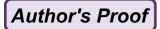
# Metadata of the chapter that will be visualized online

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Abstract	Email david.jackson@cmi.no  Why do 'integrity building' interventions in development settings rarely induce governance practices that are consistent with the standards set out in the formal state? This chapter explains the seemingly poor outcomes of integrity-building approaches by going beyond an assessment of institutions, rules or organizational processes, to focus on a key dimension of integrity building: the response and agency of ordinary citizens. In particular, the chapter considers how underlying norms within society shape choices about whether to engage in integrity supporting or undermining practices. The empirical focus is on the norms such as vote swapping, string pulling and collusion, at the municipal level in Kosovo. The research demonstrates the complexity of integrity building and how the process can be held back by interdependent behaviors that require a whole set of different interventions.		



# Integrity Building and Social Norms in Kosovo's Municipalities

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David Jackson

AUI 1 INTRODUCTION

From the post-conflict societies of the Balkans to the developing nations of sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, governance and institution building is at the heart of international development practice. Controlling corruption is invariably an integral aim of these state-building strategies, a priority mostly articulated and channeled via 'integrity building' that emphasizes governance qualities such as transparency, accountability and institutional checks and balances (Johnsøn 2016). The explicit aim of integrity-building approaches is not merely the adoption of new governance structures but for these in turn to have a tangible effect on political and social behavior. Integrity building aims therefore to instill actions 'consistent with a set of moral or ethical principles and standards, embraced by individuals as well as institutions that create a barrier to corruption' (Transparency International 2009, p. 44). Integrity is used here in a minimal sense without moralistic undertones to mean behavior consistent with the standards set out by the formal institutions and rules of states. Behavior consistent with integrity in a governance context, therefore, relates to actions such as

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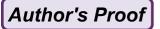
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following formal procedures, open government, orientation to the public good and information-sharing.

Yet, after two decades of this strong emphasis on integrity in governance, researchers have found a striking mismatch between theory and practice, with many studies highlighting how 'integrity-building' approaches rarely change underlying patterns of behavior on the ground (Bliesemann de Guevara 2010; Pritchett et al. 2010). Reforms are not 'taken up' by the societies in which they are introduced, an outcome some have described as 'isomorphic mimicry': the adoption of the forms of other functional states and organizations which camouflages a persistent lack of function (Pritchett et al. 2010, p. 1). In other words, developing states 'tend to adopt a "Western" form under the influence of internationalized norms, but keep functioning according to other social logics' (Bliesemann de Guevara 2010, p. 115). The general weight of evidence, therefore, suggests that integrity-building strategies have met with little success: only a handful of countries have made any significant advances in integrity, and in nearly all countries subject to anticorruption interventions, corruption is still strongly prevalent—in some it has become worse (Mungiu-Pippidi 2015; Persson et al. 2013; Zaum 2012).

This chapter aims to explain poor outcomes in integrity building undertaken as part of broader state-building and governance reform in developing countries. It does say by going beyond an assessment of the institutions and rules being introduced, the type of interventions deployed or the organizational processes involved in their implementation to focus squarely on how integrity building is *responded to* by ordinary citizens. How ordinary citizens, as key agents in shaping the functioning of many of these institutions, respond in terms of practices and behaviors is critical to explain trajectories in integrity building—why some state-building interventions are deemed effective, while others futile. It is interested in integrity-supporting practices and behaviors—and the obverse of these—integrity-undermining practices and behaviors—which are related to concepts such as clientelism, informality and corruption. Yet, it is not enough to identify these different practices and behavior—these need also to be *explained*.

Integrity-supporting and undermining practices are explained through identifying the underlying expectations and beliefs present within Kosovo's municipalities. Exploring how norms and social drivers affect state building and anticorruption on the ground offers new insights into governance reform, a key line of inquiry that takes context extremely seriously. Despite



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the World Bank and others emphasizing the importance of context there is not so much clarity on what 'working with the grain' means or how context matters. The result of this lack of understanding is that development agencies struggle to modify strategies accordingly.

This chapter aims to 'flesh out' what context means and why integrity building is not taken up by societies by focusing on the underlying social norms and expectations. This chapter presents an empirical examination of these norms existing within municipal governance in Kosovo, a country subjected to an unprecedented amount of state building. The next section presents the research design and outlines how vignette research has been used to understand social norms. The main section provides the results of the research, which demonstrate that a constellation of expectations and norms is present within a given a context, wherein personal normative beliefs favoring integrity contend with beliefs about how other people behave that can support integrity-undermining practices. Three types of norms are key to explain integrity-undermining practices: (1) the 'descriptive' norm of people who fear losing out; (2) the 'social norm' based on kin community; and (3) a prudential norm based on personal expectations of the efficacy of formal procedures. The research demonstrates not just the complexity of integrity building but how the process can be held back by interdependent behaviors that require a whole set of different interventions to address. The concluding section discusses what these kinds of interventions could be.

## 2 Research Design and Method

Norms and expectations are important because they shape how people behave as members of a society and have a strong influence on how they choose to act in different situations, indicating what actions are appropriate or disapproved of (Bicchieri 2016). The empirical focus of this chapter is on the social norms and drivers that support or undermine integrity building in Kosovo's municipalities, a unit of analysis that is particularly favorable for exploring the norms that prescribe either deviant or integrity-supporting practices. First, despite being one of Europe's smallest places, Kosovo, since 1999, has been subject to the most intensive governance-building mission of recent times. Second, the municipal level is the primary empirical venue in which state and society interact, in other words, a domain whereby the impact of social norms is particularly significant. This is due to Kosovo being a decentralized state, and so core facets of people's

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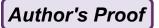
lives have been administered by, dealt with and delivered by municipalities; at the same time, society's relationship with the central state is rather distant, compounded by the lack of direct representation of citizens in the national parliament where members are elected by a nation-wide list system rather than representing a particular constituency.

### Integrity-Undermining and Supporting Practices

This research is interested in understanding the social drivers—the norms and beliefs—that influence how citizens relate to the state at the municipal level in Kosovo. It is interested in how these norms explain *integrity-supporting* practices and behaviors—and the obverse of these, which is not the absence of *integrity-supporting* practices but rather *alternative practices and behaviors* that can be considered to be *integrity-undermining* practices and behavior.

The empirical focus is on those key dimensions of the way citizens relate to the state at the municipal level: how citizens vote for municipal leaders; how they exercise voice; and how they access basic goods. Integrity in these three dimensions—the standards of how citizens should behave is set out in the rules and institutions of state. Integrity-supporting practices within voting are structured by the practice of people voting freely, with their conscience, and secretly, practices that are guaranteed in the basic provisions of the Law on Local Elections.<sup>3</sup> Integrity in exercising voice is predicated on the practice of institutionalized mechanisms so that all citizens can have a say and aims toward responsive government. The Law on Local Self-Government has accorded significant weight to accountability procedures, as well as participatory structures in decisionmaking, such as petitions, citizen committees or representation by assembly members. Access to resources is based upon equitable access and rules that are applied neutrally. Kosovo's constitutional preamble, for example, proclaims Kosovo to be a 'state of free citizens that will guarantee the rights of every citizen, civil freedoms and equality of all citizens before the law ... as a state of economic wellbeing and social prosperity'.

Integrity-undermining practices represent a broad category of behavior, often related to concepts such as informality, clientelism and corruption. Within the state-society dimensions of voting, voice and accessing goods, it is possible to identify the main integrity-undermining practices that are likely to be present. Vote swapping (i.e. swapping a vote for a good promised by a candidate) is the main integrity-undermining practice



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within the voting dimension. In terms of voice, rather than going through the formal channels, informal string pulling and favor is a key integrity-undermining practice. For accessing goods, collusion and clientelist exchanges between municipal officials, political leaders and citizens are important integrity-undermining practices (Jackson 2014).

Fifteen years of internationally led state building has aimed to instill integrity at the municipal level.<sup>5</sup> Yet, evidence suggests that integritysupporting practices generally do not define how people relate to the state, with informal, clientelist and corrupt practices still common, often defining how citizens relate to the state. A perception survey of over 1000 citizens suggested that integrity-undermining practices are still common (Jackson 2014). The survey revealed that the integrity-supporting practice of voting freely and according to the public good is barely relevant to how people vote or how politicians campaign. Rather, voting in Kosovo is based overwhelmingly on a clientelist logic: what a political candidate may personally offer voters. In fact, 85 percent of citizens believe that is voting is determined by personalized promises. Moreover, over 90 percent of people believe that it is only people with strong connections with political leaders who have their voice heard, suggesting informal connections are important for accessing goods. In addition, only 22 percent of Kosovar voters agreed that in general people are treated equally by political leaders, implying that integrity-undermining practices like string pulling are common (Jackson 2014).

Understanding this outcome by assessing the types of rules and institutions or their implementation is simply not enough—one has to understand those deeper roots of social and political behavior, an understanding of which is critical if we are to understand more clearly processes such as integrity building.

Different types of norms exist and the model presented below is adapted from Bicchieri's model of norms (Bicchieri 2016) (Fig. 1).

### Research Method: Vignettes

The aim is to explain the *type and nature* of the norms that explain the persistence of integrity-supporting or integrity-undermining practices at the municipal level in Kosovo. The main research method has been to deploy 'vignettes' as an instrument to tap into motivations about why people engage in integrity-supporting or integrity-undermining behavior. These vignette interviews with residents were complemented by additional interviews with key informants that sought to supplement and triangulate

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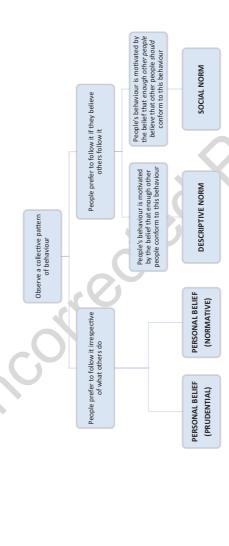


Fig. 1 Source: Adapted from Bicchieri (2016)



the information gained from the vignette research. Vignettes are 'short stories about hypothetical characters in specified circumstances, to whose situation the interviewee is invited to respond' (Finch 1987, p. 105). This research instrument is particularly appropriate because it provides an engaging and subtle instrument with which one can tap into highly complex behavioral frameworks and addresses the situational elements of behavioral choices because vignettes allow for different situations to be built into the research design, thus bringing choices nearer to the kind of situations which people face (Finch 1987). Vignettes are also useful to engage people about sensitive topics. As commentating on a vignette story is less personal that talking about direct experience, it is often viewed by participants as being less threatening and allays the possible intrusiveness of face-to-face interviews, creating a comfortable distance between the researcher and participant (Renold 2002).

During September and November 2013, 60 citizens across four different municipalities—Peja, Kamenica, Hani I Elezit and Skenderaj—were asked to respond to three different vignettes about real-life situations in Kosovo.<sup>6</sup> Within each of the three dimensions of state-society interaction (voting, voice and accessing resources), two choices were given, one reflecting integrity-supporting practice and one reflecting integrity-undermining practice. Respondents were also given the opportunity to offer a different response.

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## Vignettes

1. Voting

During election time, a political candidate approaches and suggests that if Besa and her family all vote for the candidate, then the candidate will be able to give one of Besa's family members a job in the municipality. What do you think Besa should do?

- Ignore the offer and ask the candidate what he/she is going to do to improve the lives of the people of the municipality.
- Take up the offer and tell the candidate that she/he has her vote.

### 2. Exercising voice

Besa's neighborhood has issues with water. Often the water is not always available and the situation is getting worse. Besa wants to solve this problem. What do you think Besa should do?

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206	•	Write a letter to the municipality or make an official petition to th
207		municipality.

 Phone the mayor or speak to someone who has a connection to the mayor.

### 3. Accessing resources

Besa's daughter wants to go to university and needs a municipal scholarship. The rules state that whoever has the best marks should get the scholarship, but the marks of Besa's daughter are not so strong. What should Besa do?

- Apply to the municipality for a scholarship.
  - Try to make connections with the political leaders of the municipality.

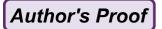
After each choice was made I sought to inquire deeper into why these were made that aimed to understanding the underlying norms and expectations behind the choices made. The research diagnostic deploys a model of collective behavior by Bicchieri that outlines different types of norms and expectations that could be identified.

- Prudential norm: what are the practical advantages/disadvantages of such a practice?
- Personal norm: what do you believe or think about the practice?
- Descriptive norm: what do you think other people do?
  - Social norm: what do you think other people think should be done?

All 60 interviews were collated, coded and analyzed for dominant themes, patterns and motivations that could shed light on explanations for why clientelism is engaged in.

### 3 Empirical Results

This section gives an overview of the results of the empirical investigation. Table 1 shows that the integrity-undermining practices were generally rejected, but then Table 2 breaks down the data to reveal something rather interesting: while most respondents rejected the integrity-undermining practice in each vignette, when the results are compiled from the perspective of the respondent, a finding emerges that suggests that the majority would still utilize informal and clientelist practices in certain situations when necessary.



**Table 1** Overview of responses to vignette scenarios

Integrity-undermining practice	Vote swapping	String pulling	Collusion	t1.2
Advised by respondent	43% (26)	27% (16)	18% (11)	t1.3

t1.1

t1.4

t2 1

t2.10

Source: Author interviews conducted between September and November 2013 (n = 60)

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 Table 2
 Overview of individual responses to vignette scenarios

Situations in which integrity-undermining practice is advised				vised	
Response:	Reject all	At least one	One	Two	Three
Total	35%	65%	38%	23%	2%
Age: 18-30	35%	65%	39%	22%	2%
31-49	25%	75%	38%	38%	0%
Over 50	54%	46%	38%	8%	0%
Female	38%	62%	33%	25%	4%
Male	33%	67%	42%	22%	0%

Source: Author interviews conducted between September and November 2013 (n = 60)

The first table demonstrates that overall the integrity-undermining practices were mostly rejected as a path for the characters to take—yet, it was not always an overwhelming rejection. Yet, these findings are complicated—and possibly undermined—by the finding presented in Table 2, which breaks down the data to reveal something rather interesting. While, most respondents rejected the integrity-undermining practice in each vignette, when the results are compiled from the perspective of the respondent, an interesting ambiguity emerges: overall, 65 percent of respondents suggested the protagonist should choose the integrity-undermining practice in at least one of the cases, while only 35 percent would reject the integrity-undermining practice in all the three cases.

Perhaps in most cases then the respondents would advise the protagonist to reject the integrity-undermining practice, but these figures suggest that a majority would still keep it in the repertoire of political behavior; in other words, the *majority would still utilize integrity-undermining practices in certain situations when necessary.* Social norms are key to explaining both categories of practice. The first part of this section explains the first category of behavior: the norms and expectations that support integrity-supporting practices. The second part is devoted to explaining the norms supporting integrity undermining practices.

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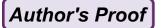
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### **Explaining Integrity-Supporting Practices**

Respondents who chose the integrity-supporting option were asked follow-up questions for why this was the case. An interesting pattern emerged whereby social or descriptive norms were not invoked to explain this choice; in other words, integrity-supporting practice was not motivated by the sense that other people also do it or that enough other people believe that it should be done. Moreover, prudential reasons, which may be practical given the situation, were also not used to justify behavior. Instead, personal normative beliefs were invoked, of which different strands emerged that nevertheless amounted to independent norms, in the sense that they 'involve undertaking certain actions regardless of what others do or expect us to do' (Bicchieri 2016, p. 58).

The first strand of normative belief was that pursuing integrityundermining practices would be detrimental to society as a whole, the public good. In rejecting to swap his vote for employment, a 65-year-old retired auto-mechanic from Kamenica neatly summed up this perspective, 'if everybody did it, it would be bad for everybody' (Resident Kamenica 2013a). A retired man from Hani I Elezit rejected vote swapping on the grounds that personal interest should not triumph over the public good: 'I do not care about having good conditions when no one else does. This is all about personal interests that will damage other parts of society' (Resident Hani I Elezit 2013). A young lady from Peja municipality talked about the socio-economic consequences, explaining that she would reject swapping her vote even if she was desperately poor because it would make 'poverty deeper' (Resident Peja 2013a). On a political theme, a young student from Skenderaj said Artan should reject the offer of employment because 'the road to the EU isn't paved that way' (Resident Skenderaj 2013a). Other respondents pointed to the perverse incentives created by integrity-undermining practices. A young lady from Skenderaj municipality, for example, urged Besa not to collude with politicians in order to get an unmerited scholarship because it is important to motivate people: 'it doesn't matter if it only happens once, it will motivate the daughter next time. You must stimulate everyone to move forward and develop themselves, then the entire state develops' (Resident Skenderaj 2013b).

Beyond a belief that it would harm the public good, respondents explain the rejection of integrity-undermining practices in terms of them contravening the notion of fairness in society. Asked why the character in the scenario should reject collusion, a 35-year-old male from Kamenica



replied simply: 'she doesn't deserve it' (Resident Kamenica 19.20.13). Another male respondent from Kamenica of a similar age suggested that: 'If Artan creates connections, others will lose out. It is not fair, especially as poor people with children will lose out' (Resident Kamenica 2013b). A woman from Kamenica municipality echoed this point: 'You would be taking the place of someone who is qualified and that is not right' (Resident Kamenica 2013c).

Some respondents, albeit less commonly, immediately identified corruption within the vignettes. In reference to the vote-swapping scenario, a retired university professor in Peja municipality suggested: 'this is corruption and personal gain... I would not accept because the candidate is trying to corrupt me' (Resident Peja 2013b). A younger student from Skenderaj put it in more sophisticated political terms: 'it is corruption because the candidates are placing pre-conditions on voting for them' (Resident Skenderaj 2013c). Another student from Peja suggested that 'it is vote theft' (Resident Peja 2013c), while an older resident from the same municipality suggested 'I would want them to put them in jail for making offers such as these' (Resident Peja 2013d).

This pattern of responses demonstrates the importance of personal normative beliefs. When pressed about how these beliefs may be reconsidered in light of the behavior of others, no respondent changed their mind but rather reiterated a steadfast commitment to this personal belief.

# **Explaining Integrity-Undermining Practices**

Still, as the summary overview of the responses suggested, the majority would still utilize integrity-undermining practices in certain situations when necessary. It is this interesting finding that needs to be thoroughly investigated and the rest of the chapter is dedicated to explaining this ambiguity. Three types of norms are key to explain the category of integrity-undermining practice: (1) the 'descriptive' norm of people who fear losing out; (2) the 'social norm' based on kin community; and (3) a prudential norm based on personal expectations of the efficacy of formal procedures.

### Descriptive Norm: Everyone Else Is Doing It

The first main explanation for why people engage with integrityundermining practices is that it that it is motivated by the expectation that everyone else is engaged in these practices. Moreover, though descriptive

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norms do not normally face social sanction, such as social ostracism, the *material cost* of not following this norm was highlighted. The expectation that most people engage in integrity-undermining practices was rooted in two different expectations of other people's behavior: first that other residents are likely to engage in these practices and, second, that key political agents within the municipality, political leaders and municipal officials, also do.

Interviews revealed that people believe that other residents are engaged in political behavior, such as vote swapping and string pulling, and so there are no potential allies to fight against integrity-undermining practices. One man in Kamenica municipality said in response that vote selling and clientelist offers of employment 'happen everywhere in Kosovo—it's ordinary' (Resident Kamenica 2013d). In Skenderaj municipality, a local sculptor said that in an ideal world he would reject the offer but in 'reality, of course this is different. Most people would take up the offer of the job from the politician. In fact, 99 percent of people would take this offer' (Resident Skenderaj 2013d). Reinforcing the expectation that everyone else engages in integrity-undermining practices is a pattern of discourse which seemed to lament how people have in recent years become more inwardly concerned or as a housewife from Kamenica put it, 'less sensitive towards others' (Resident Kamenica 2013e) and more likely to pursue their own interests. Interviewees described the behavior of fellow residents in terms of a new culture, a culture that has emerged after the 1999 war and is qualitatively different from what preceded it. A dentist technician from Peja suggested:

Everything has changed. There isn't any love between each other anymore. I helped people during the war, no one cares anymore. In the past [90's] I didn't suffer for anything. Even people were more loving toward one another. Today it's all about everyone for themselves. (Resident Peja 2015)

Because people believe that everyone else engages in integrity-undermining practices and rarely act in a manner befitting the public good, these are thought to be systemic, a view expressed by many residents. A 34-year-old university educated male said that, 'yes, the situation isn't fair. It's corruption but the *whole system* isn't fair' (Resident Skenderaj 2013e). In Peja municipality, a retired university professor said that he would like to use the formal routes to apply for the scholarship but 'in reality everyone attempts to do this by trying to make connections' (Resident Peja 2013b). A 35-year-old man from Peja explained that he



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knows that phoning the mayor directly in order to receive help with his water problem is 'not a good thing' but he also knows:	370 371
You really can't do much otherwise. I know that if I knew the mayor I would be more successful. I know how many people who don't even wait in line in the municipality because they know the mayor. Without connections there is nothing. (Resident Peja 2013d)	372 373 374 375
Yet, interviews also revealed that perceptions of the political agents in charge of the municipality were largely negative, meaning there is very little trust in the institutions to function in a way which will meet the daily challenges that people face. People's repeated interactions with the municipality have crystallized a dominant perception that the distribution of resources seems to be based on informal and clientelist practice rather than on any public or formal criteria.  During my research, people explained how, due to the primacy of connection-based decision-making, the municipality has come to be seen as an unpredictable source of help. A head of a household in Skenderaj explained how, when the municipality were installing new sewage infrastructure in his village, the families at the two ends of the street were connected but he couldn't get connections for his house because 'our house is sort of in the middle, and we didn't know anyone in the municipality so we got left out' (Resident Skenderaj 2013b). A gardener from the Peja region described his experience of the municipality:	376 377 378 379 380 381 382 383 384 385 386 387 388 389 390
In the present politicians only think about themselves [later on in discussions] The politicians from the municipality say that they are helping us. However the mosque sends food and flour. I have sent a request for a year now just for the materials to build my house, nothing has happened. The municipality even stopped my social welfare assistance. (Resident Peja 2013d)  The case of the gardener becomes more extreme:  Every Tuesday I go the municipality but the Mayor only sees people he has connections with. Security guards block my way and tell me I cannot go further into the municipality. I am even shouted at by these people. (Resident Peja 2013d)	392 393 394 395 396 397 398 399 400 401
The distrust of local politicians, especially, was expressed vigorously during interviews. Sometimes, politicians were castigated as 'selfish' in	402 403

politics 'just to get to rich' or even as 'liars'. But, the dominant negative

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characteristic of politicians that was cited was that rather than being utterly corrupt, it was believed politicians worked for their own interests and not for the public good or that looking after the people is a secondary aim for politicians. A young student from Peja town summed up this view: 'presently the public interest comes second' (Resident Peja 2013a). A teacher in a school of small village in Peja municipality, who has much experience of the how the municipality operates, declared, 'I only trust poor people. Those touched by government cannot be trusted' (Resident Peja 2013e).

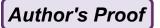
Despite all the democratic discourse that has accompanied the development of the Kosovan state, formal institutions are beleaguered by a credibility gap as many respondents revealed that they simply do not trust politicians to be stewards of the public good. In the absence of this trust, people then seek engage in informal, clientelist and corrupt practices merely to get things done.

Moreover, not pursuing these practices comes at a cost. Unlike social norms, this cost is not tied to a social sanction, such as embarrassment or pariah status, but rather a material sanction as respondents described that they gain little from abstaining from or resisting integrity-undermining practices and the costs of doing so may be too great to bear. A young housewife from Peja municipality explained not engaging in clientelist behavior can make the difference of her young son attending pre-school:

Sometimes maybe you don't want to go into connections, but you do. For example to get my son into a pre-school I had to do it by connections. There is nobody investing properly in the municipality and so everything is being done by nepotism. Everyone [politicians] is working for themselves, there is no sense of community. (Resident Peja 2013f)

From her own experience, she also went on to admit that connection is crucial even for vital medical aid: 'If you do not know anyone, even in a hospital, you can't do much. My child fell from the second floor once, and the emergency services didn't react for four days. You can't achieve or solve anything without connections' (Resident Peja 2013f).

Unsure that the politicians and the broader population will look out for you and knowing that the system is based on clientelist practice, people feel trapped in the system. This explains why personal normative beliefs may be subverted by this descriptive norm. Indeed, some respondents explained how they did not approve of integrity-undermining practices but felt it was necessary. For example, a young male student from Kamenica



municipality suggested in response to the scholarship scenario that the integrity-undermining practice 'is reality in Kosovo and Kamenica. If you have connections then you get the scholarship. I know it's wrong but this is the way it is' (Resident Kamenica 2013f). Likewise, a businessman in Skenderaj suggested the first choice of going through the formal route will 'never work': 'It would be nice to apply and not be a 'soldier of politics' but things do not work like this' (Resident Skenderaj 2013f).

The most dominant explanation for why people keep integrity-undermining practices in their repertoire was because citizens revealed that they simply do not trust the other actors, namely other citizens and politicians, to refrain from such practices and therefore feel trapped in the system; hence, even if people object, they engage in integrity-undermining practices because they fear losing out if they do not. The reasoning can be summed up as: given everyone else does it, I may lose out if I don't do it—why therefore shouldn't I? (Persson et al. 2013, p. 457)

The Logic of Social Norms: Kin Communities and Mutual Obligations A separate strand of discourse emerged during the vignette interviews that constituted a social norm. Respondents emphasized how the integrity-undermining practices should be taken up, or are at least acceptable, if they benefited one's immediate kin community—that is kinship structures and immediate neighborhood or village ties.

Kin communities embody a sense of mutual obligations and, while many traditional customs in Kosovo have been displaced, the *sense of obligation* to the kin community still lives on, which, for at least some, acts as a strong social norm that can persuade people to enter into integrity-undermining practice. Such a social norm is particularly strong in Kosovo, where pioneering anthropologists Bert Backer and Janet Reineck have demonstrated how for Kosovan Albanians associational life is not configured by class, religion, ideology or profession but, first and foremost, by the extended family; this kinship structure, however, extends to a slightly larger association, the immediate village or neighborhood (Backer 2003; Reineck 1993).

Kinship structures are not just extensive but have been traditionally intimate and tightly knit to the extent that anthropologists have referred to the family as a 'corporate entity':

The family is corporate group par excellence: property is held in common, the group acts as one body in the face of disputes with outsiders, there is a

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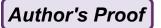
leader who represents the group to other groups ... the structure has, in a sense, a life of its own independent of the members. (Reineck 1993, p. 55)

Though kin structures are central to the social fabric, ties and participation occur beyond the family to the immediate village (in more rural municipalities) or the neighborhood (in more urban municipalities). Villages and neighborhoods tend to be tightly knit, partly because members of the extended family often live in the same village or neighborhood but also because they provide a setting for interfamily cooperation. These relations beyond the extended family are very intimate and, rather tellingly, members of the immediate community are referred to with kin-like labels. In an interview with a village elder in Koperinice village, for example, he referred to non-family members as 'our niece and nephews' (Village Elder 2013).

The view that the extended family and immediate community are the central pillars of social life because they are bounded by mutual obligations is corroborated by some contemporary anthropological work from 2011 in the village of Isniq where 'kinship ties seems to be still very strong and faithfully preserved' and 'regardless of geographic distances, relationships between relatives appear to be very well preserved, even if some of them have gone to Pristina, Mitrovica, Istog or elsewhere more than 40 years ago' (Latifi 2012, p. 19).

Obligations to the kin community matter. During interviews, there was a sense among residents that it is perfectly fine to request special favors from kin-community members. For example, a painter from Skenderaj municipality said Artan should accept the offer of a job from a political candidate so that 'another family member can get something out of this' (Resident Skenderaj 2013g). A 34-year-old university educated male said in response to the vote-swapping scenario that 'if someone from his family gets a job at the municipality then they could get services done for us' (Resident Skenderaj 2013e). Likewise, a young man from a village in Peja municipality explained that utilizing kin-community connections can be a valuable way of 'getting help', especially if the formal processes do not work:

Our village elder is from [the political party] PDK and most of the village supports PDK. The PDK has helped us out in the past, for example, the village has the best school in the region. We have gained a lot from having this special connection ... so I would advise everyone else to make connections. (Resident Peja 2013g)



Citizens often answered in discussions that it was natural to find a kincommunity member in the municipality to help with a problem. In response to fixing the water problem, a man from Kamenica municipality suggested 'connections are much more effective. If I know the brother or sister then I would call' (Resident Kamenica 19.20.13). For the municipal worker, prioritizing the kin community cannot always be served through the formal channels and so often they would have to push aside formal rules and procedures to help with the issue. Illustrating this, a Kosovan director of the Swiss-funded civil society program explained to me that he recently needed a document from the municipality for a visa application but he was concerned that municipality may be too slow:

So I asked my father if he knew anyone at the municipality. I couldn't believe it, he found a 'long lost cousin,' someone who I have never met, but is, you know, part of the network, and it worked. I'm not sure how he did it but I received the visa very quickly. (NGO director 2015)

This example also illustrates how long-lost cousins, even those you have never met, can be commandeered to support the network as long as they are part of the bloodline or have ties to the village.

Interviews, therefore, revealed that supporting kin-community members through integrity-undermining practices are seemingly well tolerated, and the weight of the evidence collected suggests that they are not isolated or unrelated instances but reflect a norm that carries significant weight and is well understood across society. An interesting case study revealing the importance of this norm relates to the experience of the Vetvendojse party who now govern in Pristina municipality after their victory in the 2014 elections. The party itself had stood on a platform of good governance and had issued explicitly anti-clientelist messages during the campaign. Yet, having been in power for over a year, it seems that the norm of family obligations can distort even the most zealous commitments to good governance. A political analyst, who has strong links with the leading members of the party, explained:

The family obligations are still very strong, even here in Pristina. Ask some of the Vetvendojse guys. Though they are all against clientelism, they still feel the pressure to serve the family. These guys are from urbane families in Pristina. But now they are in power, they get phone calls asking for jobs for cousins. And some of them have had to give in to these requests. (Political Analyst 2015)

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Not adhering to this norm can bring social costs. For a politician or municipal worker not adhering to this norm risks not just material but emotional consequences, such as social discomfort or disappointing one's immediate family. Indeed, the key mechanism that explains why obligations to the kin community persist seems because it is strongly tied to self-identity. A Kosovan advisor to an embassy of an EU member state summed up the general view:

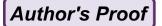
Solidarity still exists in Kosovo but it is about the family first; we just cannot give beyond family until family is taken care of first. Few people have the luxury of being able to give beyond the family. I have my own family to take care of here in Pristina. But also I am paying all the bills for my aunt and sister and I pay for nephew's education too. This is a natural obligation, rooted in Albanian tradition. (Political Adviser 2015)

The use of the word 'tradition' by the advisor to explain something of contemporary importance chimes with those anthropologists who have emphasized how Albanians' personal and collective identity is primarily forged in terms of symbols derived from the past (Reineck 1993, p. 104). Reineck explains that faced with a history of marginalization, Kosovan Albanians have seized upon 'tradition as the guide to personhood ... customs are considered valid and indisputable simply by virtue of being of the past' (Reineck 1993, p. 104). This equally applies to the importance of kinship obligations. A young writer from Kamenica municipality explained how:

Individuals and families are the most important unit and there is little sense of community. Blood relations are most important. This is because we have been trying to survive and through that process, we know that the family is the only one who can protect you in the end. (Writer 2013)

Tradition as a force that shapes contemporary self-understanding can extend well into the urban elite of Pristina. A young US-educated advisor for an international NGO, when asked why family is so important (he tells me he visits his family village each weekend), draws on a historical narrative:

Never in our history could we Albanians rely on anyone else. We had to build these big houses, they looked like fortresses. In Albanian language we have no word for home, in the broader sense, only house because for centuries,



outside the family house there was nothing, no security or friendship. Our history is about not trusting outsiders. (Project Officer 2015)

The levity of the norm is even tied up in the linguistic structure of local dialect through the traditional concept of the 'retch'. Literally translated as a 'circle', retch is taken to mean the social circle or moral community of which people feel part (Reineck 1993, p. 189). Each 'retch' is said to be underpinned by its own norms and expectations of appropriate behavior, norms which as we have seen certainly extend to condoning clientelist-style behavior; indeed, linguistically, retch and 'connection' are used interchangeably in common parlance.

In summing up this section, for at least some residents the sense of obligation to the kin community acts as a strong norm that can persuade people to eschew integrity-supporting practices. Perhaps this finding is not surprising: many scholars have emphasized the importance of kincommunity obligations in shaping the rhythm of politics (Banfield 1955). Fukuyama, drawing on evolutionary biology, argues that kin-community norms are in fact default modes of sociability: 'the desire to pass resources on to kin is one of the most enduring constants in human politics' as 'all human beings gravitate towards the favoring of kin and friends (reciprocal altruism) with whom they have exchanged favors unless strongly incentivized to do otherwise' (Fukuyama 2014, p. 43).

### Prudential Norms

During the vignettes, another important theme emerged: integrity-undermining practices were often advised because they reflected an informal and personalized style of politics that is more supportive for basic strategies of survival and 'getting on' in life. These strategies, which Migdal has referred to as 'blueprints for action', are essential in a relatively poor and uncertain country like Kosovo for navigating challenging circumstances, whether poverty, unemployment or post-conflict dislocation, but also important for providing opportunities and even upward mobility (Migdal 1988, p. 27). These strategies are 'homemade' and improvised, relying on personal connections or trading favors, and forged through day-to-day experiences, local social knowledge and common sense.

Viewing political dynamics through the lens of the daily techniques of survival and 'getting ahead' helps clarify an important dynamic within integrity building: the degree to which governance reforms are taken up is related to the degree to which they are able 'to deliver key components for

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individuals' strategies of survival' (Migdal 1988, p. 27). This section demonstrates that integrity-undermining practices persist because they are perceived as a more supportive ecology for these 'blueprints for action' than the integrity-building model.

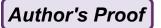
Interviews revealed an important quality of informal and clientelist networks: they are utilized because the chain that links information about the problem to the problem solver is shorter and more fluid as it is integrated in general channels of sociability. The alternative is to go through the formal procedures of the integrity-building model: wait in line at the municipality, fill out a form and wait for the bureaucratic processes to finish. Consider this example of an NGO worker who needed to renew the identity card of the NGO director:

Actually it was quite serious as the municipality threatened a huge fine. But, there were mitigating circumstances. I took the informal route with the official because it's easier just to speak to them and to explain why the director hadn't renewed his identity card. In the end, we got sorted. This wouldn't have happened through filling in all these forms. Because the official gave me his time, in return my friend helped him out with a little problem he had. (NGO director 2015)

The broader ecology of informality and connections offers an infrastructure of information generation and sharing that is perceived to be more efficient than that offered by the integrity-building model. A resident of Pristina explained to me how this works:

Generally, you would ring someone you know who works in the municipality, a cousin perhaps. Even if the connection doesn't work in the department that deals with the particular problem, he or she knows will have a connection in the relevant department, a family member or friend perhaps. They meet over lunch or coffee, then you get a call back in the afternoon with an update of what is going on. (Citizen Pristina 2013)

Interviews also revealed that there is a perception that the alternative integrity-building model is rather slow and these cumbersome procedures are inappropriate for the type of problems that citizens expect municipalities to address. Discussions often emphasized the drawbacks of the rules and procedures of the formal model, with respondents associating them with inertia and onerous. Connections help us 'avoid bureaucracy', as a 26-year-old woman from Kamenica suggested (Resident Kamenica



2013d), or can mean 'the problem is solved more quickly' (Resident Kamenica 2013g). A builder from Skenderaj municipality explained that with the formal route 'you can make requests once, twice, three times and then maybe it reaches the higher level' but if you use personal connections, 'your problem will be solved quickly' (Resident Skenderaj 2013f). Integrity-undermining practices can be particularly appropriate for the urgent natures of the challenges that people face in complex, post-conflict settings like Kosovo.

Another advantage of informality is that it provides for flexible governance because it widens the scope of discretion. The mayor of Decan municipality, a popular politician, rather openly explained to me how with regard to employment decisions, discretion beyond the formal rules is part of the process.

Author: How do you choose who gets jobs in the

municipality?

Mayor of Decan: 'Well there are rules but I also take other things into

account. For example, I give jobs to poor families or those who have lost people in the war'. (Mayor Decan

2013)

From the outside perspective, this discretion may represent the absence of the rule of law; from the inside, it is merely a way of tailoring solutions to problems, such as family poverty, a flexibility that may not be possible under strict adherence to the formal system, as it could contravene equal treatment, for example.

Illustrating the pervasive nature of these techniques is an insight relayed to me by a UK-educated Kosovan advisor to an international development agency, who described these blueprints as being part of a general 'lifestyle' across Kosovo. He told me that when he pays his bills at the outlet for the electricity company, he unconsciously starts chatting with the man behind the counter:

I will ask him, which village is your family from, or which neighborhood do you live in. I will be seeking out a connection between us. Maybe I will chat with him for ten minutes. Maybe we do have a connection somehow and he can make my life a little easier with the bills, then I help him with something in the future. Yes it sounds crazy to do this just to pay some bills. But it is our way of surviving, of getting things done. This is how we [Kosovan



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Albanians] are ... always seeking out new ways to get ahead a little. It's not as calculating as it seems, everyone does it. It's a kind of lifestyle. (Development Professional 2015)

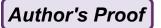
This belief in the viability of informal practices is partly shaped by the experience of many Kosovo Albanians' experience with a parallel state in the 1990s, which relied on social networks for the provision of public goods. Banished from state educational facilities, Kosovan Albanians relied on social networks to set up make-shift schools in private buildings, such as empty houses, warehouses, garages, basements and mosques that served as make-shift high schools (Clark 2000). Informal social networks were also crucial for the parallel health system operated by the Mother Theresa Association (MTA). In establishing clinics, the MTA relied entirely on the support of local businesspeople for the premises and the equipment. The system more generally relied on solidarity as social networks were galvanized to find volunteer nurses and doctors. While never entirely adequate, by 1998 there were 91 clinics and 7000 volunteers and all treatments were free (Clark 2000, p. 108).

Summing up, when state building started the broader political setting was structured according to an informal and connection-based system in which Kosovan Albanians forged strategies for survival and getting ahead. Yet, the resilience of this framework is also explained by the perception among residents that informal methods *continue to be* more effective than the integrity-building model. In this respect, the evidence supports those scholars who emphasize the relationship between social problem-solving networks and clientelist networks (Auyero 2001; Szwarcberg 2012).

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### 4 Conclusion

This chapter has explained the generally poor record of integrity building in Kosovo's municipalities. It has gone beyond lines of enquiry that assess the type of rules or the organizational inputs as explaining outcomes in anticorruption or state-building efforts to focus on the underlying challenge of social norms inimical to integrity building. In doing so, it has conceptualized informal, clientelist and corrupt practices not as isolated incidents or individual transactions but as inextricable from a broader framework of social norms and expectations. The main implication of the research is that introducing formal rules and institutions is simply not enough—integrity building requires a whole range of interventions that address countervailing norms and induce changes in the social fabric.



Interdependent behaviors—those that take into account how others behave—are of high importance as they can often trump independent normative beliefs, with a broad section of respondents explaining how they didn't approve of corruption-inducing practices but felt it was necessary, a view summed up phrases such as 'I know it's wrong but this is the way it is'. Two key interdependent behaviors have been identified: the 'fear of losing out' norm and the 'kin-community' norm. In the 'fear of losing out' perspective, citizens revealed they simply do not trust other citizens and politicians to refrain from integrity-undermining practices and therefore rationalize that they may lose out in terms of accessing political goods if they refrain from using these practices. The 'kin-community' perspective was based on the social norm that one ought to support immediate community to avoid a social sanction. This conclusion discusses how the two norms underpinning integrity-undermining practices may be changed.

Shifting norms to cultivate supportive interdependent behaviors require more than changing personal beliefs. As these norms depend on how other people behave, shifting behavior requires that 'the participant must also be sure that its abandonment will not be followed by negative sanctions. People face a double credibility problem here: they must believe that the information they receive about others' true beliefs is accurate, and they must also believe that everyone is committed to change their ways' (Bicchieri 2016, p. 44). Bicchieri therefore asserts that all interdependent behavior therefore requires three conditions to change: (1) people must have shared reasons to change; (2) their social expectations of others must collectively change; (3) and actions have to be coordinated.

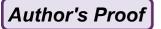
The first of Bicchieri's conditions is that people must have shared reasons to change. Persuasion via factual information about the costs of integrity-undermining practices is key for behavioral change, which in turn puts an emphasis on careful messaging. Information about the aggregate costs of integrity-undermining behavior to the public good—how it affects public service provision, livelihoods and social trajectories—can provide a persuasive foundation for people to change behavior (Hoffmann and Patel 2017). Such information should be specific: an analysis of the costs of integrity-undermining practices for each municipality could provide salient facts people could connect with. On the other hand, personalized attacks or moralizing messaging can create apathy and reinforce people's sense that corrupt practices are widespread, dissuading a change in behavior.

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New facts and information are, however, not enough for interdependent behavior change—how can people believe that other people's behavior will change? Rothstein argues that how people behave is shaped by a mental model of how other actors in society are likely to behave (Rothstein 2005, 2011). Mental models are maps that are 'short hand' for the kind of underlying social norms operating in a society: so, for example, if a citizen's mental model of society is dominated by a sense that the rules of game are corrupt, this structures how they are likely to behave. Rothstein argues that people make strong inferences about how the world works from their interaction with public officials; in other words, public officials send strong signals about what kind of game is being played in society. Reducing integrity-undermining practices therefore 'requires strong signals that the government agency in question has changed' (Rothstein 2005, p. 166). Political signaling from municipal leaders that integrityundermining practices will no longer be tolerated could engender a new set of expectations of how the municipality operates, providing a reimagining of mental models. Here, the 'integrity-building' leadership of municipal mayors could be key.

Beyond this, collective deliberation can be important in communicating the likelihood of a collective shift in behavior: 'Discussion helps to change our personal normative and factual beliefs and to observe that others' beliefs are changing, too. The process of belief change becomes a collective one, as we change our minds together' (Bicchieri 2016, p. 166). In Kosovo's municipalities, formal channels of collective deliberation, such as municipal assemblies, may be constrained in what they can achieve, especially as they are often politicized. Alternative forms of collective deliberation, such as informal citizen councils, could be explored.

The third of Bicchieri's conditions is that there should be a mechanism to coordinate behavior away from integrity-undermining practices. As integrity-undermining activities were rationalized because they seem to create more effective and efficient channels to the municipality, reforms to processes and procedures within municipalities could be important, especially as they can be considered slow and cumbersome. Shifting this impression then would create more supportive expectations of integrity. Insights from behavioral economics suggest that individuals can be encouraged to engage in 'positive' behavior if procedures are straightforward and undemanding to respond to and comply with (Hoffmann and Patel 2017). Greater thought into how procedures and processes are designed in municipalities, with an emphasis on clarity and parsimony,



could coordinate the reshaping of people's beliefs. New modes of delivery, such as 'one-stop shops', may be important in this regard.

Bicchieri identifies trendsetters as another important mechanism for coordinating collective behavior (Bicchieri 2016). Trendsetters are 'first movers', breaking free from established norms in a way that can inspire others to follow suit. In Kosovo's municipalities, those who can set these transformative examples are not only political leaders but civil society and youth leaders as well as traditional holders of influence such as village elders and religious leaders. Effective support to this vanguard can be channeled through leadership programs and coordinating mechanisms that can bring trendsetters together may also be helpful. Media can also raise the profiles of trendsetters.

Notes

1. Nestled in south-eastern Europe (SEE), Kosovo is bordered in the southwest by Albania, in the south by Macedonia, in the east and north by Serbia and in the north-west by Montenegro. A 2015 estimate states that the total population is 1,870,981 with around 92 percent of that number identifying as Albanian. Around 5–6 percent of the population consists of the Serb minority that are mostly concentrated north of the Ibar river, adjacent to the Kosovo-Serbian border, but some also reside in small areas in southern Kosovo. The remainder of the population comprises the Roma, Bosniaks, Turks and Gorani minorities.

- 2. Author calculations OECD database http://stats.oecd.org/qwids/#; In 2009, for instance, the international community dedicated \$345 per person on international state-building efforts in Kosovo, an amount that towers over the aid spent on state-building activities in those other, more high-profile efforts in Afghanistan (\$62 per capita) and Iraq (\$41 per capita) and dwarfs that allocated to other countries in the SEE region (after Kosovo, Bosnia-Herzegovina receives the second highest at \$44).
- 3. Law No. 03/L-072 on Local Elections in the Republic of Kosovo 3.
- 4. Law Nr. 03/L-040 on Local Self-Government.
- 5. In 2009, the largest projects within the public sector policy and administrative management category were directed at the municipal level, for example, Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development microdata. For example, an EU-funded project (€0.8m per annum) has aimed to 'establish a more efficient, effective and accountable local government with emphasis on better management, consistent service delivery and improved relations with citizens'. Other development agencies have supported a variety of interventions aiming to increase citizen participation and raise awareness on

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- democratic issues, including the 'Effective Municipalities Initiative' program supported by the United States Agency for International Development and the 'Support to Decentralisation in Kosovo' project implemented by the United Nations Development Program.
- 6. The interviews were anonymous and so citations for the interview take the initials of municipality (P, K, H, SK) and the position in which they were interviewed. All respondents were interviewed personally in their homes and in their first language (i.e. Albanian or Serbian). The sample was 'proportionally stratified' according to age and gender. The population of respondents was all those people eligible to engage with the state, that is all adults over 18. The survey took place across four municipalities. This number was chosen to ensure coverage of municipalities in different regions and of different sizes. Within each municipality, sampling took place across the different neighborhoods that were identified beforehand. Studies about sensitive topics are prone to social desirability bias—that is, when people do not give honest answers in order to present themselves in a socially desirable light. Asking people to respond from the vignettes' characters' perspective rather than on the basis of their own lives can reduce the effects of social desirability bias (Hughes and Huby 2004). Pre-tests of the vignettes specifically focused on whether the survey generated any emotional or psychological harm through requesting feedback from respondents about how they felt during and after the vignettes.

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# **Author Queries**

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AU3	Please provide caption for Figure 1.	
AU4	Please check the output of lists below the heading 'Vignettes'.	
AU5	Please check the output of Table 2.	
AU6	Please check if edit to the sentence starting "But, the dominant negative" is okay.	
AU7	The citation "Szwarcberg 2011" has been changed to "Szwarcberg 2012" to match the author name/date in the reference list. Please check if the change is fine in this occurrence and modify the subsequent occurrences, if necessary.	
AU8	'n.d.' (no date) has been added in the Interview "Resident Kamenica. 19.20.13. n.d. 8. In Person, 19 September 2013." Please check.	