

THE TIES BEHIND UNDUE INFLUENCE

The Role of Personal Connections and Revolving Doors in Political Corruption

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RESPOND
Rescuing Democracy from Political Corruption in Digital Societies

The Ties Behind Undue Influence

The Role of Personal Connections and Revolving Doors in Political Corruption

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1. OBJECTIVE

Personal connections (PC) and revolving doors (RD) constitute a **structural component of contemporary corruption systems**. Far from isolated misconducts, these practices form part of enduring and often institutionalized mechanisms through which private interests infiltrate public decision-making (Mattoni et al., 2026). By exploiting relational networks and blurred boundaries between public institutions and private interests, public officials can establish influence channels that undermine impartiality, shape regulatory outcomes, and impact public trust (Hwang, 2024).

This study, carried out under Work Package 5, Task 5.1 of the RESPOND project*, pursues the following objectives:

1. **Introduce a newer conceptualization** of personal connections (PC) and revolving doors (RD) practices;
2. **Through the application of the new PC and RD conceptual framework** to a repository of real-world case studies, analyse:
   - 2.1. **the key drivers and enablers** behind PC and RD practices;
   - 2.2. **the most common schemes and modus operandi** of PC and RD;
   - 2.3. **the legal and institutional loopholes** that enable PC and RD practices.

Together, these objectives support the understanding of how PC and RD can serve as structural mechanisms of undue influence within contemporary political corruption systems.

The study is structured as follows: **Section 2** will provide a review of the literature and a conceptualization of the phenomena. **Section 3** will describe the methodology. **Section 4** will discuss the main findings of the case-study analysis, and **Section 5** will provide some conclusions and discuss policy and research implications.

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2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUALIZATION

Corruption is commonly defined as the abuse of entrusted power for private gain (Rose-Ackerman, 1978), a formulation that has shaped decades of research across different disciplines. While early approaches focused on overt forms of corruption (such as bribery, misappropriation, or obstruction of justice), more recent studies emphasize a broader spectrum of practices operating within the grey zone between legality and illegality. These include lobbying, political financing, media capture, revolving doors, and personal connections, mechanisms that allow private actors to influence public decision-making without necessarily violating explicit legal provisions. Such practices blur the boundaries between legitimate interest representation and undue influence, often exploiting legal loopholes and limited oversight.

Within this wider grey-zone area, PC and RD are particularly relevant because they constitute relational and structural channels through which undue influence by private interests can infiltrate public institutions. Rather than being isolated exchanges between self-interested actors, corruption is often a socially complex phenomenon rooted in micro-level relationships and broader social structures (Jancsics, 2025) such as kinship ties (Fazekas et al., 2016), loyalty networks (Yates & Cardin-Trudeau, 2021), institutional familiarity (Houston & Ferris, 2015), or career transitions, which allow certain actors to gain privileged access to decision-making processes and steer public resources or policies toward specific private interests (Hwang, 2024).

Definitions

PCs refer to relational ties (direct or indirect) linking public officials to private actors. This link can be used to secure preferential access, protection, and influence over the public decision-making process (Mattoni et al., 2026). The literature identifies two different configurations:

- **Direct involvement**, such as firm ownership, corporate board membership, or political affiliations (El Ammari, 2023; Tsai et al., 2021; Velasco et al., 2021).
- **Indirect involvement**, i.e., link through intermediaries such as relatives, friends, or associates, often channelled via nepotism, cronyism (informal practices that reward loyalists or long-standing associates regardless of merit), or culturally embedded networks such as guanxi (Asiimwe, 2013; Kaushal et al., n.d.; Kim & Whitaker, 2013; Luo, 2006; Pan & Tian, 2020).

While these configurations are widely acknowledged as resources exploited to secure preferential access or shape policy outcomes, the literature typically subsumes them under broad labels such as political connections. What is missing is a clear and systematic typology distinguishing their forms, mechanisms, and effects.

RDs, on the other hand, describe the movement of individuals between public office and private-sector positions within the same sector (Avril & Korkea-aho, 2025; Hernández-Aguado & Chilet-Rosell, 2018; Houston & Ferris, 2015; Hwang, 2024; Strickland, 2019; Yates & Cardin-Trudeau, 2021). These movements can take multiple forms:

- public officials moving into private roles (revolving out) (Brezis, 2017; Houston & Ferris, 2015),
- private actors appointed to public office (revolving in) (Houston & Ferris, 2015; Yates & Cardin-Trudeau, 2021),
- cyclical trajectories that reinforce ties across sectors (Yates, 2015).

Unlike general public–private circulation, RDs imply continuity within the same sector, allowing firms to acquire insider knowledge and privileged access to information and resources (Maillet et al., 2019), while also enabling former officials to maintain informal leverage over colleagues and institutions (Hong & Lim, 2016; Yates & Cardin-Trudeau, 2021).

The revolving door literature, within broader debates on corruption and informal influence, often contrasts two main explanatory perspectives. The human capital explanation, focused on technical skills and expertise (Blanes I Vidal et al., 2012; Kong et al., 2019; Yates & Cardin-Trudeau, 2021), with the relational capital explanation, centred on social ties, networks, and access (Blanes I Vidal et al., 2012; LaPira & Thomas, 2014). From a criminological perspective, this second dimension can be interpreted through the broader concept of social embeddedness, which emphasises how economic and political actions are embedded in networks of social relations (Granovetter, 1985). Research on organised crime shows that

such relational embeddedness facilitates access to resources, information, and opportunities for cooperation (Kleemans & van de Bunt, 1999). Similarly, studies on corruption demonstrate how kinship ties and informal networks provide a social infrastructure for organising and sustaining corrupt transactions, particularly in contexts where formal safeguards are weak (Jancsics, 2025). In these settings, personal obligations toward family members, friends, or trusted associates can operate as relational mechanisms that enable preferential treatment and informal exchanges.

Within this perspective, PCs and RDs can be understood as mechanisms through which socially embedded ties enable influence, preferential access, and the circulation of resources across the boundary between public authority and private interests.

Together, PC and RD practices can significantly impact policymaking, creating conditions that can conduct to regulatory capture and biased resource allocation (Hwang, 2024). Even when not formally illegal, they thrive in grey areas, where rules on conflicts of interest are vague and oversight is limited (Avril & Korkea-aho, 2025).

Research gap

Despite their relevance, PC and RD remain insufficiently conceptualized, limiting the understanding of their role as structural components of corruption. First, PC and RD are usually referred to as a dichotomy, although some contributions show that RD trajectories can operate as a source of political connections, privileged access, and relational influence (Houston & Ferris, 2015; LaPira & Thomas, 2014; Yates & Cardin-Trudeau, 2021). Second, while the literature acknowledges the role of informal relationships and institutional permeability in shaping public decisions, analyses of PC and RD often remain generic, without clarifying the concrete mechanisms through which influence is exercised or the conditions that facilitate it. Existing contributions tend to address these phenomena under broad conceptual categories, offering valuable insights but without clearly differentiating their configurations or operational logics.

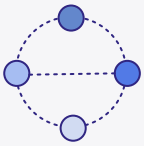
A further limitation concerns the absence of precise definitions and systematic frameworks, which limit comparability and analytical clarity. A notable gap concerns what could be called *indirect revolving door*: practice in which the relevant cross-sector movement is not undertaken by the public official directly, but by a close contact, such as a relative or trusted intermediary. Unlike PC, which refers to a simultaneous arrangement between a public official and a private interest, indirect RD involves a sequential arrangement, with a temporal transition between public and private roles. In these cases, the movement of the connected person can help

preserve or activate informal channels of influence. This pathway is neither clearly defined nor operationalized in the existing scholarship, highlighting the need for a more precise conceptualization. Its characteristics also reveal a conceptual bridge between PC and RD: both rely on relational ties that outlast formal institutional positions, suggesting that they should be analysed within a unified framework rather than as fully separate categories.

This study seeks to fill these gaps by offering a structured conceptualization and operationalization of PC and RD, grounded in the empirical analysis of real-world cases. Through this approach, the aim is to shed light on how these practices operate and the legal or institutional vulnerabilities they exploit.

A single conceptual framework combining PC and RD

This compendium introduces a structured framework that distinguishes types of PC and RD based on two analytical dimensions:



the nature of the relationship (direct vs. indirect)

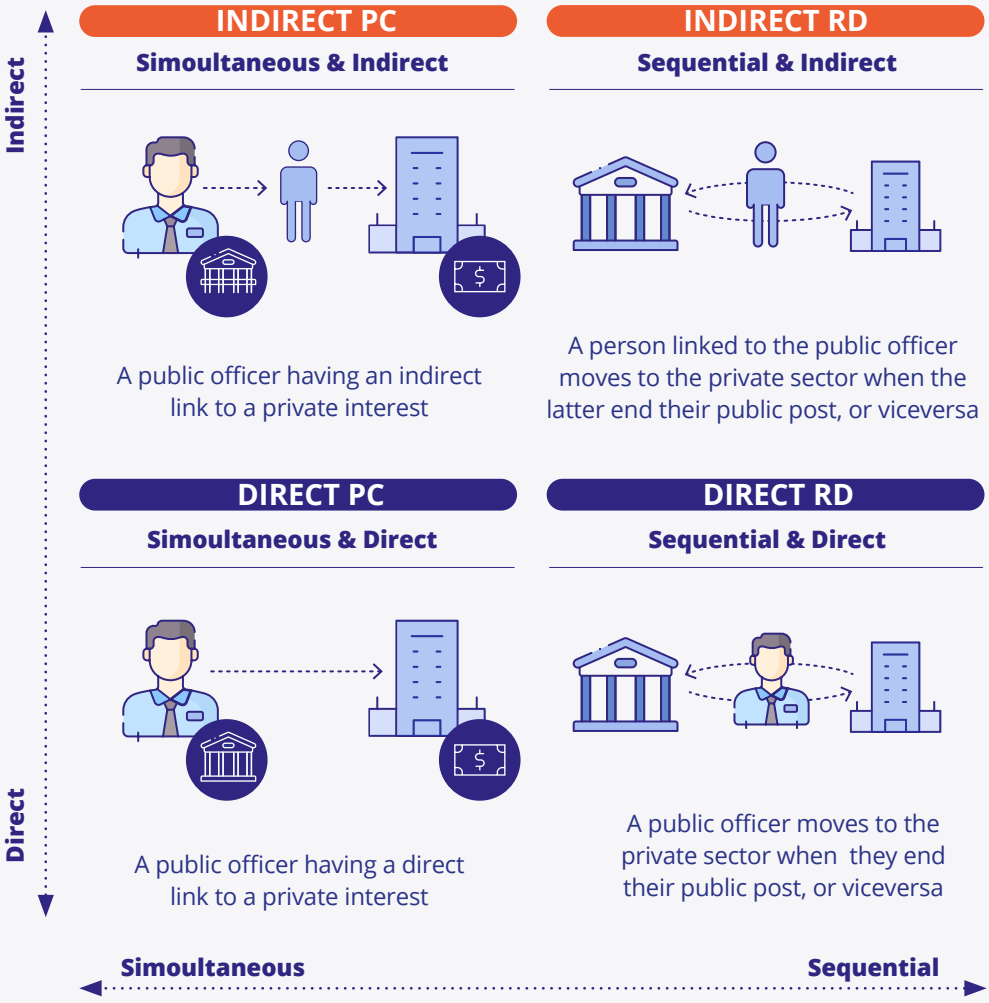


the temporal dimension (simultaneous vs. sequential)

These dimensions not only serve conceptual clarity but also offer practical classification criteria for the empirical analysis. The typology rests on four core scenarios, each capturing a distinct type of relational mechanism:

- **Direct PC**: A public official has a direct link to a private interest, such as being a direct shareholder or beneficial owner of a firm, or holding a managerial role;
- **Indirect PC**: A public official is indirectly linked to a private interest through a third party, typically a family member, close associate, or trusted intermediary, who, for example, can act herself/himself as shareholder, owner, manager of a private firm;
- **Direct RD**: A public official moves to the private sector after holding a public mandate (or vice versa), often in sectors previously regulated or supervised under her/his former public mandate.
- **Indirect RD**: A close contact of a public official (i.e., a relative or a friend) transitions into the private sector following or preceding the official's public mandate, enabling sustained informal influence.

Figure 1 Conceptualization of PC and RD
Source: Authors' elaboration



PC and RD are also structurally distinct. PC being simultaneous, as it does not involve transitions, and RD being sequential, involving movement from public to private roles or vice versa.

This two-dimensional matrix (direct/indirect and simultaneous/sequential) enables a nuanced understanding of how PC and RD mechanisms are configured and maintained across time and institutional settings, and can help a better operationalization and classification of empirical evidence and case-studies.



3. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH

The conceptual framework operationalised in the previous section is applied to a sub-sample of cases of PC/RD taken from a curated repository of 109 cases of corruption practices retrieved from 16 countries as part of Task 2.3 of Work Package 2 of the RESPOND project. The cases cover five distinct types of corruption practices, i.e., Revolving Doors, Personal Connections, Lobbying, Media Capture, and Political Financing.

The repository is compiled following a non-random sampling criteria. In particular, national experts involved in the project were instructed to identify and submit at least two cases from the categories listed above with specific reference to their country, based on the definitions of the corruption-practice categories listed above. These category definitions served as guidelines for case selection, helping experts assess whether each case fell within the analytical scope of the repository.

Each case was first screened by the research team to ensure consistency with the operational definitions adopted in the project and to verify its correct classification. This screening involved assessing whether the case matched the defining features of the relevant corruption category, whether the actors and relationships involved were sufficiently identifiable, and whether the available sources provided enough information to support the classification. When a case appeared ambiguous or potentially overlapping across categories, it was reassessed against the operational definitions and discussed within the team before assigning the final classification. Subsequently, all cases were examined in depth drawing on open sources, including national and local media, independent media outlets and investigative journalism platforms, in order to validate factual elements and clarify actors' roles.

Subsequently, every case was analysed through a standardised coding framework (including 51 variables), organised into several categories (see Table 1). The framework was designed to capture both descriptive information, such as country, sector, actors involved, and type of practice, and analytical dimensions relevant to the project, including drivers, roles, and consequences. Before being applied to the full repository, the coding framework was tested on a small subset of cases to assess whether the variables were clear, consistently applicable, and capable of capturing the main features of the practices under analysis.

Table 1 Coding Framework
Source: Authors' elaboration

	Category	Variables
	Case Characteristics	Case ID; Year; Description
	Corruption Type	Media capture; Personal connections; Revolving doors; Lobbying; Political financing; Corruption subtype
	Actors and Roles	Type and institutional affiliation of corrupted and corruptor actors; Drivers; Intermediaries involved; Legal persons; Shell companies; Legal arrangements
	Jurisdictional Elements	Country and ISO code; Satellite jurisdictions; High-risk jurisdictions
	Digital Dimension	Role of digital technologies (in enabling or detecting the corruption)
	Economic or regulatory exchanges	Benefits; Transaction type; Public procurement; Public grants; Legislative/ Regulatory favours; Real estate; Art goods; Assets; Liquid cash.
	Consequences	Legal consequences; Non-legal consequences; Year of the consequences
	Discovery	Discovery method
	Sources	Link of open sources used for validation

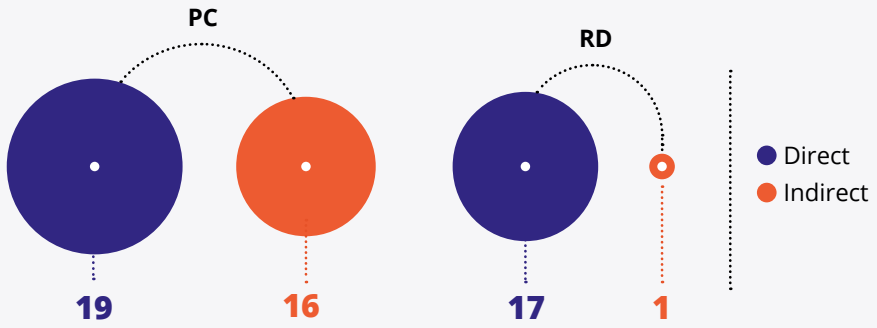
This study focuses primarily on the two categories of RD and PC which are object of this analysis. Each case, retrieved from the repository, has been analysed and coded according to the time perspective (simultaneous as PC or sequential as RD) and the nature of the relationship between the public role and private interest (direct or indirect). The subset of the repository dedicated to PC and RD comprises 53 cases from 11 countries, providing a robust basis for comparative analysis (see Annex A for anonymised case summaries).

4. RESULTS

Each case in the repository was first classified according to the operationalisation criteria outlined in Chapter 2. On this basis, the repository includes 35 cases of PC and 18 involving RD.

PC | 35 Cases **RD | 18 Cases**

Figure 2 Distribution of the nature of relationship (53 cases)
Source: Authors' elaboration



Regarding the nature of the relationship, as shown in Figure 2, 19 cases have been classified as direct PC, where the public official holds a personal or financial interest in a private entity, and 16 as indirect, where the link is mediated through third parties such as family members or associates.

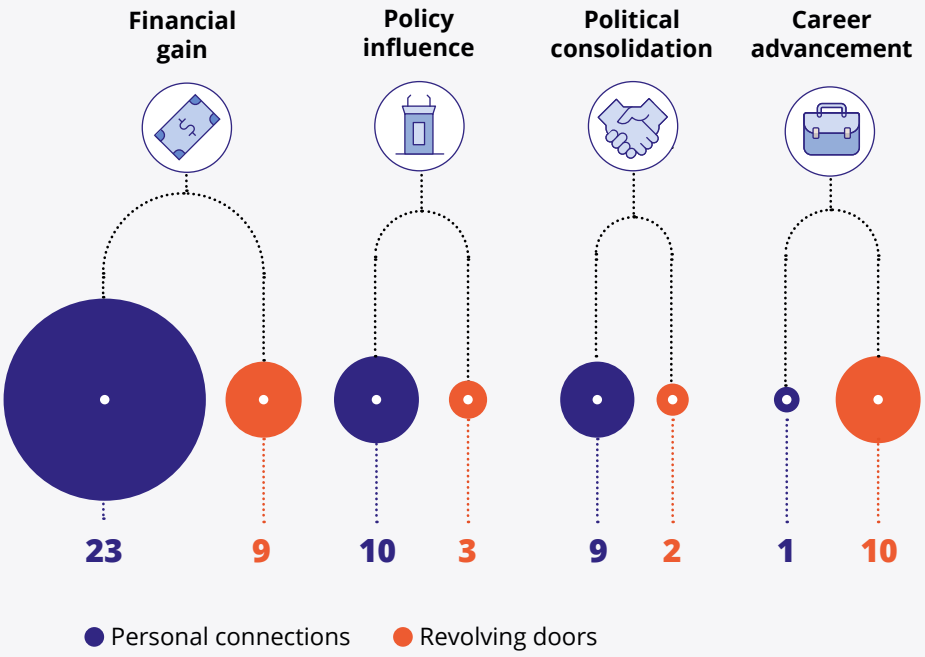
Similarly, among RD cases, 17 have been identified as direct, featuring the public official's own transition between sectors, while only 1 case illustrates an indirect RD, involving the movement of a connected individual rather than the official themselves. This structured approach facilitates the analysis of corruption risks by focusing on the underlying relational dynamics.

Building on this, all cases were subsequently analysed using the criteria set out in Table 1, which allowed to identify both the key drivers and enablers underlying each practice (the why) and the methods and schemes through which influence was exercised (the how). This two-step approach strengthens analytical precision and enables a systematic examination of the relational mechanisms through which undue influence materialises.

4.1. Key Drivers

PC and RD are sustained by a combination of individual motivations and systemic enablers that allow these practices to thrive within institutional grey zones. The analysis of the repository reveals that actors engage in PC and RD mechanisms for a range of strategic motivations. Four primary drivers are recurrent across the dataset: financial gain, political consolidation, career advancement, and policy influence. While these drivers may overlap, each of them shapes the configuration of corrupt schemes in distinct ways.

Figure 3 Distribution of Key Drivers by RD and PC practices (53 Cases)
Source: Author's elaboration



Financial Gain | 32 Cases

Financial gain is the most common motivation, present in 32 of the 53 cases analysed. This incentive typically manifests through direct economic benefits, such as the award of public procurements (e.g., case HU002), or access to privileged business opportunities (e.g., case NL001). It is particularly dominant in personal connection practices (23 cases), where public officials retain financial stakes in private entities benefiting from their decisions, and in revolving door configurations (9 cases), where officials move into corporate roles that offer significant remuneration following their public mandate.



Policy influence | 13 Cases

Policy influence, present in 13 cases (10 of PC and 3 of RD) refers to the desire to shape institutional decisions in favour of specific ideological or corporate agendas. This is often achieved through informal lobbying, advisory roles, or the use of intermediaries such as think tanks and consultancy firms (e.g., case FR004, EU002). While sometimes framed as legitimate advocacy, these arrangements can blur the lines between expertise and undue influence, especially when the same individuals alternate between public and private regulatory roles.



Political consolidation | 11 Cases

Political consolidation appears in 11 cases, often involving personal connections (9 cases) in its indirect form or revolving door arrangements. In these cases, the objective is not immediate enrichment but the strategic reinforcement of political control. Common tactics include orchestrating the electoral succession of allies or relatives (e.g., case IT001), positioning loyalists in administrative roles (e.g., case SWE005), or maintaining informal influence over institutions even after leaving office (e.g., case NL006). These strategies create self-reinforcing networks of power that resist institutional turnover.



Career advancement | 11 Cases

Career advancement, identified in 11 cases, is a frequent driver in revolving door schemes (10 cases). Officials may anticipate future employment opportunities and begin shaping regulatory or policy decisions to align with the interests of potential employers (e.g., case EU003). These forms of anticipatory loyalty can significantly distort the neutrality of public service, as decisions are taken not in the public interest but in view of post-mandate personal trajectories.

These motivations are not mutually exclusive. In 15 out of 53 cases, more than one objective was identified. The most frequent overlaps involve financial gain combined with career advancement (6 cases) or with policy influence (5 cases), suggesting that economic incentives often coexist with broader strategic objectives. The combination of overlapping incentives reinforces these corrupt configurations and makes them more resilient to institutional countermeasures.

4.2. Enablers

Beyond individual motivations, several enabling factors explain the persistence of PC and RD mechanisms across different national contexts. Legal loopholes are among the most immediate structural weaknesses. In different cases, conflict-of-interest rules are either vaguely defined or weakly enforced. For example, cooling-off periods that prohibit former officials from taking private roles related to their previous public functions are formally in place in many jurisdictions, but are often limited in duration, applied inconsistently, or weakly enforced in practice (eg., IT007, EU003, NL006). This legal ambiguity provides fertile ground for revolving door arrangements.

Institutional weaknesses, including the lack of robust oversight bodies or ineffective transparency mechanisms, further facilitate the use of personal and professional networks for private benefit. In such environments, public officials may act with relative impunity, exploiting formal positions and informal connections to advance their interests without fear of sanction.

Concealment through intermediaries is a recurring tactic that allows actors to obscure the real beneficiaries of influence. The use of NGOs, think tanks, advisory firms, or even charitable organizations serves as a façade behind which private interests can be pursued while maintaining an appearance of legitimacy (eg., case SRB002). These entities often operate as soft power instruments, simultaneously offering reputational cover and strategic leverage within policy networks. For example, some cases in the repository involve media organizations or charitable foundations that are used to conceal financing, reward political allies or distribute favours in ways that are difficult to trace (e.g., BG003, NL001). Taken together, these enablers sustain an environment in which undue influence can operate with limited detection and accountability.

4.3. Common Schemes and Practices

The analysis of the repository reveals a set of recurrent schemes through which PC and RD concretely manifest. Schemes and practices refer to the concrete ways in which personal connections and career transitions are used to influence public decision-making. They represent the “how” of these types of corruption, bridging the gap between motivations and outcomes. Although PC and RD rely on distinct logics (PC on simultaneous relational ties and RD on sequential mobility across sectors) many schemes show hybrid features, underscoring the shared relational infrastructure through which private interest can infiltrate public power.

4.3.1. Schemes associated with personal connections (PC)



Procurement manipulation: a typical pattern common to both direct and indirect PC involves the strategic manipulation of public procurement processes. These are frequently tailored to benefit companies linked to officials either directly (as shareholders or owners) or indirectly through family members, friends or close associates (e.g. case HU004).



Tailored legislations and regulations: typical of direct PC, concerns the drafting of laws or regulatory amendments crafted explicitly to advantage specific private interests in which the official holds a stake. This practice leverages legislative power to shape the market environment or regulatory conditions, often bypassing proper scrutiny. (e.g. case UA006).

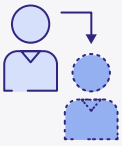


Strategic appointments: appointing allies to key strategic positions, whether within public institutions or state-owned enterprises, is a further method to consolidate influence (e.g., case SWE005). This pattern is particularly relevant to both direct and indirect PC, where trusted networks are mobilized to secure ongoing control over decision-making channels. These appointments frequently ensure the continuation of informal influence even when officials are no longer formally in the office.

4.3.2. Schemes associated with revolving doors (RD)



Revolving-out: direct RD cases (e.g., case EU003) often feature officials moving shortly after leaving public office into positions within companies or sectors they previously regulated or supervised. Such transitions can undermine the neutrality of policymaking, as prior decisions may be influenced by prospective private benefits. This is further compounded when cooling-off periods or conflict of interest laws are weak or poorly enforced.



Successor-based influence: indirect RD cases, though less frequent, illustrate how informal channels of influence can be sustained through the movement of close associates into public roles previously held by the official (e.g., case IT001).



Lobbying and advisory roles: informal influence also extends beyond formal roles. Officials and their networks often engage in advisory or lobbying activities within the same sector, blurring the line between public duty and private interest (e.g., GB004). This is closely tied to direct RD, where former officials use their institutional knowledge and contacts to benefit private actors.

4.3.3. Sectoral concentration and roles distribution

Across the 53 cases analysed, PC and RD practices do not occur uniformly but concentrate in a limited cluster of sectors where public decisions have a strong impact on private actors and where frequent interactions between officials and companies occur.

Construction (10 cases), and energy (8 cases) emerge as the most recurrent areas, reflecting their structural dependence on political decision-making. Other sectors (i.e., healthcare procurement, financial services, public affairs, and agriculture) appear less frequently but follow comparable logics, consistently involving firms that rely on government contracts and subsidies.

Figure 4 Distribution of sectors (53 cases)*

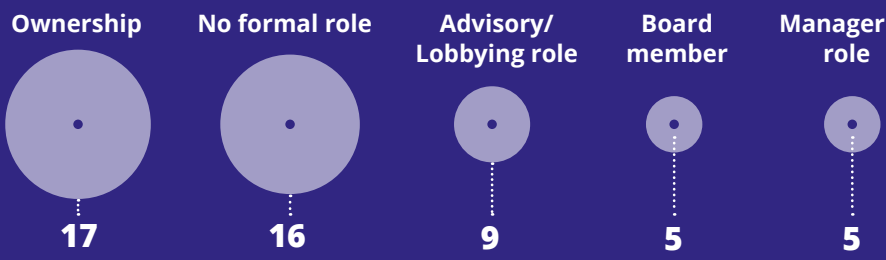
Source: Authors' elaboration



*not mutually exclusive

Figure 5 Distribution of roles (53 cases)

Source: Authors' elaboration



A similar pattern is visible in the roles that public officials occupy within private companies. In 16 cases, officials hold no corporate position but influence outcomes in ways that benefit personal connected firms; In the remaining cases, they occupy roles that can be grouped into three main categories: ownership positions (owners or shareholders), managerial or board-level roles, and advisory or lobbying functions. These configurations point to two distinct mechanisms: an ownership-based mode, where officials directly control or benefit from private companies exposed to public decisions; and an influence-based mode, where informal access or policy discretion channels advantages to connected actors without the need for formal corporate roles. Taken together, these trends illustrate how sectoral exposure and functional positioning shape the concrete ways in which personal connections and revolving doors manifest.

All together, these examples and the broader pattern analysis provide a comprehensive understanding of how personal connections and revolving doors operate as structural components of corruption.



5. CONCLUSION

This compendium has provided a detailed conceptualization and operationalization of two prevalent forms of corruption: Personal Connections (PC) and Revolving Doors (RD). By developing a structured framework that distinguishes these phenomena along the dimensions of directionality (direct vs. indirect) and temporal configuration (simultaneous vs. sequential), the study provides a clear and coherent framework to understand how PC and RD can be defined and how they contribute to systemic corruption.

The analysis of 53 cases across 11 countries revealed that these practices are spread and often intertwined, with some cases displaying overlapping features of both PC and RD. The typology distinguishes between direct and indirect forms of personal connections and revolving doors, capturing how influence can be exerted either through close relationships or through movements between public office and private sector roles. This nuanced framework reflects the varied and complex ways corruption schemes operate.

Key drivers identified include financial gain, political consolidation, career advancement, and the pursuit of policy influence. Enablers such as legal loopholes, weak institutional oversight, and the strategic use of intermediaries (including NGOs, media outlets, and charitable foundations) further facilitate these practices.

By grounding the study in empirical cases, the compendium bridges the gap between theoretical discussions on institutional corruption and empirical-based insights. The typology and patterns identified provide a foundation to better recognize, monitor, and address the relational logics that underpin corruption risks.



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9. ANNEX

A. List of cases

Case ID	Country	Category	Nature	Description
UA001	Ukraine	PC	Direct	A member of parliament who owns a retail chain offered public authorities to purchase anti-epidemic medical supplies from his company during the Covid-19 pandemic. Some of the goods, initially presented as humanitarian aid, were later sold in the company's stores.
IT001	Italy	RD	Indirect	A mayor managed companies through a network of family members. After a corruption scandal involving these activities, he was succeeded in office by a relative.
GB001	United Kingdom	PC	Direct	A public official used her position to facilitate the inclusion of a company linked to her and her spouse in a government fast-track procurement channel during the Covid-19 pandemic. The company subsequently obtained large public contracts for the supply of medical equipment.
SRB001	Serbia	PC	Indirect	A relative of a high-ranking public official was involved in a private company engaged in the arms trade with a state-owned manufacturer. Leaked documents indicated that the company purchased weapons at lower prices and resold them at a profit.
SRB002	Serbia	PC	Direct	A public official held ownership of multiple luxury properties through offshore companies and direct ownership, exceeding declared income. Investigative reports revealed the use of numerous bank accounts registered under the official's name and close family members, involving large financial transactions.

SWE002	Sweden	PC	Direct	A public official involved in high-level government negotiations later took a position as senior advisor to a private company operating in the same sector. At the time of the transition, the official remained formally employed in the public administration through a leave-of-absence arrangement.
BG002	Bulgaria	PC	Direct	A businessman became a government minister overseeing a sector in which his private company operated as a leading firm, while maintaining a role in the company during his time in office.
FR003	France	RD	Direct	A former government minister transitioned to roles in the private technology sector after leaving office. The individual was involved in public policy negotiations on the same sector while later engaging in related private-sector activities, including lobbying and advisory roles.
FR004	France	RD	Direct	A ministerial advisor responsible for policy areas related to environmental regulation later joined a private company operating in the same sector shortly after leaving public office. Prior to this transition, the advisor had professional interactions with representatives of the company during the preparation of relevant legislation and its implementing measures.
NL001	Netherlands	PC	Direct	A group of private individuals procured face masks during the Covid-19 pandemic and supplied them to the government through a contract initially presented as linked to a non-profit initiative. The transaction was facilitated through personal connections with public authorities and was ultimately conducted via a private company owned by the individuals.
NL002	Netherlands	RD	Direct	A government minister responsible for infrastructure later moved to a position in a lobby organization representing the energy sector. Prior to leaving office, the minister held regular meetings with companies in the sector and participated in policy-related commissions while aware of the upcoming transition to a lobbying role.

HU002	Hungary	PC	Indirect	A private company repeatedly secured large public procurement contracts from central and local authorities and was linked to a businessman with close ties to the ruling political leadership. Following a breakdown in this relationship, the company was excluded from public procurement. After being acquired by another businessman connected to the same political network, the company re-entered the public procurement market.
IT004	Italy	PC	Direct	A public official holding political office maintained ownership and control over a large media group during his time in government. During this period, legislation affecting the media sector was adopted, and public advertising resources were allocated to outlets within the same media group.
EU002	European Union	PC	Direct	A public official used a non-governmental organization under his control to channel payments from foreign actors in exchange for influence over parliamentary activities.
IT006	Italy	PC	Direct	A public official proposed policy measures affecting a sector in which a specific business operated. The official had previously held stakes in the business and, after formally divesting, maintained indirect financial ties through a company co-owned with a close associate, which received a share of the business's revenues.
IT007	Italy	RD	Direct	A former government official involved in foreign policy was appointed to a senior position in a private company operating in a sector linked to his previous public responsibilities shortly after leaving office.
GB004	United Kingdom	PC	Direct	A member of parliament engaged in paid consultancy roles for private companies while in office and used his parliamentary position to advocate on their behalf.

HU004	Hungary	PC	Indirect	A government office approved procurement tenders for infrastructure projects that were subsequently awarded to a private company co-owned by the son-in-law of a high-ranking public official. The tenders concerned publicly funded projects and were linked to the same authority overseeing their approval.
GB006	United Kingdom	RD	Direct	A former head of government took a position as advisor to a private financial company after leaving office and subsequently contacted senior government officials to advocate for the company's access to public financial support schemes during the Covid-19 pandemic.
EU003	European Union	RD	Direct	A public official approved a large loan to support infrastructure developments while in office and, shortly after leaving the position, joined the board of the company benefiting from the financing during the cooling-off period.
SRB004	Serbia	PC	Indirect	Public procurement contracts for a major infrastructure project were awarded to private companies linked to the family of a high-ranking public official, with these companies involved in the construction of key structural components of the project.
SRB005	Serbia	PC	Direct	A public official who owned and controlled multiple private companies, including businesses with ties to foreign markets, held a government position responsible for overseeing bilateral relations in areas connected to his business activities.
BG003	Bulgaria	PC	Direct	A public official who owned and controlled a large media group used his position to secure financial benefits and maintain influence over political processes.
BG006	Bulgaria	RD	Direct	A former head of state joined the supervisory board of a private construction company with operations in the same country shortly after leaving office. Prior to holding public office, the individual had professional experience and ties in the same sector.

BG007	Bulgaria	PC	Direct	A public official held ownership and control over a large media group, including major newspapers and television outlets, and used these platforms to influence public communication and political discourse while in office.
NL005	Netherlands	PC	Indirect	A public official used his position in local government to influence zoning and construction decisions in favour of private developers, including a long-standing personal associate, and shared confidential information related to public appointments.
NL006	Netherlands	RD	Direct	A former public official engaged in lobbying activities on behalf of a private company shortly after leaving office, including contacting national authorities and facilitating meetings with policymakers to support the company's market expansion.
FR006	France	PC	Indirect	A public official employed close family members as parliamentary assistants and allocated public funds for their remuneration over several years.
FR007	France	RD	Direct	A former public official responsible for fisheries policy and international representation joined an industry lobby organization operating in the same sector shortly after leaving office, taking a leadership role within the organization.
UA005	Ukraine	PC	Indirect	A public official had a long-standing professional relationship with a private businessman through a media partnership prior to entering office. The businessman's media outlets provided coverage supporting the official's political campaign, and the relationship continued after the official assumed public office.
UA006	Ukraine	PC	Direct	A public official with ownership interests in a private company participated in the drafting of legislation affecting the same sector. The adopted measures provided financial advantages to companies meeting specific criteria, including a firm in which the official held a stake.

SWE004	Sweden	PC	Direct	A payment was made to a high-ranking public official involved in a public project through a consulting arrangement with a company linked to the project.
SWE005	Sweden	PC	Indirect	A public official appointed close associates to senior positions within a public administration without a competitive selection process, with the individuals having personal or professional ties to the official.
CAN002	Canada	PC	Indirect	A public authority selected a non-profit organization to administer a large public funding program. Senior public officials involved in the decision had close family members who had received payments, expenses, or had professional roles linked to the organization.
CAN003	Canada	PC	Indirect	A government decision altered land-use regulations to allow development in previously protected areas. The selected lands were owned by private developers who had prior personal or professional connections with senior public officials, and some acquisitions occurred shortly before the policy change.
SWE008	Sweden	PC	Direct	A public official holding a local political office was employed as a lobbyist by a private firm representing clients in a sector subject to local policy decisions, while simultaneously participating in political activities related to the same sector.
SWE009	Sweden	RD	Direct	A former public official responsible for energy policy joined the board of a private company operating in the same sector shortly after leaving office.
SWE010	Sweden	RD	Direct	Former high-ranking public officials joined a private lobbying firm after leaving office. The firm operated through an affiliated organization presented as an environmental association and engaged with local public authorities on policy-related issues.

SWE011	Sweden	PC	Direct	Multiple public officials holding positions in local government were simultaneously employed as lobbyists for private interests, while participating in committees responsible for decisions affecting the same sectors.
SWE013	Sweden	PC	Direct	A political foundation linked to a party received substantial donations from anonymous sources. The foundation was chaired by an individual who simultaneously owned a private company operating in a policy-relevant sector, while political actors associated with the party had professional links to the same company.
SWE016	Sweden	RD	Direct	Multiple public officials holding senior government positions had previously been employed by a think tank or lobbying organizations.
IT009	Italy	PC	Indirect	A senior public official was involved in approving the restructuring of a welfare organization under ministerial supervision. In the same context, a close family member of the official obtained a position at a private institution through individuals linked to the organization benefiting from the decision.
SRB008	Serbia	PC	Indirect	Public funds and subsidies in the energy sector were allocated to companies linked to individuals with close personal ties to high-ranking public officials. These companies operated infrastructure projects and received preferential conditions, including financial incentives and access to public procurement opportunities.
SRB008	Serbia	RD	Direct	Individuals involved in public procurement processes transitioned between positions in the state-owned energy company and private firms participating in tenders.

UA008	Ukraine	PC	Indirect	A private energy company appointed the son of a high-ranking public official to its board, where he received substantial compensation despite lacking relevant sector experience.
UA009	Ukraine	RD	Direct	A public official moved from a senior position in the Ministry of Internal Affairs to a private legal career, where he represented politically exposed individuals, and later returned to a high-ranking public office with oversight over law enforcement and judicial policy.
UA010	Ukraine	RD	Direct	A senior official moved from private-sector roles in financial companies to a top position in the state fiscal authority, where he later authorized large-scale financial benefits to a private businessman in exchange for payments.
HU006	Hungary	PC	Indirect	A company linked to a close associate of the head of government was awarded a public procurement contract following a significant increase in revenue after acquisition by an affiliated investment fund, with repeated participation in state-funded projects.
HU008	Hungary	PC	Indirect	A company was awarded a multi-year public procurement contract for cleaning and security services in hospitals through a tender with restrictive eligibility criteria, while several individuals within the company maintained personal ties with officials in the public body responsible for awarding the contract.
IT011	Italy	PC	Indirect	A public official influenced permit approvals and regulatory decisions through informal relationships with private developers, including cases involving projects linked to his daughter's employer.

IT011	Italy	RD	Direct	A public official moved between public office and private-sector roles, including a temporary position in a private company and a later consulting role with an industry association while continuing to influence public regulatory functions.
SWE017	Sweden	PC	Direct	A minister purchased shares in a private company while participating in government decision-making processes related to a contract involving the same company.
EU004	European Union	RD	Direct	An individual moved from a role as a parliamentary assistant within the European Parliament to a corporate lobbyist position representing a private company in the same institutional context.

Source: Authors' elaboration