**15:30 – 16:30**

**Innovative tools for anti-corruption work**

EU NETWORK
AGAINST
CORRUPTION

European Commission

# Taking history seriously
## Lessons from the past for better anti-corruption in the future

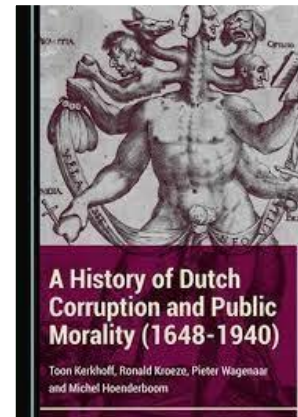Centre for Parliamentary History, Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, 15 October 2025

# Established knowledge or fallacies

- More corruption now, in the past things were better
- Standards against we judge corruption in contemporary times are permanent
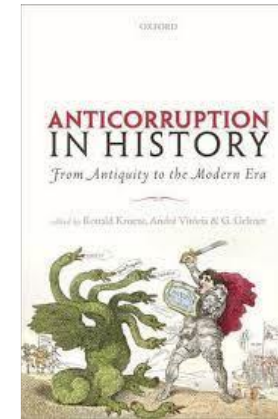- In Europe we have figured out anticorruption

# Understanding the history of anticorruption = acknowledging change, context and ambiguities
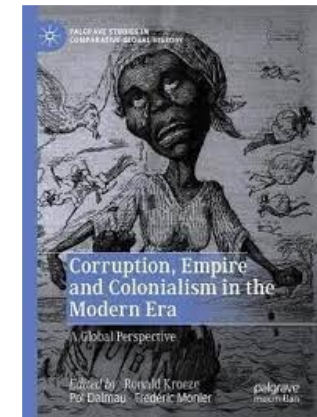
- Anticorruption is about controlling and curbing corruption

- Since ca. 1800 corruption is the misuse of public power/ resources for private gain (modern definition of corruption)

- Anti/corruption is an umbrella concept, what it precisely means, is context specific

Kerkhoff, Kroeze, Wagenaar, *A History of Dutch Corruption* (Cambridge Scholars Publishers, 2019)

Kroeze, Vitoria, Geltner, *Anticorruption in History* (Oxford University Press, 2018/ 2021)

Kroeze, Dalmau, Monier, *Corruption, Empire and Colonialism* (Palgrave, 2021)

# A brief historical example: anticor[ruption] international antibribery (1970s-no[w]



PRESS RELEASE

EMBARGOED UNTIL SATURDAY 15 JULY 1995 AT 0400 [...]

NEW ZEALAND BEST, INDONESIA W[...]
POLL OF INTERNATIONAL CORRUPT[...]

New Zealand, Denmark, Singapore and Finland come out [...]
in the world, and Pakistan, China and Indonesia as the wo[...]
Index released today (Saturday, 15 July 1995) by the Ber[...]
governmental organisation, Transparency International (TI).

The organisation was established two years ago to rais[...]
corruption and to create a coalition of interests from bot[...]
sectors to combat it.

"The index will appear annually and is a 'poll of polls'", exp[...]
TI, in releasing the survey.

"It is an assessment undertaken for us by a specialist [...]
Lambsdorff of the University of Göttingen, in which existing [...]
interests and financial journalists have been analysed and [...]
how international business sees the levels of corruption in t[...]
survey."

To the extent that countries have problems with their rankings, this [...]
but rather with the perceptions international business have of the s[...]
countries, he explained.

"We plan to broaden the scope of the index, and also to include ass[...]
of corruption practised by businesses from various major tradi[...]
dealings abroad," Dr Eigen continued. "To the extent that the surv[...]
this is because the existing polls themselves have been selectiv[...]
which have been the subject of at least two polls are included."

Chapter

The anti-corruption industry: from movement to institution

By Steven Sampson

FIRST 100 DAYS

CBS NEWS 24/7 — TRUMP SIGNS ORDER PAUSING ENFORCEMENT OF LAW BANNING FOREIGN BRIBERY PRACTICES

# Insights from history, see example

- be aware that *changing* political and contextual factors matter for how we understand anti/corruption
- think in terms of (controlling) institutional breeding grounds for corruption in stead of simple clear-cut individual wrong-doers (rotten apples)
- note that historically speaking anticorruption is the result of actions of individual powerful actors and coalitions
- be sensitive towards connections between corruption 'there' and 'here' to understand the dominance of some and the lack of other types of corruption/ anticorruption norms
- note that one dominant understanding of anti/ corruption can neglect other forms of anti/corruption (breeding ground for criticism)
- anticorruption norms and institutions are not permanent

# 'History-informed better questions' – Toolkit

Look to the past to learn how to ask, and find answers to, better questions.

- Anticorruption is about setting (new) norms. What are our collective norms? What is our understanding of the good society/ good government? What do we agree/ disagree about?

- What leading anticorruption norms can be discerned from a specific (historical) case? Are these still enough, appealing, present?

- Rethink 'decisive' changes or 'breaks' in the (recent) past: what 'old' forms of anti/corruption did continue to exist?

- Be sensitive to ambiguities, silence and power-relations: What tensions do exist between technocratic/ legal and popular/ democratic models of anticorruption?

- In what way is anticorruption 'here' connected with corruption 'there'?

University of Bologna

EU NETWORK AGAINST CORRUPTION

Brussels, October 15th 2025

# Overview on AI-based Anti-Corruption Technologies (AI-based ACTs)

*"AI system means a machine-based system designed to operate with varying levels of autonomy [..] and that, for explicit or implicit objectives, infers, from the input it receives, how to generate outputs such as predictions, content, recommendations, or decisions that can influence physical or virtual environments"* (EU AI Act)

| **Enhanced public value** (eg fast data processing, more accurate decision-making) | **Design vs reality gap** (eg data availability, technical expertise, regulatory compliance) |
|---|---|

- Research shows AI **can enhance** anti-corruption

- Public organisations are **increasingly piloting and adopting** AI-based ACTs across different areas (eg public procurement, healthcare, tax) with different functions → main development strategies: in-house development, outsourcing of ready-to-AI solutions, and co-creation with different stakeholders → but with different outcomes

- Their success/failure hinges on: **enablers** (eg individual previous experience with AI, data availability, EU funds) **vs roadblocks** (eg individual scepticism, limited or low mgmt commitment, emerging regulation)

- AI-based ACTs entail **risks** as AI can be abused or misused, and new corruption opportunities may arise (eg AI procurement

---

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

1) **AI should complement existing anti-corruption efforts rather than replace them entirely**
2) **AI-based ACTs are highly context-sensitive, thus their design, development and implementation should be adapted to their context of use**

# Real-World Use Cases

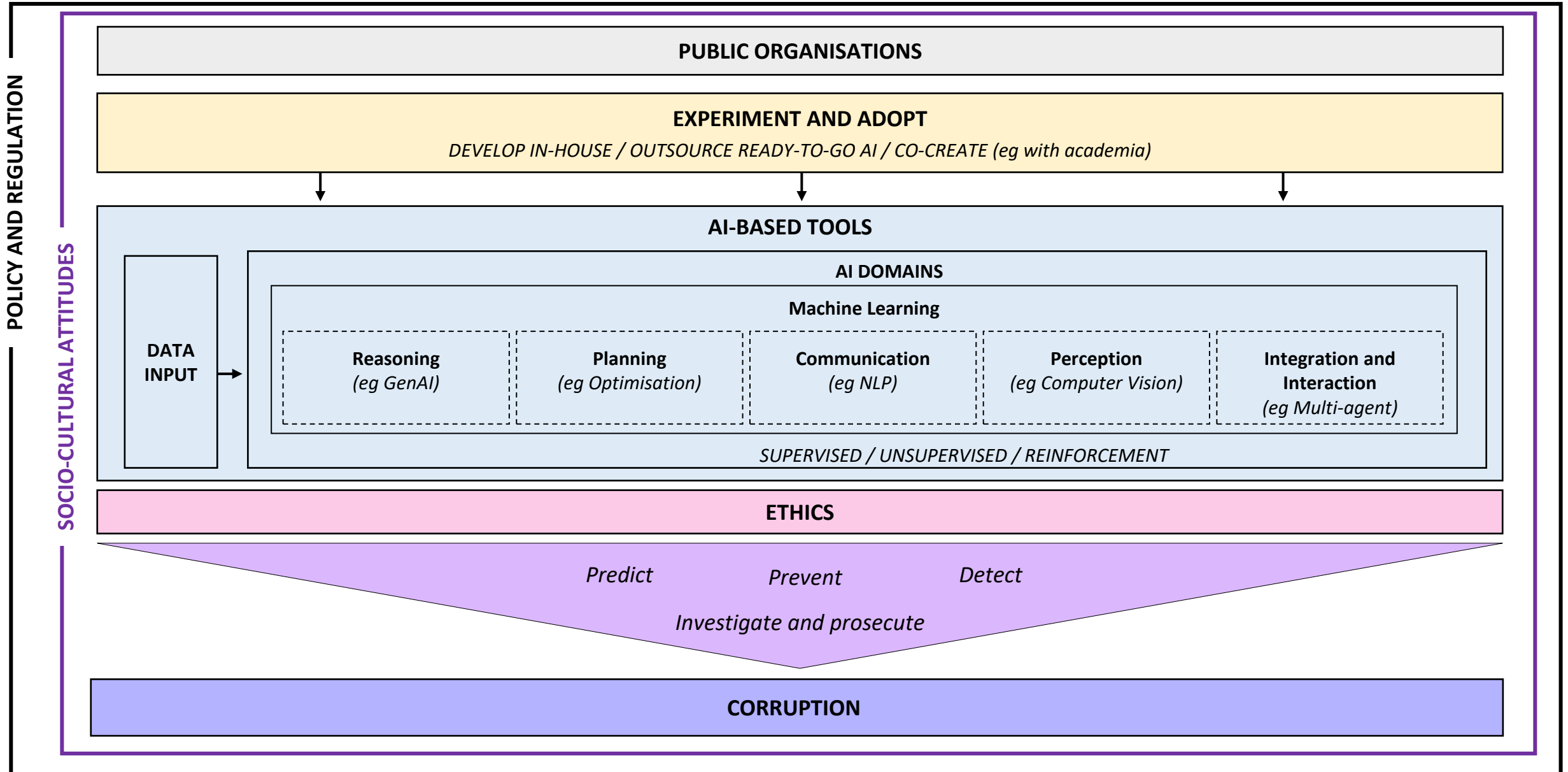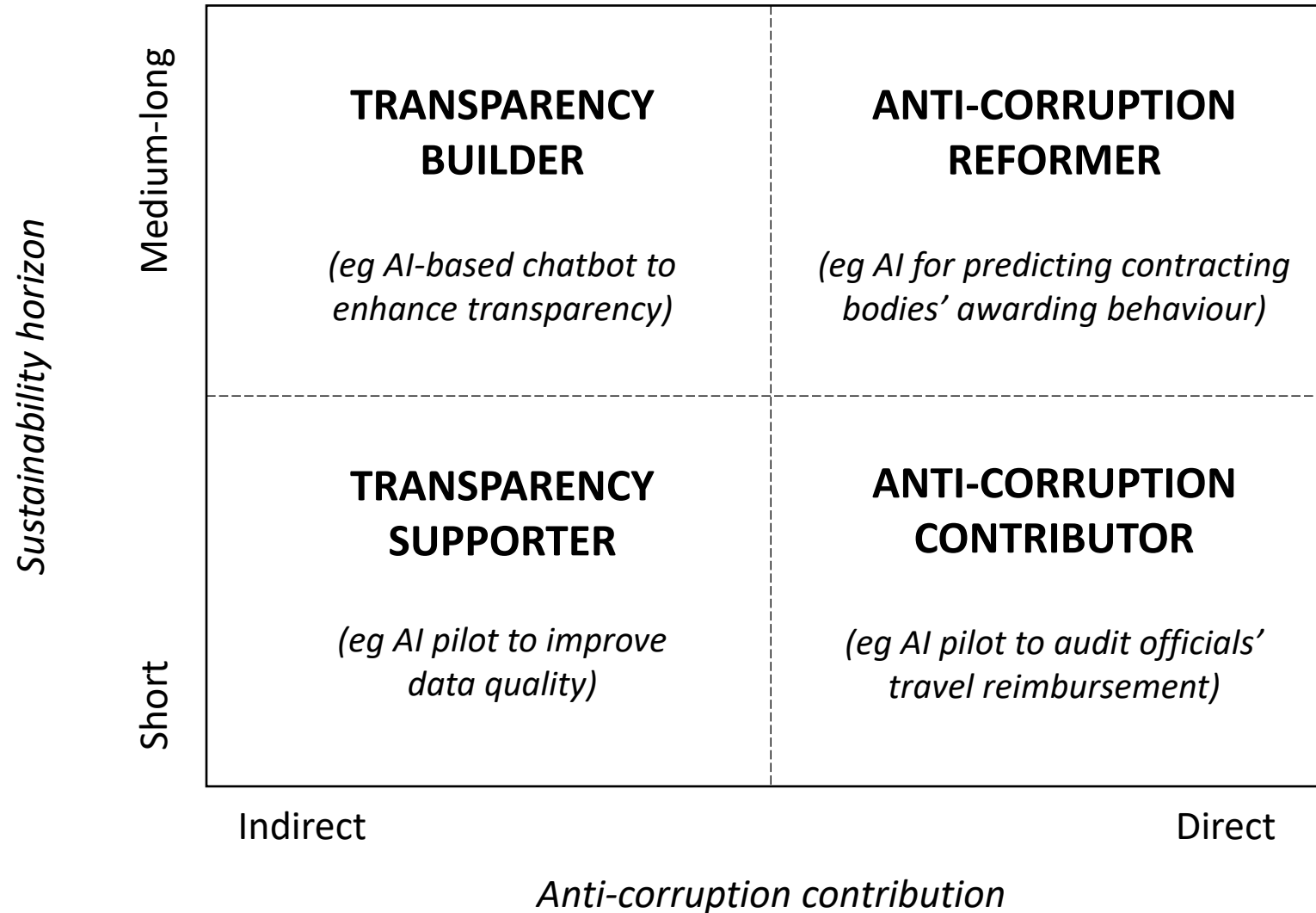| Main Function | Examples of Real-World Use Cases |
|---|---|
| **PREVENT** | • AI to evaluate bids in public procurement<br>• AI to analyse and evaluate legal drafts for anti-corruption purposes |
| **PREDICT** | • AI to predict risk of engagement in criminal activities<br>• AI to predict awarding patterns of contracting authorities |
| **DETECT** | • AI to identify anomalies and irregularities in public expenditures<br>• AI to audit public officials' travel reimbursements |
| **INVESTIGATE AND PROSECUTE** | • AI to enhance anti-corruption investigations by speeding up admin work<br>• AI to perform OSINT operations |

# An Analytical Framework to Understand AI-based ACTs

# A Typology for AI-based ACTs



Source: Gerli (forthcoming).

# Key Recommendations

**Awareness**
- Overcome organisational path-dependency by fostering **openness to innovation**
- Ensure **top management commitment**

**Preliminary Assessment**
- Assess the **actual need** for AI to perform specific tasks
- Evaluate the relevant **regulatory environment**
- Examine **organisational context and capabilities** (data availability, expertise, and IT infrastructure)
- Anticipate potential **technical, organisational, social, and ethical impacts**

**Design**
- **Strategy:** Follow a gradual approach to AI adoption with realistic objectives, aligned with organisational goals, Build synergies within and across public organisations
- **Technology:** Define clear, responsible and transparent technical requirements, Invest in data harmonisation and interoperability
- **Organisation and expertise:** Allocate dedicated and sustained budgetary resources, Recruit or develop in-house data science expertise (eg upskilling), Ensure managerial capacity (eg hiring "next generation specialists", creating a dedicated unit or office

**Training**
- Ensure **human-in-the-loop** processes
- Use **test environments** before full-scale implementation

**Implementation**
- Develop a structured **change management** plan
- Invest in long-term **sustainability and maintenance**
- Evaluate opportunities for **reuse and scaling**

# Final Reflection

## Is your organisation engaging with AI-based Anti-Corruption Technologies?

University of Bologna

# 15:30 – 16:30
## Innovative tools for anti-corruption work

### Q&A

1. What **emerging technologies**—such as AI, predictive analytics, or real-time monitoring—do you consider as **holding the most promise** for strengthening the EU's anti-corruption strategy, and what risks should be considered in their deployment?

2. What could the EU Network Against Corruption do **to support public sector practitioners?**

3. Are there **examples from Member States where digital tools have successfully shifted anticorruption efforts** from reactive to preventive, and what can be learned from them? Any best practice?

European Commission

EU NETWORK
AGAINST
CORRUPTION