commonalities, especially at a personal level, both within the business and outside of the business, allows you to develop a common ground and then start to build a friendship on it. ... [Y]ou do have a level of trust, and I think salespeople generally are trained to do that.
>
> Buyer and seller representative

Such social activity between boundary spanners fosters social closeness and deep personal

relationships:

> So lots of time is spent forming friendships and developing intimacy through social activities that are non-business, like tickets to tennis and things like that. ... little things that you do for each other that form that intimacy. And then later, we can help each other in different ways. I think that's just how it all goes around. ... They're really invested in me as a person and they do it for me because they like me, because I'm their friend. The ones where I have a high personal relationship, it's like a joint love for each other.
>
> Seller representative

Another informant identified seeking social closeness as a nearly inevitable aspect of human

nature:

> I don't think you'll ever replace having a cup of coffee, it's a social lubricant. That's how you develop allegiances. And you do it because it's human … to interact; we are social beings and we've always worked socially … through history. It's unusual for humans to be solitary.
>
> Seller representative

Social closeness is intensified by increased use of social media in the workplace, which

allows representatives to be in more frequent social contact. Organisations have very little

influence and oversight over social media interactions and thus are increasingly isolated from

this aspect of their representatives' work life, as one of the informants describes:

> [S]ocial applications and the increasing interconnectedness between people are blurring the boundaries between work and private lives. ... I was very clear with my team to say, "If you're talking to a supplier, it does not happen through WhatsApp. You go through email and telephone calls and the company-approved channels". All of that's gone by the wayside. ... [T]hat is really quite a challenge because from a compliance standpoint, in most cases it's extremely hard to get access to that data.
>
> <div align="right">Buyer representative</div>

Many boundary spanners experience *physical encapsulation*, and separation from colleagues in their firms who otherwise would reinforce organisation norms. Their duties are frequently performed out of the office and require ongoing interactions with counterparts in partner organisations. In extreme cases, the boundary spanner is physically located in or near a counterpart's facilities. Many salespeople have no office in their firm's facilities, but rather work out of their homes and spend more time with customers than with their fellow employees (Robertson & Anderson, 1993), a trend exacerbated by the recent pandemic. Even when located in a facility with other colleagues, often more time is spent on video calls or other interactions with boundary spanner counterparts than with intrafirm colleagues. Some boundary spanners realize the usefulness of physically separating counterparts from their firm's environment:

> Like the old adage "you need to be in the car park with the customer". You see someone in the office, they'll have their game face on. ... But when we say "get in the car park" it is like take them out of their space, bring them somewhere else and then you really find out what is going on. They might start opening up because they don't feel that they are shackled by meeting rooms and people around them and then they can start to tell you what their real problems are or what is really going on in their organisation.
>
> <div align="right">Seller representative</div>

Such temporal physical isolation together with aspects of social isolation can progressively cause representatives to detach from their firms, as described by one of the informants:

> One of the sales guys from our side and one from the purchasing side had a very close personal relationship. The guys would stay at each other's houses when they travelled and see each other as old mates. Definitely, our guy would let them get

away with all sorts of things because he had a closer connection with the individual than he had any sort of connection with our company. So, the personal relationship was definitely everything.

<div align="right">Buyer representative</div>

A boundary-spanning cocoon can develop *ideological encapsulation,* a state in which the worldview of the social cocoon becomes paramount. In the early stages of development, intra-cocoon norms are often influenced by and co-exist with norms of the representatives' firms; behaviours are generally aligned with accepted organisational practices. In later stages, intra-cocoon norms may begin to diverge from partner firms' norms, leading to questioning of firms' decisions, greater allegiance to intra-cocoon norms than firm norms, and potentially deviance. Based on the field study, this appears to happen through developing unique ways of working, shared business objectives, and shared identities and interests:

> We both have similar business drivers and goals, right? So, the fact that I understand how my counterpart is being rewarded, what his job is, what success looks like to him, and that he understands what success is like for me, and that we are able to line up those two things with each other. Then that creates an opportunity for us to really create a win-win situation. ... [T]here's certain unwritten understandings that develop as well. Especially through repetition. In that sense ways of working develop that are outside of strict corporate governance and bureaucracy.

<div align="right">Seller representative</div>

The potency of intra-cocoon norms was noted by one informant:

> You can end up in a situation where you might have processes in place that are circumvented because of the personal relationships, for the best of reasons. The circumvention could take place because of a norm: "In this situation we are circumventing and this is why". But there could be risks, which are realised, which are understated. Assessment of the risk may be distorted by the personal relationship.

<div align="right">Buyer representative</div>

Through physical, social and ideological encapsulation processes, boundary spanners assume vulnerabilities. For example, when meeting for non-business activities, bringing their families together (physical encapsulation), or exchanging stories about families or personal histories (social encapsulation), boundary spanners assume social vulnerabilities. When

adopting ideas and business practices that deviate from their firms' positions (ideological encapsulation), boundary spanners also assume professional vulnerabilities. Interpersonal trust can instigate, lubricate, or even legitimize these encapsulation processes by reducing the risk of the associated vulnerabilities being exploited by the trusted counterpart. As interpersonal trust deepens over time and boundary spanners increasingly accept more mutual vulnerability, they become more susceptible to the influence of their counterpart, gradually strengthening encapsulation (Lofland, 1969; Pillemer & Rothbard, 2018; Zahra et al., 2006). Thus, for encapsulation to thrive, interpersonal trust is essential (Haytko, 2004):

> So, if you ask me to detail elements of my clients' personal lives, I can probably tell you quite an astonishing amount of detail. About who they are, their marriage, their girlfriend's or boyfriend's name. What they do for a living. How long they've been together? What they do at the weekend? You know all of these things. Do they live together? How long do they live together? Do they own any property together in other countries? ... [P]eople tend to share personal information with people that they like or that they feel comfortable sharing that sort of information with, and when people start to open up about their personal lives, it makes the business more personal as well. ... If you can't develop that relationship where they go "I trust you", getting those sorts of information and deals done is infinitely more difficult.
>
> Seller representative

Each encapsulation process in turn strengthens the cocoon members' interpersonal relationship. Physical encapsulation increases the frequency and intimacy of interactions, social encapsulation promotes solidarity, flexibility, and mutuality, and ideological encapsulation involves a perception of uniqueness and an "us against the world" mentality. Increasing familiarity and trustworthiness in the interpersonal relationship confirms that any vulnerabilities are not being exploited, which strengthens both trust and further encapsulation. This self-reinforcing process pivoting around mutual interpersonal trust provides fertile ground in which a boundary-spanning cocoon can develop and strengthen. This chapter thus proposes:

Proposition 2:   *Mutual interpersonal trust between representatives of different firms in a business relationship leads to encapsulation of the representatives, which increases the likelihood of the emergence and strengthening of a boundary-spanning social cocoon.*

V.3.2 Boundary-spanning social cocoon & boundary spanner corruption

Although social cocoons can be beneficial (Huang et al., 2016; Pratt et al., 2006), they also can become fertile ground for the development of corrupt behaviour (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Ashforth et al., 2007). A social cocoon can create an environment in which organisation norms have diminished or have no relevance (Ogino, 2007) and where intra-cocoon norms are prioritised over those outside the cocoon (Kong et al., 2014; Pillemer & Rothbard, 2018; Zahra et al., 2006). When a social cocoon forms, the members "actively seek to compartmentalize themselves from external influences" (Anand et al., 2004:16). Representatives' obligations to their respective firms are gradually superseded by allegiance to their counterpart. This sentiment clearly emerged in comments from the field interviews:

> People think that because they can trust each other that they can go their own way and forget about the process.
>
> <div align="right">Seller representative</div>

Intra-cocoon norms do not necessarily conflict with or violate partner firms' norms, but they have the potential to do so. This is particularly likely to occur when corrupt behaviour is inculcated through three normalisation processes that make "the extraordinary seem ordinary" (Ashforth & Kreiner, 2002:.215)—socialisation, rationalisation, and institutionalisation (Anand et al., 2004; Ashforth & Anand, 2003).

Socialisation represents a slippery slope, that is, a progression from initial cooperation, via incrementalism of ever greater participation in corrupt behaviours, to finally fully compromising and committing to corruption (Gino & Bazerman, 2009; Bandura, 2017). As part of this slippery slope, intra-cocoon norms progressively diverge more seriously from organisational norms. Disregarding their firms' norms in favour of adherence to the

boundary-spanning cocoon's norms is *de facto* evidence that the representatives are "in", thereby validating them as insiders (Aven, 2015; Misangyi et al., 2008). Cooperation is motivated via social rewards for activities consistent with divergent intra-cocoon norms, as illustrated by:

> One of my clients recently said to me "You scratch my back, I'll scratch yours." … [S]he's definitely told me some stuff internally that's being discussed ... I took her out for a nice dinner and we're due another one soon. ... It's a combination, it's saying thanks for your support, but also it's another opportunity to get to know them a bit better to have a good time with them and show gratitude as well. It's not bribery because they've already done the deal. I will take them out because then I've got a business case, right?
>
> Seller representative

Incrementalism begins with minor and isolated violations of extant firms' norms, gradually escalating to more serious deviance. Thus, the road to corruption begins with an initial voluntary decision to propose or assent to what are often only marginally questionable behaviours. Psychological closeness and personal loyalty motivate cocoon members to seek favour with each other, even if they must suppress their own moral compasses or disconnect from their firms' norms (Gino & Galinsky, 2012; Hildreth et al., 2016). Consider the following quote that illustrates this incrementalism:

> There is a certain part of the give and take that is part of the grease that makes the personal relationship. You may ask for a favour from a supplier, through a back-channel communication, for reducing a price. It's not a contract variation request, "can you process the paper-work faster than the 30 days, can you rush through this?" That is the soft side. The supplier may come back and say "remember when I did you a favour, can you give me this favour back? Can you make an exception on the payment terms?" That is where the slippery slope starts, which starts in a completely reasonable realm, but could lead to more deviant behaviour. It's OK, until it's not.
>
> Buyer and seller representative

Compromise frames a questionable activity as preferred *vis-à-vis* a greater evil. One informant slipped into the respondent role and provided an evocative personal example where a buyer brought into a compromising situation by salespeople is taking a personal risk to avert the greater evil of jeopardizing the relationship:

Suddenly you'll find yourself in a slippery place. I'm just having a nice dinner with them, now they've just brought in some girls here and I don't want to do anything. I don't want to push them away, as that will look bad in the culture and you don't want to look bad. … But at the same time, they make you sing with them, kiss them (just on the cheek) and you think "if someone is taking a picture now, I may be in a bad shape." You are just like "ok, I just want to play my role and have fun," but they are putting me in a difficult position.

<div align="right">Buyer and seller representative</div>

Rationalisation reclassifies corrupt behaviour as compatible with the representatives' moral compasses. These self-deceptions can also develop into a shared social resource by which cocoon members jointly justify corrupt activities through moral disengagement and ethical fading mechanisms (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Bandura, 1999; Tenbrunsel & Messick, 2004). In some cases, informants who act in accord within intra-cocoon norms suppress contemplation of their firms' norms, become oblivious to violations of those norms, and do not cognitively acknowledge their behaviour as deviant, as exemplified by:

When I am doing something kind for someone, or when I facilitate something, or when I help something happen, does this mean this is a kind of passive, informal bribery? Probably not. But, when I help someone, somehow, somewhere, I have in mind that the guy owes me something. … One day, he may help you to do business. It is not direct bribery, but "being kind" to one guy, should we say that he'll help me? This must happen. It's an asset, it's not bribery, but it is informal and it's almost deviant. It's impossible for me to say what is acceptable and what is not. It's personal relationships. You cannot put it on a scale.

<div align="right">Buyer representative</div>

Institutionalisation embeds deviant actions into routines and processes within the social cocoon. Requests move from *ad hoc* questionable decisions to actions more systematically contravening the firms' norms and hold influence over a larger body of cocoon members' decisions (Gino & Bazerman, 2009; Bandura, 2017). Such institutionalisation is further supported by growing intra-cocoon memory regarding previous collaboration in deviant activities. Deviant intra-cocoon norms become self-reinforcing, as members seek to operate in accord with the dominant ideas guiding intra-cocoon behaviour (Earle et al., 2010). One informant describes how routinised norm violations can escalate over several episodes:

> You know, you're not going to go and give 100 grand from day one or ask for money from somebody you just got to know today, right? They all started getting coffee, getting a drink, and then just progressively getting something else. ... You can get $100, you accept it. Next time it's becoming $2000, you accept. Next time is going to be $10,000. That's how it works, right?
>
> Buyer representative

Ultimately, through systemic momentum (Ashforth & Anand, 2003), the corruption becomes routine and, in some cases, can become apparent to those outside the boundary-spanning cocoon:

> The most severe one I have heard is a large sum of money in a red packet from a supplier during a special celebratory dinner given to a customer—a senior individual who was a decision-maker. It sounds legitimate, as it's a lucky draw, but I have been told that this particular senior always won the lucky draw.
>
> Buyer representative

In summary, the normalisation of corruption in boundary-spanning social cocoons is often given legitimacy by relationship-building practices. In fact, the link between the boundary spanners' interpersonal relationship and corruption was top of mind for most informants. Thus, this chapter proposes:

Proposition 3a: *A boundary-spanning social cocoon comprising representatives of different firms in a business relationship allows for the normalisation of corrupt behaviour, which increases the likelihood of boundary spanner corruption.*

The potential for corrupt behaviour is enhanced in the presence of individual, intraorganisational or socio-cultural factors that induce deviant intentions (Marcus & Schuler, 2004). Boundary spanners may lack internal controls or have individual propensities that make them particularly susceptible to corrupt behaviour. Lack of internal controls such as weak ethical values or low self-monitoring can make deviant behaviour appear less problematic (Brady et al., 2012; Jelinek & Ahearne, 2006a). Albeit many companies provide norm-enforcing ethics and compliance training, one informant outlines how this proves ineffective for boundary spanners with weak ethical values:

He just thought there's no conflict of interest here. He didn't see it. He had training from Ethics and Compliance, he had signed the declaration that had done the training. This was over several years, but he still couldn't see the conflict of interest. It was never proven that he was receiving a payment under the table for awarding contracts. But presumably, he was getting some sort of benefit because we were talking about in total around about five and a half million of invoices that were completely unsubstantiated.

<div align="right">Expert representative</div>

In addition, many of the propensities associated with boundary spanner success—competitiveness, drive, risk-taking, extroversion—can result in greater willingness to engage in deviant behaviour (Harris & Ogbonna, 2002; Jelinek & Ahearne, 2010). One informant outlines how boundary spanner competitiveness motivates corrupt behaviour:

So, the local business invited my procurement manager. It was a very important supplier and my procurement manager, without asking me for permission, went ahead and attended the session. It was supposed to be a seminar, but the seminar is just the front. It was actually a drinking session with a cash gift. ... It was his ego because he wanted to outshine you. He wanted to show to his peers across the region that he can socialise with a very important supplier and being seen. So, this one clouded his judgment.

<div align="right">Buyer representative</div>

Although boundary spanners may not be more personally disposed to deviance than other employees, their competitive work environment and organisational role inherently involve intraorganisational triggers and opportunities that make them particularly susceptible to deviant behaviour (Jelinek & Ahearne, 2006a, b, 2010; Robertson & Anderson, 1993). In sales roles, triggers are prevalent; quantitatively-based individual performance targets, public performance rankings and awards, quotas that are tied to significant leaps in compensation, and other individual performance pressures create a competitive environment beyond that experienced by most other employees. The informants highlight intraorganisational pressures as a prevalent trigger for potentially corrupt behaviours within a boundary-spanning social cocoon:

Huge pressure from the business to grow sales, to grow the platform, to grow the presence in customers. The question is how. The how is all about interpersonal

<div align="right">162</div>

relationships. It's all about having my friends in the distribution networks who can play God and decide whether I stock your products, whether I don't stock your products, and so on.

<div align="right">Buyer representative</div>

When individual accountability is coupled with perceived unfairness (e.g., in the allocation of leads, territories, or bonuses), boundary spanner trust in the firm and job satisfaction erode. The accompanying resentment, frustration, exhaustion, and loss of direction and shared purpose can cause moral disengagement that may trigger deviant intentions, which may then be acted out through deviant behaviours, often justified as actions taken to restore equity (Jelinek & Ahearne, 2006a; Ramaswami & Singh, 2003). Given the intraorganisational complacency that grants boundary spanners wide latitude and autonomy in pursuit of organisational objectives, a motivated boundary spanner has many opportunities to reduce perceived inequity by taking actions that enhance their personal outcomes at the firm's expense (Agarwal & Ramaswami, 1993; Ramaswami, 1996). One informant describes a specific example of how generally lax procurement controls create an intraorganisational opportunity enabling deviant activities:

> [Firm] has a fairly high dollar threshold before they start worrying about this type of thing. It's a lot of money to an individual, but at [firm] level … 10 or 20 million here or there doesn't really register much. So our … procurement control framework, I would say it's lax, it has a higher tolerance than other companies. … [Y]ou don't even need a contract for anything that's going to cost US 2 million or below. ... It really boils down to [firm's]'s risk appetite ... and there are lots of opportunities to engage in a fraudulent manner without detection.

<div align="right">Expert representative</div>

If no boundary-spanning cocoon exists, deviant intentions are likely to be pursued via individually-executed deviant behaviours. Although individual and intraorganisational factors can drive individually-executed deviance, they are not sufficient to generate boundary spanner corruption. A boundary-spanning social cocoon provides an excellent opportunity for a deviance-minded individual—a viable, highly attractive, and convenient venue in which

collusive deviant behaviours can be normalised and pursued, with the added benefit that the

cross-firm collusion is difficult for either firm to detect. Information asymmetry inherent in

boundary spanning roles creates an opportunity for representatives to extract economic rents

to the detriment of their firms (Jaworski, 1988; Jaworski & MacInnis, 1989). Actions,

decisions, orders, and payments are not internal to one firm, but cross firm boundaries.

Boundary spanners can capitalize on this complexity and use their technical and bureaucratic

expertise to conceal deviant actions from their firms (Jávor & Jancsics, 2016). One informant

describes how the unique complexities of the B2B context provide the opportunity for

boundary spanners to collude on KPIs in response to a specific intraorganisational trigger:

> It happens because the pressure that everyone is under. The KPIs, it hurts you when it
> hits the pocket. There is no official transaction, there is no transfer between banks,
> there is no evidence, I communicate with you offline, no email, nothing. It boils down
> to the individual: "You scratch my back". It happens when the relationship goes to a
> very good level. You have built a relationship where I can trust you.

<div align="right">Buyer representative</div>

Further to these individual and intraorganiational factors, socio-cultural norms

prevalent in societies may provide a framework around which corruption is perceived by

boundary-spanners operating in those cultures. Rules-based societies may perceive illicit

exchanges of money and favour as bribery, for example, whereas relationship-based cultures

view such interactions as a function of a relationship (Ariyabuddhiphongs & Hongladarom,

2014). In societies where the predominate organisational relationship hinged upon patron-

client where individuals weigh obligations between patrons, often through financial means

(Jordan, 2007). Deviance in such societies can be embedded into social relationships,

operating along pathways of kinship, outside of conventional business structures, but

perceived as additive to social capital (Sajó & Kotkin, 2002). The strength of these socio-

cultural factors can permanently shape individual values; indeed even instances of individuals

transported out of their home environments are found, but still apply their individuals

incongruent to local norms (Fisman & Miguel, 2007). Within societies suffering from weak

codes of laws, fragmentation of subgroups can emerge, in which principles of protecting "my

inner" circle trump over more society-wide considerations (Tulaeva, 2014). This attitude is

expressed by the following informant quote:

> If you want to insert an anti-bribery element into certain geographies it does not compute. The rigour and involvement are inevitably less, even in international companies, and saw this myself. Pragmatism is the order of the day. Unfortunately, pragmatism is transferred into a local environment, which means that they play by their rules.
>
> Buyer representative

The interplay, or intensity, of these individual, intraorganisational and socio-cultural factors

inform the proclivities of an environment such that it encourages corrupt behaviour within it,

and therefore increasing the likelihood that a social cocoon, present within the society, can

potentially flip towards the corrupt. For example, one informant described individual factors

surrounding emotional displays could differ in different socio-cultural contexts:

> We leverage guilt in different ways. As a broker the base emotion is probably betrayal. Some people will call up the client and shout at them and say "I can't believe you did that, it's completely unacceptable. I thought that we understood each other." Some people get very angry and very passionate to leverage. In Asia, people don't tend to like to be shouted out, and next time you pull them up, it's very difficult for him to forget that you were the person that was all nice one minute, and then very shouty and angry the next. You express surprise, you talk them through all the points that lead you to believe that they were going to support you. And that can lead to the other person feeling uncomfortable but not in a "I'm being attacked by someone questioning my moral integrity" but in a very passive-aggressive, nice way and that sometimes can elicit a response in Japan.
>
> Buyer and seller representative

Therefore, although individual, intraorganisational and socio-cultural factors can drive

individually-executed deviance, they are not sufficient to cause boundary spanner corruption.

This chapter, therefore, posits the following proposition:

Proposition 3b: *A boundary-spanning social cocoon comprising representatives of different firms in a business relationship allows for the normalisation of corrupt behaviour, which results in greater likelihood of boundary spanner corruption as individual, intraorganisational and socio-cultural deviance-inducing factors increase.*

V.3.3 Intraorganisational agency trust & boundary spanner corruption

Intraorganisational trust can develop between many different trustor-trustee dyads within the firm (Fang et al., 2008). With regard to boundary spanner corruption, trust between a representative and their supervisors as direct line managers is most relevant (e.g., a salesperson and their sales manager or a buyer and their procurement manager). However, interorganisational trust may also relate to other internal relationships of the representative (e.g., a salesperson with a product manager or a buyer with an operations manager).

In this context, *agency trust* is the belief of relevant managers that their representative will perform well, fulfil complex responsibilities, pursue the organisation's best interests, and adhere to organisation norms (Fang et al., 2008, Perrone et al., 2003). In a business relationship, the partner firms each bestow fiduciary responsibilities upon their respective representatives to enact their firm's policies and practices. A significant amount of agency trust is placed in boundary spanners (Villena & Craighead, 2017; Wang et al., 2013), both in the customer and the seller firm, particularly when representatives perform their duties independently and in isolation from others within their firm (Rindfleisch & Heide, 1997). Although agency trust can serve as an effective governance structure in some circumstances (Brown et al., 2000; Heide & John, 1992; Zaheer & Venkatraman, 1995), relational safeguards are often ineffective in preventing opportunism (Jap & Ganesan, 2000; Jap et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2013; Wathne & Heide, 2000). Strong agency trust can allow a boundary spanner to enact deviant intentions:

Because they could get away with it. Because they were already trusted. Human relationships and trust are a double-edged sword. In that case the trust that was given to those people was abused. And it killed the company, a hundred years of legacy gone. So personal relationships are extremely important, but trust requires to be worked upon, it's not just set and forget. And if you do think you're going to set and forget it, then temptation creeping in is going to be that much more alluring.

<div align="right">Seller representative</div>

A serious complication of agency trust is that it motivates managerial laxity and exceptions in the development and use of behaviour-based controls such as close monitoring, direction, and oversight and intervention in the trusted boundary spanner's activities (Anderson & Oliver, 1987). Agency trust encourages increased reliance on outcome-based controls, which allow boundary spanners to be "left alone to achieve results in their own way using their own strategy" (Anderson & Oliver, 1987:76). Outcome-based controls, however, can inadvertently increase performance pressures, perceived unfairness, and resentment, providing motivation for deviant actions (Ramaswami, 1996; Robertson & Anderson, 1993). Regardless of the specific types of control used, scarce managerial resources are likely to be devoted to monitoring less-trusted boundary spanners, with highly trusted representatives given much less oversight as the following quote by one of the informants exemplifies:

He's the number one person in that function, and owns the budget for [region]. He became very bold, I think, because he's a main decision maker. He only needs to explain to his boss and he signs off. So because he's trusted by his boss, he's trusted by the audit team. ... But he's not playing to the market standard.

<div align="right">Buyer representative</div>

Behaviour-based controls are implemented through intensive interactions between managers and boundary spanners in which the representatives discuss calls made or correspondence with counterparts as well as the content of those interactions, such as product demonstrations or social entertaining. These controls not only allow managers to support the development of boundary spanners' skills, they also provide a venue in which managers can reinforce the firm's norms. Behaviour-based controls such as these signal the importance the

firm places on responsible behaviour and the firm's intent to enforce and evaluate representatives' adherence to organisation norms (Jaworski, 1988; Robertson & Anderson, 1993). One informant observes regarding the importance of having behavioural oversight:

> It boils down to people and process. You need to have strong compliance and periodic audit so that people are aware that their actions are being monitored or being subject to scrutiny.
>
> Buyer representative

Behaviour-based controls impede the development of boundary-spanning social cocoons by inhibiting the encapsulation process. Frequent and in-depth interactions between representatives and managers reduce the representatives' physical encapsulation with counterparts. Unfortunately, agency trust can undermine the utilisation of behaviour-based controls that would otherwise discourage or safeguard against encapsulation (Gargiulo & Ertug, 2006; Marcus & Schuler, 2004). If managers meet less frequently with highly trusted representatives, those individuals are at greater risk of physical encapsulation. Regular meetings enable the deepening of representative-manager social ties, thereby also undermining social encapsulation. But if a trusted boundary spanner's expenses are less carefully scrutinised, excessive social entertaining is more likely to occur, along with concomitant social encapsulation. Prominent controls also mitigate against ideological encapsulation by continually reinforcing the firm's expectations, practices, and norms (Robertson & Anderson, 1993). When a trusted representative is given more autonomy, however, the firm's norms are typically discussed and reinforced infrequently.

Weak behaviour-based controls also contribute to the normalisation of deviant norms or behaviours within a boundary-spanning cocoon by failing to inhibit the socialisation of undesirable behaviours by boundary spanners that can act as a precursor to more serious corruption. High agency trust and the resulting weak behaviour-based controls can bolster a representative's confidence in their own judgment and self-control, consequently

undermining the self-reflection and introspection that could lead to awareness of, more careful evaluation of, and ultimately resistance to initially minor deviations from organisation norms. Furthermore, it encourages morally malleable reasoning (Jap et al., 2013; Tenbrunsel et al., 2003) and thus the rationalisation of corrupt behaviour by boundary spanners. The absence of clearly prohibited behaviours, or failure to sanction behaviour that contravenes the firm's norms, signals that those behaviours are acceptable or even desirable (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Robertson & Anderson, 1993). Weak behaviour-based controls can signal that organisation norms are discretionary, particularly when violated for a "greater good" such as acquiring business. Non-intervention allows corrupt behaviour to proliferate and become endemic and thus institutionalised within the social cocoon. One informant singled out the importance of controlling the encapsulation and normalisation processes early on:

> At [Firm], we did a lot of staff rotation. ... Two years. It's very common. They rotate between different accounts. ... that would prevent the emergence of a kind of social relationship. No one is going to give you $100 grand on the first day they meet you. They always start from, "OK, let's get a drink and I give a dinner or something". The relationship develops progressively from the bottom to all the way. You can control the start and stop that going too far. ... knowing them too well. ... Most companies have a code of conduct. So there's like a limit, say $200. ... Everything works step by step. So, if you manage the things on a very low value, you slow things down before they get out of control. ... Don't try to stop $100,000 cash. ... You control at the beginning when it is small.
>
> <div align="right">Buyer representative</div>

Although agency trust is generally beneficial, it can become dysfunctional when it undermines sufficient monitoring of boundary spanners. Agency trust does not cause boundary spanner corruption, but it helps enable encapsulation of representatives within boundary-spanning cocoons and provides greater opportunity for an individual with deviant intentions to normalize corrupt behaviour. Boundary spanner corruption is most likely to occur when agency trust exists in *both* firms simultaneously. A representative employed by a firm with strong behaviour-based controls is much less likely to encapsulate into a boundary-spanning cocoon, adopt deviant intra-cocoon norms, and normalize corrupt activities.

Therefore, if one of the partner organisations has effective behaviour-based controls, boundary spanner corruption is less likely to occur. The chapter proposes:

Proposition 4:   *Simultaneous agency trust placed in representatives of different firms in a business relationship weakens behaviour-based controls, which increases the likelihood that a boundary-spanning social cocoon will develop as well as result in boundary spanner corruption.*

V.3.4 Interorganisational trust & boundary spanner corruption

Research indicates that partner firms can form a trusting interorganisational relationship (Fang et al,. 2008; Morgan & Hunt, 1994). In this case, trust is not specific to a particular relationship between representatives of two firms, but cuts across most, if not all relevant touchpoints between these firms. This may involve different functions and hierarchy levels in either firm (Doney & Cannon, 1997). Such organisation-level trust manifests as increased confidence and positive expectations within the wider organisation about the partner firm, including adherence to relational norms that have formed within the interfirm relationship. Mutual interorganisational trust has been found to amplify the dark side effects of strong interpersonal trust (Fang et al., 2008; Jeffries & Reed, 2000). Interorganisational trust can create a false sense of security for both firms and their respective managers regarding the risk of representatives' encapsulation and normalisation in boundary-spanning cocoons.

As with agency trust, interorganisational trust provides supervisors or managers of representatives with a justification for devoting or reallocating scarce resources to monitoring and policing the actions of representatives in relationships with less-trusted business partners, while relaxing such controls in relationships with trusted partners. Dealing with extra-relational threats to the firm's mutual interests may be given more attention by managers than safeguarding against internal threats. Development and use of boundary spanner controls in a strong, ongoing business relationship are unlikely to be a high priority. Vulnerability increases as the firms' managers have little knowledge of, or influence over, the norms and

practices developing within a boundary-spanning cocoon. In addition, mutual

interorganisational trust can encourage representatives in a social cocoon to view their

interpersonal trust as consistent with their firms' positions (Fang et al., 2008), thus aiding in

normalizing deviant behaviour and rationalising that behaviour within that cocoon. The

following quote based on the strong relationship between two CEOs signalling mutual

interorganisational trust to managers exemplifies the possible detrimental effects on oversight

over boundary spanners:

> A CEO had a personal relationship with another CEO, where they were excited about
> the opportunities and were both putting their energies into making a partnership work.
> Twenty years later ... the relationship is just running on autopilot, junior people are
> managing one another and there isn't any oversight, so who knows what is
> happening? There's not any framework to measure against.
>
> Buyer and seller representative

Furthermore, when there is interorganisational trust, managers have a default

tendency to presume that the partner's representatives are also trustworthy (Doney &

Cannon, 1997). Consequently, within a successful, trusting interorganisational relationship,

developing and deploying behaviour-based controls can be viewed as less important (Gulati

& Nickerson, 2008; Villena et al., 2011, Wuyts & Geyskens, 2005). Lack of clarity in

responsibilities for monitoring and lax enforcement of norms fosters both encapsulation and

normalisation within a cocoon (Ashforth & Anand, 2003; Lofland, 1969; Luo, 2004). The

detrimental effect of interorganisational trust on relationship-specific controls was

highlighted by multiple informants:

> Due diligence increases, to a point, but when trust increases, it starts to slow down. If one
> doesn't hear anything bad from the company, one reduces due diligence. But this only
> happens over time. For it to reach that stage, one needs multiple engagements to build
> trust.
>
> Buyer representative

> If one has higher trust when you're working with a supplier, then you may put less
> metrics in place to manage that supplier, and you may be more relaxed in managing that
> supplier until something goes wrong. ... [T]hings could just carry on for quite a while.

Similar to agency trust, mutual interorganisational trust does not cause boundary spanner corruption, but it cultivates an environment that provides opportunities for boundary spanners to more readily engage in corruption. Therefore, the chapter proposes:

Proposition 5:   *Mutual interorganisational trust between firms in a business relationship weakens behaviour-based controls, which increases the likelihood that a boundary-spanning social cocoon will develop and result in boundary spanner corruption.*

V.3.6 Individual, organisational and socio-cultural factors in social cocoon formation

The broader context of this analysis in large part as a response to individual, organisational and socio-cultural factors. Each of these factors influences the formation of social cocoons within interpersonal relationships.

Individual factors: Within the space of individual factors, personalities and personal preferences further impact a boundary spanner's proclivity to personalise business relationships in a form of a social cocoon. Boundary spanner engagement with the emotional content of a commercial interaction can have an influential impact on re-ordering decisions for future partners (Preis, 2003). Pre-existing emotional dispositions can create path-dependents for users' perception and performance evaluation of a commercial interaction (Gountas & Gountas, 2007). Boundary spanners may be incentivised to be more emotionally characteristic in the formation of close relationships, as it positively impacts performance (Verbeke, 1997). Within the interviews, we see evidence of the emotional predispositions at play within sales interactions which potentially favours more personalised relationships outcomes:

> I think it comes down to the individual. Everyone's wired slightly differently and so some people have it naturally embedded in them and that's their sales style. They are the stereotypical salesperson. Those really 'happy-go-lucky' types and people warm to them. And then you've got salespeople who are like much more "well, this is what I

do and I'm going to deliver you a solution". We always see the ones that are more engaging and flamboyant tend to be more successful because people actively want to work with them because they enjoy their company. … That's why you have to have a certain personality to work in sales. Because you have to always go in with your game face on and show like all appear at least authentic at all times.

<div align="right">Seller representative</div>

Preferences regarding the ways of working and communicating also inform the nature of personalised boundary spanner relationships. The preferential aspects of these interactions can be evidenced in an example from a seller organisation, whereby sales representatives struggled to engage a prospective client, in an environment hitherto populated by personalised business relationships:

> [The client] didn't want to talk to anyone on the phone. He didn't want to meet anyone or talk. He wanted all the information on *WhatsApp*. So he dehumanised the process. It was all about numbers and data and doing that made it very difficult for people to leverage as an individual. So, if two people bring you the same information. If you don't have a personal relationship with either of them, it will just be down to whoever gave it to you first, regardless of whether there's a historical relationship between the company that he works for on the other side. So I had a colleague who was trying to extend a deal and he was just never able to talk to the person on the phone. He could never get a feel for him on the phone, and the more you can get somebody talking, the more likely it is they're going to say something that maybe they wouldn't say to everyone.

<div align="right">Seller representative</div>

Organisational factors: The organisation itself also provides the parameters for the degree to which close personal relationships are normalised. Furthermore, the 'tone from the top' is a similarly important issue in establishing a corporate culture conducive to the formation of social cocoons (Pinto *et al.* 2008). It is often a cultural practice within organisations to entrust boundary spanners with significant autonomy to forge their own close relationships with external partners (Perrone *et al.*, 2003). Frequently, throughout the interviews, respondents the wide autonomy that boundary spanners are afforded within their organisations. One C-level informant encourages his team of boundary spanners to get close to their counterparties:

I think it is sometimes a necessity that buyers and sellers or buyers have a relationship with their suppliers, on a professional level. A lot of people see that as a grey zone sometimes. I do believe that negotiation is also a tradeoff. … It is a deal that is made so when you have a close relationship, and you believe that you are professional enough and you are representing your company to push for that company and make the right deals. So that means that there is a commitment of some kind. But if it's within the contractual means, then I'm all for it. And it should be done. … A professional closeness. … Be close with your suppliers. You have to know them 100% because you've got to rely on these people.

<div align="right">Buyer representative</div>

Socio-cultural factors: The degree of closeness in relationships is also an outcome of socio-cultural contexts (Eckerd et al., 2016). Frequently, interviewees remarked that the degree of personalisation in boundary spanner relationships differed markedly across different socio-cultural contexts, such as the following example:

It depends on the country in which you're operating, so certain geographies are high relationship cultures, where it's absolutely critical. That's most of Asia, South America, but I would say the UK, Australia, the US it's less important. There it's more the outcome and results. And even if I didn't like you, we could still do business if my product met your need or buying something you need. But I think in Japan that would not be possible, in China that's not possible. So for me it's very contextual.

<div align="right">Buyer representative</div>

Indeed, many other informants drew upon broader socio-cultural factors experienced in different geographies and in particular relation to China and Chinese practices in business relationships. The theme of culture determining a more personalised form of relationship was a frequently occurring item, reflecting many of the *guanxi* relationship approach that often mediates the boundary-spanner relationship (Gu et al., 2008; Lee et al., 2001; Leung et al., 2011). To provide one example:

So you know in Chinese culture you have to give people face. We make sure are not really tough on each other. I can share an example: when I was working in China in Beijing, I was in procurement. There was a service provider, and they're very, very close with business. I heard a couple of times that they went out together during the weekend. The two families joined together for holidays. So it was fairly close.

<div align="right">Buyer representative</div>

Elsewhere, we found that Western MNCs were struggling to 'depersonalise' the nature of business within their own areas and that more relationship-focused interactions prevailed in certain geographies, despite the attempted introduction of control measures:

> The procurement process and sourcing decision has been depersonalised. Putting in place category management, sourcing strategy, etc… Means the sourcing decision is largely the right one for the business. In the Western environment, by and large, where procurement is embedded into the process it by and large removes many opportunities for personal relationships to influence the outcome. If you travel to parts of the world where relationships still matter, it's different.
>
> Buyer representative

Furthermore, nuances between industry sectors that also determine the personal nature of business relationships (Gordon, 1991; Plewa et al., 2005.). The nature of productive processes in certain industries has a greater emphasis on relationship constructs, such as innovation or team working, which are more conducive to forming tighter personal relationships (Lee & Yu, 2004). The interviews uncovered a range of intra-industry norms that only related to practices within certain sectors, such as these two examples:

> It's different from one culture to another. It is also different from one industry to another. I used to work in the building construction industry where informal contact is really critical. You would go and sign your contract and you would celebrate over lunch or dinner. That's kind of even mandatory things to do. In pharmaceuticals, we are super-compliant. We need to comply. It brings more restrictions in regards to the type of informal interactions that you can have.
>
> Buyer representative

> The physical commodities sector is not regulated like futures trading, so personal relationships are very important. You may find a cheaper price, but you will still go with the existing relationship.
>
> Seller representative

Related to this, 'spend categories' on the buyer organisation side also influence the degree of personalisation in relationships (Heikkilä et al., 2018). Although a boundary-spanner may not wholly inhabit an industry, they can begin to reflect the nature of that environment more than their own enterprise norms (Sturdy & Wright, 2008). As one informant reports:

And this you see one very classic example is consultancy. Consultancy is a very good example of how it is very hard to break when [boundary spanners] and suppliers have a very strong relationship. Consultancy is based on competency because people have the competency to advise you on what you want to do. Sometimes it's very sensitive. Quite regularly we hear [boundary spanners] having super strong opinions, particularly when they are at a very high level. They say, "This is the only one I'm going to work with." And then you look at the quotation and it's very high. There are other companies who could do it at a better rate. It could be bundled for example. Or there could be other solutions and they don't even want to discuss. The personal relationship relationships detract from what is technically the right thing to do.
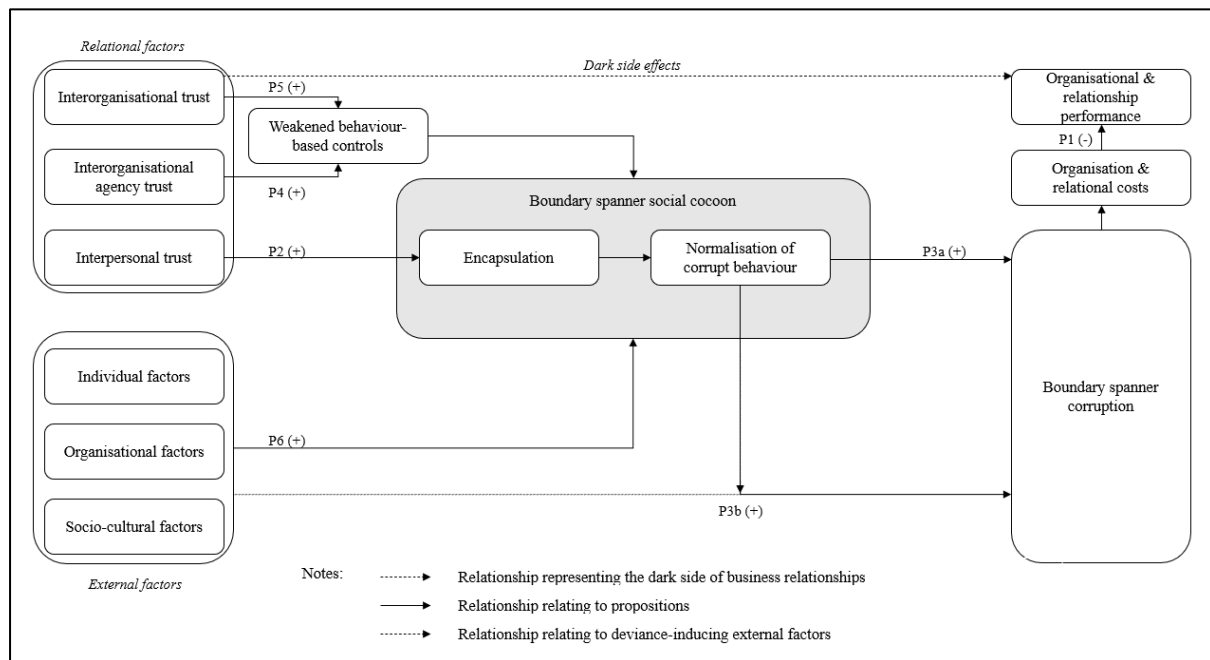
Seller representative

These personal, intraorganisational and socio-cultural factors provide an environment which further informs the likelihood of social cocoon formation. This dissertation asserts therefore:

Proposition 6:   *Individual, organisational and socio-cultural factors increase the likelihood of the emergence and strengthening of a boundary-spanning social cocoon.*

V.4 A theoretical model of boundary spanner corruption

Chapter II identified the importance of situating the boundary spanner representative's role within a set of multi-level relationships (Fang et al., 2008). Chapter V adapts this multi-level trust model and builds on the initial framework proposed in chapter II (figure 2.3) to explicate how boundary spanners' behaviour is impacted by *interpersonal trust* between representatives of different firms, the *intraorganisational agency trust*, controls, and practices that exist internally within each firm, and the *interorganisational trust* between the firms – see figure 5.1. The chapter theorizes that simultaneous trust at all three levels plays a role in the development of boundary spanner corruption.

FIGURE 5.1
A THEORETICAL MODEL OF BOUNDARY SPANNER CORRUPTION

Boundary spanner corruption requires mutual interpersonal trust between representatives of involved firms, but this alone is not sufficient. Interpersonal trust provides an opportunity for the development of a social cocoon, which may under certain conditions generate boundary spanner corruption (Anand et al., 2004). A boundary-spanning social cocoon is a microculture within the representatives' relationship that provides the discretionary space for the development of intra-cocoon norms that may conflict with cocoon members' organisational norms (Anand et al., 2004; Ashforth & Anand 2003; Aven, 2015). While the focus of this study is on single representatives on each side of the business relationship, a social cocoon may involve multiple representatives in each firm. Moreover, external factors such as individual, organisational and socio-cultural factors combine to increase the likelihood of the emergence of a social cocoon. These factors combine to induce the formation of a social cocoon – which by itself it not necessarily corrupt. However, the factors can also combine to help motivate the normalisation of deviant practices within this social cocoon – which converts into a corrupt social cocoon. For example, corrupt behaviour

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either through individual personalities (Preis, 2003), organisational 'tone from the top' (Pinto et al. 2008) or socio-cultural factors (Marcus & Schuler, 2004) that induce the formation of social cocoons within a boundary spanner relationship.

A combination of these relational and external factors motivates a social cocoon to develop through encapsulation within close boundary spanner relationships. The social cocoon can create and sustain a new set of norms that deviate from those of the seller and customer firms. As cocoon-specific norms become more dominant, a slippery slope towards boundary spanner corruption evolves. If deviance-inducing factors in the intraorganisational task environment or at the individual level generate deviant intentions in either the salesperson or buyer, the social cocoon provides the opportunity for collaboration with the counterpart. Although boundary spanners appear to be faithful representatives of their firms, in reality, they collaborate to engage in surreptitious behaviour that violates their firms' explicit or implicit norms (Zaheer et al., 1998).

The formation and strengthening of a boundary-spanning social cocoon are facilitated as greater intraorganisational agency trust is placed in each representative by their respective managers. Agency trust makes the firm more vulnerable to exploitation, as it weakens the imperative to develop and use intraorganisational controls to detect potential corrupt behaviours (Gargiulo & Ertug, 2006) and enables risk-taking by the boundary spanner (Mayer et al., 1995; Ring & Van de Ven, 1994; Rousseau et al., 1998). Mutual interorganisational trust similarly encourages the weakening of controls in relationships with trusted partner firms (Gulati & Nickerson, 2008; Wuyts & Geyskens, 2005).

The existence of the above motivating factors, coupled with the emergence of a social cocoon that normalises corrupt behaviour, leads therefore to boundary spanner corruption (Anand et al., 2004; Ashforth & Anand, 2003). The consequences of this are borne through

organisational and relationship costs, also outlined in chapter four, further undermining organisational and relational performance.

V.5 Conclusion

This chapter focused on building a theoretical model of boundary spanner corruption, with a focus on motivators and mechanisms. Key findings and their implications on the research questions will be discussed.

Motivators of boundary spanner corruption: The literature review in chapter II highlighted a range of motivators from all three reviewed literature streams. These were integrated with the identified mechanisms into a proposed model of boundary spanner corruption in figure 5.1. The interviews echoed and supported many of the insights uncovered in chapter II. In particular, relational and external motivators for boundary spanner corruption were highlighted in the informant testimony. The multiple levels of trust under which representatives operate provide an environment conducive to boundary spanner corruption. Practitioners underlined the intraorganisational trust in which boundary spanner representatives were endowed. This highlighted the opportunity that representatives had to act corruptly. Moreover, it also echoed the finding of research from the dark side of business relationships that trust can motivate behaviours against the interest of the organisation. Further, findings from the sales and service deviance literature were also replicated in this research such that excessive individual autonomy, afforded by this intraorganisational trust, can also motivate deviant behaviour. Further, the complexity of individual, organisational and socio-cultural factors as external motivators for boundary spanner corruption, which were highlighted by the corruption perspectives, were also found in the interviews. Informants frequently raised the issue of individual moral compasses as drivers for boundary spanner corruption. For example, the issue of 'greed' was frequently identified as a motivator for

boundary spanner corruption. Moreover, organisational drivers from the 'tone from the top' and organisational culture were identified as significant drivers. Lastly, informants listed socio-cultural factors as major motivators for corrupt behaviour. Frequently, interview discussions referred to the difference in cultures as motivators for boundary spanner corruption.

Mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption. Informants also recognised social cocoon as an important mechanism that explains boundary spanner corruption. Interviews observed boundary spanner relationships in which close working relationships developed into interpersonal trust. Informants believed that social cocoons are not intrinsically deviant, but may act as conducive vehicles in which corrupt behaviour can be normalised, especially where a professional relationship moves into a friendship (Ashforth &Anand, 2003; Anand et al., 2004). The encapsulation mechanisms that outlined the means by which a productive boundary spanner relationship can flip into a corrupt social cocoon also accorded with the experiences of informants. Informants highlighted various ways in which socialisation mechanisms would manifest, from socialising to entertaining to family holidays. Practitioners also witnessed rationalisation mechanisms for corrupt behaviour, especially around justification. Institutionalisation mechanisms were also described, in which new starters were inculcated into a corrupt social cocoon in which 'business as usual' would into outlined a parallel process that contravened organisational interests. These finding aligns with the dark side of business relationships literature that trust can have a negative (or at least curvilinear) impact on performance. However, the focus on boundary spanner corruption allows this study to draw out and apply corruption normalisation to business relationships as an additional dark side mechanism.

VI. Conclusion

The previous chapters provided a novel conceptualisation of boundary spanner corruption as a nascent concept and this final chapter will summarise the chapters and their prospective answers to the research questions. It will then explore the theoretical and managerial implications of these findings. Next, the limitations will be explored, which identifies the potential drawbacks of the methods used in answering the research questions. Lastly, a future research agenda will be discussed in which theoretical and empirical research priorities are provided.

VI.1 Summary of the dissertation

The findings of each of the chapters will be discussed in turn. First, chapter I, introduced the concept of boundary spanner corruption. Using practitioner examples, this was conceptualised as (1) involving representatives of different organisations, who (2) voluntarily engage in a collaborative activity that (3) stands against the norms of those organisations and (4) has the potential to harm those organisations. From here, recognising that the concept is new to the pertinent literature streams, chapter I outlined five research questions, namely: nature (RQ1), prevalence (RQ2), consequences (RQ3), motivators (RQ4) and mechanisms (RQ5) of boundary spanner corruption (table 1.1).

Chapter II identified three key literature streams relating to boundary spanner corruption and explored their capacity to inform the research questions. The chapter identified perspectives in corruption research, exploring ethical, legal, social and economic perspectives on corruption. In addition, relevant literatures on the dark side of business relationships as well as sales and services deviance were consulted to provide further insight into the conceptualisation. The first three research questions were found to represent

literature gaps as papers do not directly address the boundary spanner corruption topic sufficiently. However, insights were gleaned on motivators and mechanisms, which were assembled and placed into an initial theoretical model to explain boundary spanner corruption.

Chapter III provided a review of the methods employed by the general corruption literature. This review confirms the difficulty of researching corruption in previous studies. However, this may be harder still when investigating boundary spanner corruption, which relates to private-to-private activity which is concealed from public life. This practical research challenge may in part account for the literature's gap on boundary spanner corruption. When compared to each of the research questions, and with consideration given to practical limitations, a multi-method research design based on interview and survey methods was identified as the most suitable to use in investigating the proposed research questions relating to boundary spanner corruption. Each particular method has its strengths and weaknesses. This review, therefore, underlined the importance of taking a multi-method research approach in reducing the impact of the limitations of particular research methods as well as broadening the capture of data on a notoriously difficult topic.

In an exploratory practitioner survey, chapter IV found that the nature of boundary spanner corruption is a multi-faceted concept, which manifests in various guises in the field. These manifestations range from the low severity types (such as personal favours and gift-giving) to more high severity examples (such as bribery and extortion). These examples were surprisingly prevalent, even in a developed country such as the US, which enforces laws prohibiting boundary spanner corruption. Buyer representatives were more likely to report higher levels of prevalence of boundary spanner corruption, reflecting a role that may be more focused on addressing deviant behaviour compared to supplier representatives. The consequences of boundary spanner corruption were also perceived as significant. These

ranged from organisational consequences (such as fines and bankruptcy) to individual consequences (such as demotion or termination). Both buyer and seller representatives believed that there were serious consequences to both high and low severity boundary spanner corruption, suggesting that even low severity corruption can have an insidious negative consequence. These consequences could have long-term repercussions, with representatives (especially buyer representatives) witnessing long-term consequences for even low severity boundary spanner corruption.

Chapter V used an iterative approach to combine empirical research with theoretical development to explore the motivators and mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption. The chapter outlined another exploratory study in which data was collected through semi-structured interviews with 31 boundary spanners representatives and experts. Data obtained from these interviews were combined with an active engagement with general corruption, dark side of business relationships and sales and service deviance literature streams to theorise a model of boundary spanner corruption. These found relational and organisational factors that motivated its emergence. More specifically, multi-level trust factors were important in motivating the emergence of social cocoons within boundary spanner relationships. The encapsulation mechanisms of social cocoons potentially normalise boundary spanner corruption. External factors were also found in the literature and informant interviews as impacting the emergence of the boundary spanner social cocoon through individual, organisational and socio-cultural factors. These factors, in concert, heightened therefore the emergence of boundary spanner corruption. Once emergent, the organisational and relational performance depletes as we observed with other dark side of business relationship effects.

These chapters were also designed to answer the research questions. The explicit findings of which are outlined in table 6.2.

TABLE 6.2

RESEARCH QUESTIONS, FINDINGS AND IMPLICATIONS

Research question	Chapters	Findings	Theoretical and Managerial implication
RQ1: What is the nature of boundary spanner corruption?	Chapters II, III, IV & V	Although this dissertation has provided more theoretical precision in outlining boundary spanner corruption, the phenomenon itself is conceptually broad. It is a multi-faceted concept containing less severe and more severe types.	Managers must be mindful of the less severe corruption types, just as much as the more severe types. These are potential 'red flags' for behaviours whereby individuals may fall down the slippery slope to engage in more egregious activities.
RQ2: How prevalent is boundary spanner corruption?	Chapters II, III, IV & V	Boundary spanner corruption is widespread – especially less severe types. This has been uncovered in both developed economies (such as the US) and undeveloped (such as emerging Asian markets).	General corruption is often assumed to be a developing world problem. However, boundary spanner is widespread in the United States and many other countries explored in this research. Organisations must be aware of the threat of this phenomenon in all geographies.
RQ3: What are the consequences of boundary spanner corruption?	Chapters II, III, IV & V	Negative consequences for both less severe and more severe boundary spanner corruption are found in both short-term and long-term time horizons. Even less severe types lead to serious and tangible consequences for both individual and organisation.	Boundary spanner corruption has the potential to harm both individuals and organisations alike. Even less severe types have long-lasting effects on organisational performance. Therefore, managers must afford the issue with serious attention
RQ4: What motivators give rise to boundary spanner corruption?	Chapters II, III & V	Multi-level trust factors motivate the emergence of corruption. Further, individual, organisational and socio-cultural factors also provide motivators.	Internal organisational factors, just as external individual factors can drive boundary spanner corruption.
RQ5: What mechanisms explain boundary spanner corruption?	Chapters II, III & V	Encapsulation mechanisms within social cocoons can lead to boundary spanner corruption. Normalising corrupt behaviours within inter-personal	Trust between boundary spanner representatives can lead to productive business relationships, but it may also lead to corruption. Rotation between roles, regular internal assessment of deals and even more technology can undermine the normalisation mechanisms that may turn a social cocoon corrupt.

RQ1 Nature. Boundary spanner corruption is a multi-faceted concept. Legal and economic

perspectives on general corruption seek to narrow the definition to include limited factors.

These either relate to a contravention of the law (Boersma, 2012) or microeconomic

behaviour (Gambetta, 2005). This dissertation finds that the broader understandings of the

phenomena within the social (and even ethical) perspectives accord with many of the

respondents' views in this research. The broadness of this conceptualisation requires a multi-disciplinary approach and multi-method approach if researchers are to fully understand the nature of boundary spanner corruption. Moreover, differing severity levels of boundary spanner corruption have also uncovered a gap in extant literature that suggests that there is an underappreciation of the low severity manifestations of boundary spanner corruption which may lead through 'slippery slope' mechanisms to more severe types. Therefore, by highlighting and engaging with potential low severity manifestations of boundary spanner corruption as a component of its nature, we may be better equipped to arrest its emergence.

RQ2 Prevalence. Survey respondents in chapter IV have found widespread levels of boundary spanner corruption in the United States. This dissertation shows that boundary spanner corruption may be more widespread than previously assumed. Much research often directs attention to less developed countries (Transparency International 2021b) which may provide an undue sense of invulnerability to boundary spanner corruption in more industrialised geographies. The dissertation suggests a potential for the phenomenon to be found in a wide range of contexts. That said, the informants also stressed the wide variations between geographies and sectors. Socio-cultural factors may drive the specific prevalence of boundary spanner corruption in each jurisdiction. However, the widespread prevalence of boundary spanner corruption was particularly noticeable for less severe types. Interview informants also indicate a widespread prevalence of the phenomenon. Although difficult to detect and document, it is the low-severity types that appear to be more prevalent. This may further underline that the phenomenon is significantly underestimated in prevalence. If, as this research suggests, boundary spanner corruption is highly prevalent, it may have significant consequences on firm and indeed national performance.

RQ3 Consequence. The practitioner survey uncovered evidence of negative consequences for boundary spanner corruption that affect both organisations and individuals. Negative

consequences were also reported for both buyer representatives and seller representatives for both high and low severity types of corruption. These are related to the relatively minor consequences faced by individuals, such as demotion as well as to catastrophic firm-level consequences such as bankruptcy. Interestingly, even low severity examples result in negative consequences in both the short and long term, suggesting an insidious impact of even low severity corruption. If there are long-term consequences of the serious nature of even low severity corruption, its relative prevalence across geographies and industries may represent a major challenge for business. Indeed, given the absence of significant research into the concept, researchers may have overlooked a widespread drive of organisational and relational underperformance. Given this, understanding the motivators that give rise to boundary spanner corruption will be vital to prescribing measures to advise its elimination.

RQ4 Motivators. The dissertation uncovered relational factors within business relationships that motivate boundary spanner corruption, as well as factors external to the business relationship. On the relational factors, the degree of interorganisational trust was necessary for the emergence of a business relationship that links boundary spanners. Intraorganisational trust was required to place boundary spanners in a position of autonomy within that business relationship. Indeed, the informants in chapter V underlined this finding as a central motivator to boundary spanner corruption. Interpersonal trust between representatives was another factor that drove boundary spanner corruption. Chapter V also highlighted the friendships or other excessively close engagements that could emerge at an interpersonal level as a motivator for deviance. When these three relational factors simultaneously act in concert, they drive weakened control mechanisms and, as we shall see in the next section, social cocoon mechanisms. Further to these, external factors were also found to drive corruption. Individual factors could motivate negative behaviours, through either individual proclivities or strained personal financial circumstances. Organisational factors such, as

culture, may affect boundary spanner representatives' calculations to be deviant or even tacitly encourage deviance. Lastly, socio-cultural factors also drive corruption. For example, in certain countries, closer business relationships are the norm between boundary spanners. Certain socio-cultural contexts can create environments in which corruption is the norm, and therefore 'straight' boundary-spanner interactions may be almost fanciful. In totality, we see a range of relational and external factors within business relationships that motivate boundary spanner corruption.

RQ5 Mechanisms: The literature review also identified encapsulation mechanisms within social cocoons that may explain boundary spanner corruption. These are normalised through processes of socialisation, rationalisation, and institutionalisation (Anand et al., 2004; Ashforth & Anand, 2003). The practitioner interviews also uncovered evidence of this, where close, personalised interpersonal relationships provide a social cocoon isolated away from organisational norms. These relationships may involve different job titles or levels in either firm (Doney & Cannon, 1997). This reflects the relative autonomy that boundary spanners may enjoy enabling the emergence of social cocoons. Successful and trusting relationships often focus on relational factors and traditional compliance-focused behavioural controls are actively weakened (Gulati & Nickerson, 2008). As such, increased autonomy and reduced monitoring may be a further motivator to this boundary spanner corruption mechanism. Coupled with the relatively multi-faceted nature of corruption and its suspected prevalence, this mechanism may provide a major negative consequence on business (and economic) performance.

 VI.2 Theoretical implications

This research makes several theoretical contributions. First, the dissertation identifies and conceptualises *boundary spanner corruption*, a distinct and important dysfunctional

complication of business relationships that has been overlooked in prior research. This boundary spanner corruption is unique in that it involves the cross-firm collaboration of representatives in a business relationship, making it particularly difficult to police or detect. It is also unique in that it negatively affects both firms. Corruption is particularly likely to arise in boundary-spanning relationships, where employees often face individual-level numerical targets and organisational pressures to deliver results (Ramaswami & Singh, 2003). Boundary spanner corruption is especially insidious when it offers short-term financial benefits for the boundary spanner's firm, for this initiates a deleterious reinforcement process—questionable or deviant action delivers positive firm outcomes, which leads to accolades and financial rewards for the boundary spanner and bolsters trust in that individual, which in turn motivates less vigilant control over that person, who subsequently has both greater motivation and opportunity to engage in future corrupt behaviour both within the same private-to-private relationship and in other relationships managed by that representative. Unethically obtained bonuses or other compensation can skew the targets and quotas set within the firm, setting goals for boundary spanners that are difficult to achieve by honest means. In addition, other boundary spanners within the firm who are aware of a colleague's questionable behaviour and observe the laurels that a deviant colleague receives may intuit that the organisation implicitly approves of such behaviour, making it easier to justify that boundary spanner's own questionable or corrupt practices. Boundary spanner corruption has not been sufficiently addressed in the extant literature. Seemingly related concepts, such as the dark side of business relationships (Moorman et al., 1992) or deviance in sales and service organisations (Ramaswami, 1996), omit consideration of boundary spanner corruption, the circumstances that enable and promote that corruption, and the threats it poses for business relationships.

    Second, the dissertation develops the conceptualisation of boundary spanner corruption by assembling insights from relevant literature streams into a framework that

explains the emergence of the phenomenon. A central mechanism employed in this framework introduces the concept of the *boundary-spanning social cocoon*, a key factor that enables a deviance-minded boundary spanner to engage in cross-firm collusion. Actions taken to hinder the formation of boundary-spanning cocoons and the normalisation of corrupt behaviours will reduce the likelihood of boundary spanner corruption. Understanding and detecting factors that enable or encourage the development of a boundary-spanning cocoon and the normalisation of corrupt behaviours are particularly important, for such knowledge can empower firms to devise better controls to prevent the manifestation of deviant behaviour (Ramaswami, 1996). While most existing compliance controls are aimed at uncovering corrupt behaviours *post factum,* such as through regular audits, the conceptualisation suggests that boundary spanner corruption can be more effectively addressed through *ex-ante* monitoring of boundary spanners and prevention mechanisms. Such mechanisms hold promise for firms to reap the benefits of close cross-firm interpersonal relationships while simultaneously minimising the negative consequences that can stem from those relationships (Jap & Anderson, 2003). Although a firm can have full knowledge of its agency trust and behaviour-based controls and some understanding of interorganisational and interpersonal trust (Wang et al., 2013), it knows much less about the partner's agency trust and internal controls. Relationship marketing at the interfirm level requires both firms to collaborate to enact and enforce joint controls, which one anticipates, based on insights from the framework, to be much more effective than a firm independently trying to impede or police boundary spanner corruption.

Third, this dissertation demonstrates the importance of understanding how factors at *multiple organisational and interorganisational levels* interact to impact employee behaviour. Building on Fang et al.,'s (2008) findings, it theorises that boundary spanner corruption is impacted by interactions among trust at different levels. The framework not only highlights

that potential dark side influences equally reside on those levels and can be exacerbated as an unintentional result of trust-building efforts, but that the dark side potential can be greatly underestimated unless deviance-inducing factors at the intraorganisational and individual levels are taken into account (Brady et al., 2012). The conceptual framework cautions that such deviance-inducing factors play an important role in turning value-generating relationships into value-destroying boundary spanner corruption. Distinguishing between factors of motivation—intraorganisational triggers and individual propensities—and factors of control—intraorganisational opportunity and individual self-control—provides a useful framework for assessing which factors are most pertinent in a specific private-to-private relationship. The dissertation advocates the development of a holistic approach to research on business relationships, an approach that takes into account both bright and dark side effects operating at multiple levels in business relationships. It is critically important to understand the circumstances in which the same interpersonal, intraorganisational, and interorganisational factors that generate highly favourable outcomes (Doney & Cannon, 1997) can simultaneously—and unintentionally—lay the foundation for dysfunctional consequences such as boundary spanner corruption.

Fourth, this research has provided a conceptual framework of boundary spanner corruption that may enable future research. Chapter V outlines a model, with component propositions and intermediary concepts (such as the social cocoon and the encapsulation mechanisms) that can be operationalised. As noted above, the mechanisms included in the model are new to business relationship research, which therefore may require additional refinement and development.

VI.3 Managerial implications

The conceptual and qualitative nature of the research provides important theoretical insights, based on which the dissertation offers tentative suggestions for business practice. Boundary spanners do not always act in the best interests of their firms. Seemingly well-functioning, close business relationships have the potential to foment and disguise corrupt behaviours by trusted boundary spanners; that corruption exposes their firms to potential immediate financial consequences, long-term negative performance implications, and massive latent financial risks. Although boundary spanners must be trusted due to the nature of their roles, trust need not necessarily extend across the whole bandwidth of the firm-boundary spanner relationship. Thus, trust-but-verify is the way to go. For example, boundary spanners may be trusted more fully and be given greater autonomy in some respects, such as sales-support asset utilisation or adoption of new sales technologies, yet simultaneously not be given free rein over other activities.

All elements of the firm's formal and informal controls should be reviewed and redesigned with consideration of how they encourage, enable, or deter boundary spanner corruption. This is particularly important because the more trust that is placed in boundary spanners, the higher the tendency to employ controls that focus on results rather than how the results are achieved. Formal output-based controls create pressures that can provoke deviant intentions or increase willingness to comply with questionable or deviant actions instigated by a counterpart. When using output-based controls with boundary spanners, firms should strive to set realistic performance targets and judiciously select key performance indicators. Further, a boundary spanner that declines and reports a solicited bribe or other corrupt proposals should not be penalised for missing targets or falling short on key performance indicators, but instead, be compensated fully. Firms should provide assurances that they will

reward representatives who act with integrity rather than penalise representatives who follow firm norms.

This dissertation cautions against exclusively relying on performance-based controls even with trusted boundary spanners. Behaviour-based and input-based controls should be reviewed to impede or detect encapsulation-related behaviours that enable boundary spanner corruption. This could include specifying unacceptable practices, particularly actions that could be cognitively reframed by boundary spanners as serving the firm's interests. Training should present a message consistent with this perspective. Carefully delineating the scope of boundary spanner autonomy and concurrently establishing management approval systems to validate decisions beyond that scope reduce grey areas regarding what are and are not acceptable practices and signal to boundary spanners that their actions are monitored. However, it is also important to realise that excessive behaviour-based controls may severely stifle boundary spanners in carrying out their roles, can undermine boundary spanner trust in supervisors and top management, and thereby promote undesirable reactance. Thus, firms must find the right balance between trusting and controlling the behaviour of boundary spanners.

Informal social and cultural controls offer a possible practical way to reduce behaviour-based controls and leverage trust as a governance mechanism. For example, internal conferences and social events can help establish, promote, and provide opportunities to impede or undermine boundary-spanning cocoons by developing and reinforcing shared firm norms. Developing regular, frequent interactions between boundary spanners and firm colleagues through "office Fridays" or *jour-fixe* meetings to provide sounding boards and feedback mechanisms can promote decision-making consistent with firm norms. Such interactions help facilitate boundary spanner identification with, and trust in, the firm and colleagues. Firm trustworthiness can also be enhanced by providing a comprehensive,

effective, and fulfilling task environment, showing boundary spanners that their interests are at the heart of organisational considerations. For example, this can be done by supporting the development of transferable skills through training or executive education that provides more immediate benefits to the individual than to the firm. Furthermore, developing sales processes and tools, demonstrating their effectiveness, offering useful training, and designing an adequate and fair compensation system, can all enhance confidence in the firm and reduce boundary spanners' likelihood of resorting to corrupt behaviours to fulfil their role and achieve objectives. Moreover, engaging with the socio-cultural context, and a managerial appreciation of the particularities of geographic contexts that promote social cocoons between boundary spanners must also be watched. Although these may lead to 'bright side' behaviours, they may also lead to 'dark side' effects, such as corruption.

The framework in chapter V highlights the unique difficulty of detecting and dealing with boundary spanner corruption—the initial impetus for collusive deviance can emerge externally from the firm. Boundary spanner corruption is a dyadic phenomenon and requires dyadic solutions. Even if one firm in a business relationship has strong systems to detect internal, individual deviance, they are not designed to detect cross-firm, collaborative deviant behaviour. Controls implemented unilaterally by that firm may not be effective in mitigating the risk of corruption. The most comprehensive approach for addressing potential boundary-spanning corruption requires partner firms to enact similar controls to impede, prevent, and detect the development of a boundary-spanning cocoon and associated negative behaviours. For example, detection of corruption may require the firm and partner to design and implement joint policies for monitoring boundary spanner behaviour.

Counterintuitive to prevailing business relationship thought, the more trust at the various levels that exists within a private-to-private relationship, the more important it becomes for firms to coordinate their controls. Trust and controls together can safeguard

close relationships from the detrimental influence of boundary spanner corruption. It can be suggested that relationship programs encourage open dialogue about current controls within both firms, how well those controls operate, how vigilantly boundary spanners are monitored, and what activities and decisions should be within the scope of boundary spanner autonomy versus requiring managerial approval. Ultimately, criteria for boundary-spanning control system audits could be developed based on existing CRM systems and data captured. Periodic surveys that include cocoon-likelihood indicators and boundary spanner risk profiles can be used to highlight situations needing further investigation or the need to calibrate controls across boundary spanners. Ideally, interventions based on this data could be integrated into pre-existing developmental or performance appraisal meetings. Although these managerial suggestions are tentative and require further investigation, the framework suggests that a coordinated interfirm approach is likely to be most effective in reducing boundary spanner corruption.

VI.4 Limitations and future research agenda

This section explores the potential future research agenda that may follow this dissertation, as well as potential improvements that offset the limitations of the current dissertation.

VI.4.1 Limitations

Investigating corruption is a challenging research endeavour and, as outlined in chapter III, is subject to an array of methods to overcome these difficulties. This section reviews some of the limitations of the dissertation in its own methods. As chapter II outlines, there are no studies that directly tackle the concept of boundary spanner corruption. Given the scarcity of focused investigation, the few studies that provide insights into the research questions may therefore unduly bias the model built upon those literature streams. Moreover, given the social desirability issues with all primary corruption research, relying on extant

research may also replicate the biases inherent in previous studies, where respondents may not provide reliable testimony or may downplay potentially important elements. This dissertation suffers from the same potential limitation.

In respect of the practitioner survey outlined in chapter IV, there are limitations inherent to the method. All primary research into corruption is hampered by social desirability bias. Given the sensitive nature of the topic, respondents may be unwilling to faithfully report their experiences which, despite the anonymity, they may fear exposes them. To overcome this challenge, and obtain responses on this topic, chapter IV asked respondents about industry views, as opposed to their direct experience. This may subject the responses towards hearsay as opposed to providing a report of facts experienced by an individual. Moreover, resource constraints prohibited the research from obtaining a larger sample, and as such caution is required in generalising these results to the global community of boundary spanner practitioners. Furthermore, the focus of the survey on the US as a target population may also prevent the results from generalisation to other geographies. The choice of a multi-method was employed in part to lessen the impact of these limitations. Conducting interviews enables a rapport to develop between informant and researcher, which may enable a more open and conducive atmosphere. Unlike the remoteness and relatively rapidity of online surveys, interviews can forge trust within the research process. Furthermore, on a practical level, the holding of interviews in a different geography from the survey can also offset some of the factors that may be predominant in the US and therefore unduly bias the research into a narrow socio-cultural context.

Within the interview research, there are additional limitations to this type of research. Given the social desirability issues, the level of personal exposure is even more heightened compared to the relative anonymity of online survey tools. Despite the benefits of interviews mentioned above, respondents had a professional relationship with the lead interviewer and

may be minded to maintaining that long-term relationship as opposed to revealing testimony that may further expose them. As with all interview-based research, the generalisability of individual conversations is questionable. The informants all were based in Singapore (although had international careers), and this may restrict perspectives to the relatively narrow experiences offered by the city-state. Again, the use of the multi-method approach may reduce the impact of some of these restrictions.

VI.4.2 Future research priorities

Acknowledging the limitations of the present dissertation, future research may wish to consider the following research priorities to shed new light on a nascent concept. Although this research has been driven by exploratory research, these investigations have produced a model of boundary spanner corruption. Although no firm hypotheses have been derived from the research, it does yield scope for future research to build the propositions into testable hypothesises. This may touch upon alternative focal factors not taken in this research project, or future empirical research may wish to operationalise the model proposed in chapter V and subject to empirical examination. This dissertation addressed the prevalence of boundary spanner corruption on an exploratory basis only. This research explored the concept within two major geographies, first in the United States for the survey and second in Singapore for the interviews. Future research could consider investigating other locations or comparing prevalence between different geographies. Moreover, chapter V uncovered variations between industries. Exploring prevalence between sectors may also provide insight into the prevalence of boundary spanner corruption in the field. For example, certain respondents flagged deviance issues within the construction and extractive industries. Potential case studies or other ethnographic studies of these sectors may reveal insight that cross-industry fields.

Research priority 1: Confirm and test the model on boundary spanner corruption,

especially in other socio-cultural contexts.

This dissertation has endeavoured to provide a clear conceptualisation of the
motivators and mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption. In particular, the social cocoon
mechanism emerged as a central focus for much of the testimony from the informants. The
model proposed therefore within this dissertation focuses principally upon encapsulation
within the social cocoon as the primary mechanism to bring about boundary spanner
corruption. However, more theoretical research may explore other mechanisms, drawn from
the general corruption literature, to provide other processes that may account for boundary
spanner corruption. These could focus more explicitly on the socio-cultural factors touched
upon in the framework or highlight some of the unique individual factors that may drive
boundary spanner corruption. Another potential avenue of investigation could explore the
lack of controls that emerged when the relational factors increased. This dissertation
proposed that such an environment could induce a social cocoon, but other factors could lead
to boundary spanner corruption. For example, various perspectives between boundary
spanner representatives regarding ethics or risk factors may be derived from a weakened
control mechanism.

Research priority 2: Examine the weakened control mechanisms that emerge from

multi-level trust in business relationships that may bring about

boundary spanner corruption.

Given the purpose of the theory-focused conceptual framework, no specific
hypotheses are put forward. Rather, the conceptual framework and the propositions serve as
theoretical way markers regarding the trust mechanisms that operate at different levels, the
interactions among those mechanisms, and their effects on performance, providing a

foundation for empirical research. However, there is a need to explicate and examine the precise nature of the interactions among interpersonal, interorganisational, and agency trust and their effects on the potential for boundary-spanning cocoon formation, boundary spanner corruption, and overall relationship performance. Although boundary spanner corruption is undoubtedly a problem, it is important to avoid adopting a cure that eradicates trust and all of its well-documented benefits. Trying to suppress trust across different levels in a business relationship is not practical, for the negative consequences would be certain, while the benefits would be in doubt. The focus of this research was to explore nascent concepts and build theory. The elements incorporated into the conceptualisations used in this paper are afforded equal weight within the model. However, some may have a greater impact on the different components of the model and losing all trust-based aspects of relationships may be an excessive remedy. For instance, socio-cultural factors may provide strong motivators for social cocoon formation but are weak in terms of flipping that relationship into a corrupt social cocoon. Whereas the incentives and opportunities, factors may provide strong drivers to corrupt behaviour among the representatives.

Research priority 3: Explore the relative strength of motivators or mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption

Another promising avenue would be to pursue an indirective approach that focuses on detecting a boundary-spanning cocoon, rather than striving to uncover the corruption directly. A cocoon-likelihood index could be developed to detect specific encapsulation behaviours and attitudes that, individually, are innocuous. However, the totality of the set of cocoon-enabling or cocoon-promoting factors indicates that a boundary-spanning cocoon exists or is likely to form. As each warning-sign behaviour or attitude in isolation is accepted or even desirable, a boundary spanner is likely to report the various elements honestly and accurately. Intermixing these indicators in a battery with other innocuous behaviours and attitudes would

further reduce their apparent importance and thus also reduce the likelihood that an individual who is engaging in corruption would be motivated to lie about the seemingly innocent behaviours.

Research priority 4: Build and test a cocoon-likelihood index.

VI.5 Conclusion

The conceptual framework and exploratory research highlight the importance of considering how concurrent trust at the interpersonal, intraorganisational, and interorganisational levels can enable the development of boundary spanner corruption. The dissertation offers a pathway and a potential first step on the road to a greater understanding of the nature of complications of business relationships. The prevalence of boundary spanner corruption indicates that this phenomenon is worthy of future empirical research and managerial attention. The consequences of the phenomenon are impactful not only affecting firm performance but threatening social and economic output. The motivators and mechanisms of boundary spanner corruption, although not fully understood, also provide the tools by which research and managers may seek to reduce its prevalence and impact. Although this dissertation has endeavoured to provide a preliminary investigation into the core conceptualisation of boundary spanner corruption, it also provides a programme for future research to deepen and broaden the findings of this first contribution into a potentially voluminous research space. It is also this rich well of research potential that can provide guidance and advice for practitioners who also struggle with the complexities in their roles as boundary spanner representatives. These uncertainties are summarised by one informant:

> When you are talking about personal relationships there is no black or white, there's always a grey area. This is why it's so difficult. Then it starts being deviant. One day, you say, "that guy owes me" and to me, that's a deviant strategy. It's impossible for me to say what is acceptable and what is not.
>
> Buyer and seller representative

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethical approval for boundary spanner research

Queen Mary
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c/o Professor Stephan Henneberg
School of Business and Management
Queen Mary University of London
Mile End
London   2nd December 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

Re: QMREC2351a - The Dark Side of Trust: A Multi-level Model of Boundary Spanner Corruption in Business Relationship.

I can confirm that Jonathan Webb has completed a Research Ethics Questionnaire with regard to the above research.

The result of which was the conclusion that his proposed work does not present any ethical concerns; is extremely low risk; and thus does not require the scrutiny of the full Research Ethics Committee.

Yours faithfully

Mr Jack Biddle – Senior Research Management and Governance Officer

Appendix B: Survey questionnaire used in chapter IV

Deviance in collaborative business practices

Q1 **Introduction** Welcome and thank you for taking part in our study!

Please read the following carefully as it provides information about the objectives of the study and what you will be asked to do.

The objective of this study is to understand collaborative business practices in US domestic business relationships, in particular the interactions of the representatives from different organisations. Some of these collaborative practices by organisational representatives may actually not always be in the interest of their organisations. We are interested in your general knowledge of such practices in your industry in the US, i.e. you or your company do not necessarily have to have experienced these practices yourself.

This study is for academic purposes only and all responses you provide will remain strictly confidential and anonymous. You are free to not participate and withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

The study will take approximately 15 minutes and is being conducted by a research group led by academics from Queen Mary University of London (UK). If you have questions about the study or wish to learn more about it, please contact Jonathan Webb at jonathan.webb@qmul.ac.uk. Please be aware not to use the 'return' button on your browser.

Thank you very much for participating in our study!

End of Block: Introduction

Start of Block: Filter - age

Q2

What is your age?

○ Under 18 (1)

○ 18 - 35 (2)

○ 36 - 50 (3)

○ 51 - 65 (4)

○ 66 or older (5)

End of Block: Filter - age

Start of Block: Filter - age - end

Q3 Unfortunately, this survey is intended to be completed by individuals 18 years old or above. We are very thankful for your interest in our study and your willingness to participate. Please click 'next' below to end the session.

Q4 I agree with the use of my responses for the purpose of this study.

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Q5 Thank you for considering to participate in our study. As you do not agree with the use of your responses for the purpose of this study, you will be exiting this questionnaire at this point. Many thanks again. Please click 'next' below to end the session.

Q6 Are you currently residing in the USA?

○ Yes (1)

○ No (2)

Q7 Unfortunately, this survey is intended for people living in the USA. We are very thankful for your interest in our study and your willingness to participate. Please click 'next' below to end the session.

Q8 Please indicate which of the following departments best describes the function you work in.

○ Marketing/Sales (1)

○ Manufacturing (2)

○ Logistics (3)

○ Finance/Accounting (4)

○ Human Resources (5)

○ Purchasing/Procurement/Supply Chain Management (6)

○ Strategy/Business Development (7)

○ Operations (8)

○ Other (9)

Q9 Unfortunately, this survey is intended to be completed by employees from a different function. We are very thankful for your interest in our study and your willingness to participate. Please click 'next' below to end the session.

Q10 Please indicate whether your company predominantly sells directly to other companies or directly to end-consumers.

○ Directly to end-consumers (1)

○ Directly to other companies (2)

Q11 Unfortunately, this survey is intended to be completed by employees of companies that sell mostly to other companies. We are very thankful for your interest in our study and your willingness to participate. Please click 'next' below to end the session.

Q12 Please indicate approximately how many employees work for your company?

○ <20 (1)

○ 20 – 50 (2)

○ 51 – 100 (3)

○ 101 – 250 (4)

○ 251 – 500 (5)

○ 501 – 1000 (6)

○ 1001 – 5000 (7)

○ > 5000 (8)

Q13 Unfortunately, this survey is intended to be completed by employees of large companies. We are very thankful for your interest in our study and your willingness to participate. Please click 'next' below to end the session.

Q14 How knowledgeable are you about practices relating to the management of business relationships by representatives of suppliers (e.g. sales managers, key account managers) and/or representatives of customers (e.g. procurement/purchasing managers, supply chain managers) in your industry in the USA.

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	
Not knowledgeable at all	○	○	○	○	○	○	Very knowledgeable

Q15 Unfortunately, this survey is intended to be completed by employees knowledgeable
about practices relating to the management of business relationships by representatives of suppliers (e.g. sales managers, key account managers) and/or representatives of customers (e.g. procurement/purchasing managers, supply chain managers) in your industry. We are very thankful for your interest in our study and your willingness to participate. Please click 'next' below to end the session.

Q16 Consider your company's buyers or purchasing agents who deal with your company's suppliers. To what extent are those buyers/purchasing agents expected to build a personal relationship with their assigned representatives/salespeople at your company's suppliers? Where (1) is *not at all expected to build a personal relationship*; and (6) is *very much expected to build a personal relationship*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

Q17 How important is it for your company's buyers/purchasing agents to have a trusting relationship with their assigned representatives/salespeople at your company's suppliers? Where (1) is *not important at all*; and (6) is *extremely important*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

End of Block: Boundary spanner interactions - procurement

Start of Block: Boundary spanner interactions - marketing

Q18 Consider your company's representatives or salespeople who deal directly with your company's downstream channel partners or customers. To what extent are those representatives/salespeople expected to build a personal relationship with their assigned buyers/purchasing agents at your company's customers? Where (1) is *not at all expected to build a personal relationship*; and (6) is v*ery much expected to build a personal relationship*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

Q19 How important is it for your company's representatives/salespeople to have a trusting relationship with their assigned assigned buyers/purchasing agents at your company's customers? Where (1) is *not important at all*; and (6) is *extremely important*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

End of Block: Boundary spanner interactions - marketing

Q20 We are interested in collaborative violations of organisational interests by representatives from selling and buying organisations (see figure for an illustration).

We will refer to these collaborative violations by representatives in business relationships as deviant practices. Such **deviant practices** may include unreasonable or unauthorized discounts, disclosure of confidential company information without authorisation, excessive social entertaining/gift-giving between the representatives, or use of their positions in their organisations to provide personal favors to each other.

You are under no obligation to name any individual or company. We are interested in understanding such practices in general in your industry. We would like to know about the types of behaviors you have heard about from your industry in the USA **within the last 5 to 10 years**.

Q21 How widespread are **such or similar cases** of deviant practices in business relationships in your industry? Where (1) is *not at all widespread*; and (6) is *extremely widespread*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

Q22 What examples of **such or similar cases** of deviant practices have you witnessed or heard about in your industry in the USA? Please provide short descriptions. Again, we are not interested in company or individual names, but in a description of occurrences.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Page Break

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Q23 To what extent have companies in your industry suffered **short-term negative consequences** due to **such or similar cases** of deviant practices in business relationships? Where (1) is *no short-term negative consequences*; and (6) is *very serious **short-term** consequences*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

Q24 To what extent have companies in your industry suffered **long-term negative consequences** due to **such or similar cases** of deviant practices in business relationships? Where (1) is *no **long-term** negative consequences*; and (6) is *very serious **long-term** consequences*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

Q25 What examples of negative consequences relating to **such or similar cases** of deviant practices have you witnessed or heard about in your industry in the USA? Please provide short descriptions. Again, we are not interested in company or individual names, but in a description of occurrences.

_____

_____

_____

Page Break

Q26 Remember that we are referring to deviant practices such as unreasonable or unauthorized discounts, disclosure of confidential company information without authorisation, excessive social entertaining/gift-giving between the representatives, or use of their positions in their organisations to provide personal favors to each other.

How much does the managerial focus on relationship-building in your industry contribute to such or similar cases of deviant practices in business relationships becoming more widespread? Where (1) is *contributes not at all*; and (6) is *contributes very much*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

Q27 For those who engage in **such or similar cases** of deviant practices in business relationships in your industry, how aware are they that they are doing something that is against the interest of their organisation? Where (1) is *not at all aware*; and (6) is *very aware*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

28 To what extent do organisations in your industry struggle to find effective ways to prevent **such or similar cases** of deviant practices in business relationships? Where (1) is *don't struggle at all*; and (6) is *struggle a lot*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

Q29 We are now interested in the causes of such or similar deviant practices in business relationships in your industry in the USA. We distinguish between factors relating to the involved **organisations**, their **representatives**, and the **personal relationships between the representatives**.

Organisational factors that can be conducive to deviant practices refer to organisational characteristics such as job autonomy of representatives, lack of organisational monitoring, organisational pressures to hit target as well as job frustration and distress of representatives

Factors of the representative that can be conducive to deviant practices refer to personal traits such as risk-seeking or manipulative personalities of at least one of the representatives.

Factors of the representatives' personal relationship refer to the characteristics of the personal relationship of the representatives that can be conducive to deviant practices such as personal trust and loyalty between the representatives.

In your industry, to what extent are **such or similar cases** of deviant practices in business relationships motivated by **organisational factors**?

Where (1) is *not at all motivated by organisational factors*; and (6) is *very strongly motivated by organisational factors*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

30 In your industry, to what extent are **such or similar cases** of deviant practices in business relationships motivated by **factors of the representatives**? Where (1) is *not at all motivated by factors of the representatives*; and (6) is *very strongly motivated by factors of the representatives*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

Q31 In your industry, to what extent are **such or similar cases** of deviant practices in business relationships motivated by **factors of the personal relationship between the representatives**? Where (1) is *not at all motivated by factors of the representatives' personal relationship*; and (6) is *very strongly motivated by factors of the representatives' personal relationship*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

Q32 Deviant practices may also relate to more **severe cases** such as bribery, extortion, kickbacks and bid-rigging, as well as fraud, theft, and embezzlement if engaged in collusively by representatives from different organisations. This includes appropriating company resources for their own benefits or working out deals that are best for each other personally rather than the organisations they represent. Such severe cases often also contravene interests, laws or regulations of the broader society.

Q33 How widespread are such **severe cases** of deviant practices in business relationships in your industry? Where (1) is *not at all widespread*; and (6) is *extremely widespread*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

Q34 What examples of such **severe cases** of deviant practices have you witnessed or heard about in your industry in the USA? Please provide short descriptions. Again, we are not interested in company or individual names, but in a description of occurrences.

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Page Break ——

Q35 To what extent have companies in your industry suffered **short-term negative consequences** due to such **severe cases** of deviant practices in business relationships? Where (1) is *no short-term negative consequences*; and (6) is *very serious short-term consequences*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

Q36 To what extent have companies in your industry suffered **long-term negative consequences** due to such **severe cases** of deviant practices in business relationships? Where (1) is *no long-term negative consequences*; and (6) is *very serious long-term consequences*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

Q37 What examples of negative consequences relating to such **severe cases** of deviant practices have you witnessed or heard about in your industry in the USA? Please provide short descriptions. Again, we are not interested in company or individual names, but in a description of occurrences.

_____

_____

_____

Page Break

Q38 Remember that severe cases of deviant practices included bribery, extortion, kickbacks and bid-rigging, as well as fraud, theft, and embezzlement if engaged in collusively by representatives from different organisations. This includes appropriating company resources for their own benefits or working out deals that are best for each other personally rather than the organisations they represent. Such severe cases often also contravene interests, laws or regulations of the broader society.

How much does a **managerial focus on relationship-building** in your industry contribute to such **severe cases** of deviant practices in business relationships becoming more widespread? Where (1) is *contributed not at all*; and (6) is *contributed very much*.

- ○ 1 (1)

- ○ 2 (2)

- ○ 3 (3)

- ○ 4 (4)

- ○ 5 (5)

- ○ 6 (6)

Q39 For those who engage in such **severe cases** of deviant practices in business relationships in your industry, how aware are they that they are doing something that is against the interest of their organisation? Where (1) is *not at all aware*; and (6) is *very aware*.

- ○ 1 (1)

- ○ 2 (2)

- ○ 3 (3)

- ○ 4 (4)

- ○ 5 (5)

- ○ 6 (6)

Q40 To what extent do organisations in your industry struggle to find effective ways to prevent such **severe cases** of deviant practices in business relationships? Where (1) is *don't struggle at all*; and (6) is *struggle a lot*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

Page Break

41 We are now interested in the causes of severe cases of deviant practices in business relationships in your industry. We distinguish between factors relating to the involved **organisations**, their **representatives**, and the **personal relationships between representatives**.

Organisational factors that can be conducive to deviant practices refer to organisational characteristics such as job autonomy of representatives, lack of organisational monitoring, organisational pressures to hit target as well as job frustration and distress of representatives.

Factors of the representative that can be conducive to deviant practices refer to personal traits such as risk-seeking or manipulative personalities of at least one of the representatives.

Factors of the representatives' personal relationship refer to the characteristics of the personal relationship of the representatives that can be conducive to deviant practices such as personal trust and loyalty between the representatives.

In your industry, to what extent are such **severe cases** of deviant practices in business relationships motivated by **organisational factors**? Where (1) is *not at all motivated by organisational factors*; and (6) is *very strongly motivated by organisational factors*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

Q42 In your industry, to what extent are such **severe cases** of deviant practices in business relationships motivated by **factors of the representatives**? Where (1) is *not at all motivated by factors of the representatives*; and (6) is *very strongly motivated by factors of the representatives*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

Q43 In your industry, to what extent are such **severe cases** of deviant practices in business relationships motivated by **factors of the personal relationship between representatives**? Where (1) is *not at all motivated by factors of the representatives' personal relationship*; and (6) is *very strongly motivated by factors of the representatives' personal relationship*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

End of Block: Severe cases

Start of Block: Miscellaneous

Q44 In general, to what extent are deviant practices in business relationships **encouraged by senior management** of the organisations to enhance business interests? Where (1) is *not encouraged at all by senior management*; and (6) is *strongly encouraged by senior management*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

Page Break

Q45 How confident are you about the answers you have given throughout the questionnaire? Where (1) is *not confident at all*; and (6) is *very confident*.

○ 1 (1)

○ 2 (2)

○ 3 (3)

○ 4 (4)

○ 5 (5)

○ 6 (6)

Q46 Please indicate which of the following best describes the **sector** your company is operating in:

○ Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (1)

○ Mining and Quarrying (2)

○ Manufacturing (3)

○ Electricity, gas, steam and air conditioning supply (4)

○ Water supply, sewerage, waste management and remediation activities (5)

○ Construction (6)

○ Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles (7)

○ Transportation and storage (8)

○ Accommodation and food service activities (9)

○ Information and communication (10)

○ Financial and insurance activities (11)

○ Real estate activities (12)

○ Professional, scientific and technical activities (13)

○ Administrative and support service activities (14)

○ Public administration and defense; compulsory social security (15)

○ Education (16)

○ Human health and social work activities (17)

○ Arts, entertainment and recreation (18)

Q47 Please indicate which best describes your current position within your company:

○ Top Management (C-suite) (1)

○ Senior Management (2)

○ Middle Management (3)

○ Junior Management (4)

○ Other (please specify) (5)

_____

Q48 Please indicate the number of years that you have been working in your **industry** (approximate number of years):

_____

Q49 Please indicate the number of years that you have been working in your **function** (approximate number of years):

_____

Q50 Please indicate on what type of device you are completing the survey.

○ Cell phone (1)

○ Tablet (2)

○ Laptop (3)

○ Desktop (4)

Q51
You have now finished the survey.
 Many thanks for your participation.
 Please click 'next' below to end the survey.

Appendix C. Semi-structured interview guide for Chapter V

Introduction

Thank you for taking part in our study!

The objective of this study is to understand collaborative business practices in business relationships, in particular the interactions of the representatives from different organisations.

This study is for academic purposes only and all responses you provide will remain strictly confidential and anonymous. You are free to not participate and withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

The study will take the form of a conversation with myself (Jonathan Webb) for approximately 45min. It is being conducted by a research group led by academics from Queen Mary University of London (UK).

We would like to ask if this interview can be recorded, entirely for note-taking purposes. It will not be shared with anyone else. If you would like to suspend the recording for part or the entirety of the interview please let me know.

Thank you very much for participating in our study!

NOTES:

- BASED ON RESPONDENT FUNCTION ADJUST QUESTIONS TO EITHER CUSTOMER OR SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIPS
- DEMOGRAPHICS ONLY NEEDED FOR NEW RESPONDENTS
- WHENEVER POSSIBLE RESPONDENTS SHOULD SUBSTANTIATE THEIR ANSWER WITH SPECIFIC EXAMPLES
- PROMPTS IN [ ] AND CONCEPTS IN ( )
- 'REPRESENTATIVE' ALWAYS REFERS TO BOUNDARY SPANNER
- 'RELATIONSHIP' ALWAYS INCLUDES HIGH TRUST
- UNLESS STATED OTHERWISE 'RELATIONSHIPS' ALWAYS REFER TO THE INTERPERSONAL TRUST-BASED RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN BOUNDARY SPANNERS

Demographics

Company

Please tell us about your company: Country (origin), Industry, Size (employees).

Respondent

Please tell us about your role within your company: Country (in which the respondent works), Function, Hierarchy level, Tenure.

How knowledgeable are you about practices relating to the management of business relationships by representatives of suppliers [e.g. sales managers, key account managers] and representatives of customers [e.g. procurement/purchasing managers, supply chain managers] in your company and industry.

Not knowledgeable at all (1) – Extremely knowledgeable (6)

*(**Proposition 1:** Mutual interpersonal trust between boundary spanners of different organisations in a business relationship increases the likelihood of the emergence and strengthening of a social cocoon between those individuals.)*

How **important are personal relationships** [that you and representatives of your company have with representatives of other companies, such as customers and suppliers] for your company's relationship marketing with customers/relationship building with suppliers?

In your experience, please describe the **main characteristics of <u>personal</u> relationships** that drive successful business interactions. [You did not mention trust. Is **mutual interpersonal trust** not relevant?]

What are the **benefits** of such mutual interpersonal trust for you in your role as well as for your company?

How do you go about **creating** such trusting personal relationships? [in your physical interactions, social interactions, and way of thinking in the relationship]

How **strong** can these trusting relationships become? [friendships?]

- Is it possible that in such relationships a **<u>preference</u>** develops for increased interactions with each other [frequency, intimacy]? Why do you think that is? [How does interpersonal trust cause this?] (physical encapsulation)

- Is it possible that in such relationship a **<u>preference</u>** develops to become more similar to each other? Why do you think that is? [How does interpersonal trust cause this?] (social encapsulation)
- Is it possible that in such relationship a **<u>preference</u>** develops to think alike? Why do you think that is? [How does interpersonal trust cause this?] (ideological encapsulation)

Do **unique practices** [different to interpersonal relationships based on less trust/based on equivalent high trust] develop in such relationships, i.e. unique ways of doing things.

(***Proposition 5****: Corrupt behavior between boundary spanners of organisations in a business relationship negatively impacts each organisation's performance.*)

Do these unique practices always **conform** to company guidelines, practices, rules, or norms? [Distinguish between severe and less severe non-confirming practices]

- (Less severe includes unreasonable or unauthorized discounts, disclosure of confidential company information without authorisation, excessive social entertaining/gift-giving between the representatives, or use of their positions in their organisations to provide personal favors to each other.)
- (include bribery, extortion, kickbacks and bid-rigging, as well as fraud, theft, and embezzlement if engaged in collusively by representatives from different organisations. This includes appropriating company resources for their own benefits or working out deals that are best for each other personally rather than the organisations they represent. Such severe cases often also contravene interests, laws or regulations of the broader society.)

What problems could arise from such **nonconforming practices**? [sub-optimal decision making and resource allocation, possible short-term benefits in the relationships versus long-term legal and reputational risks]

(***Proposition 2:*** *A strong social cocoon comprising boundary spanners of different organisations in a business relationship increases the likelihood of corrupt behavior between those individuals.*)

As interpersonal relationships develop, at what point can such nonconforming practices take over the relationship, i.e., are prioritized over company guidelines, practices, rules, or norms? (cocoon influences partially overtake company influences)

Can nonconforming practices totally replace company guidelines etc.? (cocoon influence substitute company influences entirely)

When such nonconforming practices exist, are the representatives always aware that these practices do not conform with company guidelines? Why would representatives nevertheless engage in such non-conforming practices?

- (Socialisation):
  - Is it possible that they are motivated by social rewards [build trust in the relationship] in the relationship? (cooperation)
  - Is it possible that they believe they are hurting the relationship [violate trust in the relationship] if they don't engage in these practices (compromise)
  - Is it possible that the non-conformity is perceived as small and irrelevant (incrementalism)? Can this create a slippery slope?
- (Rationalisation):
  - Is it possible that they find ways to justify nonconformity to themselves [importance of trust and relationship]?
- (Institutionalisation):
  - Is it possible that non-conform practices that initially where mostly done adhoc become routine practices?

What is the role of **individual traits** of the involved representatives for the development of nonconform practices in trusting relationships?

- Is it possible that there are traits that promote nonconform practices? (risk-taking, machiavellism, thrill-seeking)
- Is it possible that there are traits that suppress nonconform practices? (conscientiousness, integrity)

What is the role of respective **task environments** of the involved representatives for the development of nonconform practices in trusting relationships?

- Is it possible that there are negative experiences (triggers) that promote nonconform practices? (unfairness, resentment, frustration, exhaustion, direction-less)
- Is it possible that there are opportunities that promote nonconform practices? (role models, autonomy)

(**Proposition 3:** *Simultaneous agency trust placed in boundary spanners of organisations in a business relationship increases the likelihood that a strong social cocoon comprising those individuals will lead to corrupt behavior.*)

There are trusting interpersonal relationships between representatives that do not necessarily lead to nonconform practices. How do you explain this? [relationship length, control systems (training, monitoring, incentivisation), lack of individual and task-environment drivers]

- You mentioned control systems. What kind of different control systems work [concrete examples]? How do they prevent nonconform practices in trusting interpersonal relationships (**suppress physical, social, an ideological encapsulation**)?

Some **companies develop trusting relationship with their representatives** (AGENCY TRUST)

- How do you think this interferes with the development and utilisation of control systems designed to prevent nonconform practices in interpersonal relationships between representatives?
    - Is it possible that such trust (AGENCY TRUST) leads to ineffective design of control system?
    - Is it possible that such trust (AGENCY TRUST) leads to the foregoing or the use of control systems?
- Is it possible that weak and underdeveloped control systems can be perceived by representatives as encouraging non-conform practices? How?

(**Proposition 4**: *Mutual interorganisational trust in a business relationship increases the likelihood that a strong social cocoon comprising boundary spanners will lead to corrupt behavior.*)

Some companies develop trusting relationship with their customer/supplier organisations (INTERORGANISATIONAL TRUST)

- How do you think this interferes with the development and utilisation of control systems designed to reduce nonconform practices in the trusting relationship between their representatives?
    - Is it possible that organisation's control systems aimed at their representatives is considered to be less important in cases of such trusting interorganisational relationships?
    - Is it possible that organisations are unclear about their responsibilities in controlling their representatives in cases of such trusting interorganisational relationships?

Is it possible that representatives are encouraged by the interorganisational trust between their companies to act on their own interpersonal trust.

Appendix D: Coding tree for informant interview responses

First-order Categories		Second-order Categories		Propositions	
Commercial inefficiencies	22				
Knowledge management inefficiencies	4				
Reduced supplier pool	5				
Complacency	8			Proposition 1: Boundary spanner corruption between representatives of different firms in a business relationship increases organisational and relational costs, which negatively impacts each firm's performance.	91
Organisational reputational risk	1	Consequences of organisational norm violations	91		
Compromised decision-making	6				
Information manipulation	8				
Fines	3				
Bribery	30				
Bankruptcy	1				
Imprisonment	3				

Notes: Numbers in table refer to count of occurrence in the field interviews.

First-order Categories		Second-order Categories		Propositions	
Boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships are critical for interorganisational relationships	22				
Boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships build and maintain interorganisational relationships	2				
Boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships are maintained beyond current employers	4				
Building internal influencers in the counterparty	4				
Internal influencers impact decision-making	10				
Internal influencers are limited in capabilities	3				
Easing decision-making	9				
Accessing more inside information	23	Benefit of interpersonal relationships	111		
Creating a competitive edge	5				
Creating innovation	2				
Creating investment	8				
Creating cost savings	7				
More speed	7				
More flexibility	2				
More reliable supply	2			Proposition 2: Mutual interpersonal trust between representatives of different firms in a business relationship leads to encapsulation of the representatives, which increases the likelihood of the emergence and strengthening of a boundary-spanning social cocoon.	224
More supply chain visibility	1				
Regular check-ins maintain interpersonal trust	6				
Time builds interpersonal trust	7				
Competence builds interpersonal trust	7	Interpersonal trust	32		
Integrity is critical in boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships	9				
Interpersonal trust needs to be continually maintained in boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships	3				
External environments relax individuals	7				
External environments enable access to inside information	6				
External environments enable the unauthorized release of sensitive information	6				
External environments are a control risk	10	Physical encapsulation	44		
Entertaining enables access to more information	5				
Entertaining compromises decision-making	6				
Entertaining does not compromise decision-making	4				

Shared connections deepen boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships	5	Social encapsulation	18
Social media maintains closeness in boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships	2		
Social activities deepen and maintain closeness boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships	10		
Vulnerabilities based on social activities require individual bravery	1		
Boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships develop unique ways of working	7	Ideological encapsulation	19
Shared business objectives deepen interpersonal relationships	5		
Shared identities and interests deepen interpersonal relationships	7		

Notes: Numbers in table refer to count of occurrence in the field interviews.

First-order Categories		Second-order Categories		Propositions
Informal reciprocity deepens interpersonal relationships (cooperation)	12			
Demonstrating authenticity deepens and maintains interpersonal relationships (cooperation)	9			
Demonstrating inauthenticity harms interpersonal relationships (cooperation)	8			
Gift-giving maintains closeness in interpersonal relationships (compromise)	5	Socialisation	53	Proposition 3a: A boundary-spanning social cocoon comprising representatives of different firms in a business relationship allows for the normalisation of corrupt behaviour, which increases the likelihood of boundary spanner corruption.
Refusing gifts harms relationships (compromise)	5			
Accepting gifts compromises decision-making (incrementalism)	9			
Minor organisational norm violations lead to more serious organisational norm violations (incrementalism)	5			
Accepting gifts does not compromise decision-making	3			
Loyalties in interpersonal relationships are aligned with organisational goals	4	Rationalisation	12	
Informal interpersonal interactions enhance efficiency	5			
Informal communication flows predominate in boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships	12	Institutionalisation	12	
Boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships supersede contracts	2			144
Boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships supersede process	10			
Boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships are perceived as compromising by others	16	Social cocoon control risks	36	Proposition 3b: A boundary-spanning social cocoon comprising representatives of different firms in a business relationship allows for the normalisation of corrupt behaviour, which results in greater likelihood of boundary spanner corruption as individual, intraorganisational and socio-cultural deviance-inducing factors increase.
Boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships are difficult to monitor	2			
Boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships drive organisational norm violations	3			
Acceptance of organisational norm violations leads to vulnerabilities	3			
Organisational norm violations are common in business relationships	7	Organisational norm violations	9	
Organisational norm violations are rare in business relationships	2			
Pressure to hit targets drives organisational norm violations	7	Task environment	13	
Cultural-geographic issues drive organisational norm violations	6			
Senior people have more to lose in organisational norm violations	2	Individual profile	9	
Individuals' moral compasses drive organisational norm violations	7			

Notes: Numbers in table refer to count of occurrence in the field interviews.

First-order Categories		Second-order Categories		Propositions	
Agent discretionary power is reduced in larger interorganisational exchanges	1				
Agency trust is important for boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships	3				
Agents are trusted because of their boundary-spanner relationships	7	Intraorganisational trust	18	Proposition 4: Simultaneous agency trust placed in representatives of different firms in a business relationship weakens behaviour-based controls, which increases the likelihood that a boundary-spanning social cocoon will develop as well as result in boundary spanner corruption	18 (+58)
Discretionary powers allow agents to build boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships	4				
Discretionary powers in agents are a control risk	3				
Procurement processes reduce organisational norm violations	17				
Procurement processes do not eliminate organisational norm violations	1				
Procurement processes cannot be easily applied to certain geographies	7				
MNCs enforce strict procurement processes	2				
Stricter process and laws impede the development of strong boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships	3				
Sales is becoming more process-led	3				
High salaries of agents reduce organisational norm violations	1	Control systems	58		
Staff rotation of agents reduce organisational norm violations	5				
Banning gift-giving reduce organisational norm violations	6			Proposition 5: Mutual interorganisational trust between firms in a business relationship weakens behaviour-based controls, which increases the likelihood that a boundary-spanning social cocoon will develop and result in boundary spanner corruption.	35 (+58)
Price benchmarking reduce organisational norm violations	2				
Small spend organisational norm violations are difficult to detect	3				
Banning organisation with a history of deviance from future tenders reduce organisational norm violations	2				
Terminate employment of agents that violate organisational norms	6				
Contracts impede the development of strong boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships	1				
Simplifying contracts supports boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships	1	Contracts	3		
Contracts stifle innovative thinking in boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships	1				
Interorganisational trust is critical in business relationships	10				
Representatives from multiple organisational levels are involved in interorganisational relationships	8				
Interorganisational trust supports the development of boundary-spanner interpersonal trust	5	Interorganisational trust	32		
Important interorganisational relationships encourage boundary-spanner personal relationships	7				
Underperforming interorganisational relationships harm agency trust	2				

Notes: Numbers in table refer to count of occurrence in the field interviews.

First-order Categories		Second-order Categories		Propositions	
Senior people are more likely to engage in boundary-spanner interpersonal relationships	3	Individual factors	24	Proposition 6: Individual, organisational and socio-cultural factors increase the likelihood of the emergence and strengthening of a boundary-spanning social cocoon.	51
Personal proclivities drive interpersonal trust in business	18				
Organisational values are set by the tone from the top	3	Organisational factors	8		
Organisational cultural issues drive interpersonal trust in business	5				
Socio-cultural factors drive interpersonal trust in business	11	Socio-cultural factors	19		
Industry sector factors drive interpersonal trust in business	2				
Certain socio-cultural contexts are more subject to norm violation	6				

Notes: Numbers in table refer to count of occurrence in the field interviews.