Measuring Corruption

- To name the challenges of measuring corruption
- To describe evidence-based corruption prevention
- To distinguish three different ways of measuring corruption indicators
- To be able to pair complementary indicators for more holistic assessments of AC effectiveness
- To discuss and explain the tradeoffs of experience and perception data

Photo by: Konomiho/flickr

The challenge of measuring corruption

Evidence-based corruption prevention

Ways to measure corruption

Complementary indicators

Experience vs. perceptions of corruption

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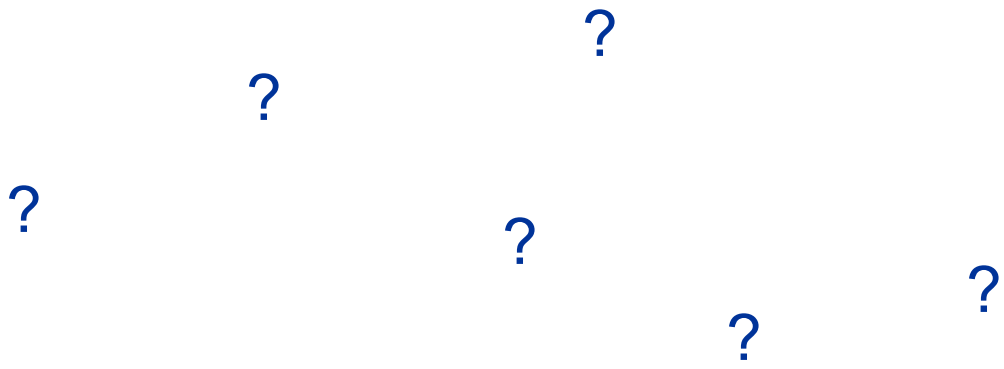
What challenges are involved in measuring corruption?



Take **1 minute** to write your own list

The challenge of measuring corruption

- A conceptually contested definition (e.g. UNCAC defines corrupt practices)
- Corruption is hidden
- Most indicators do not measure corruption directly, but are imperfect proxies that infer the existence of corruption or its opposite, (e.g. anti-corruption mechanisms)
- Politically sensitive, implying the need for reform
- Resource constraints and capacity deficits



So how then does one measure corruption?



The challenge of measuring corruption

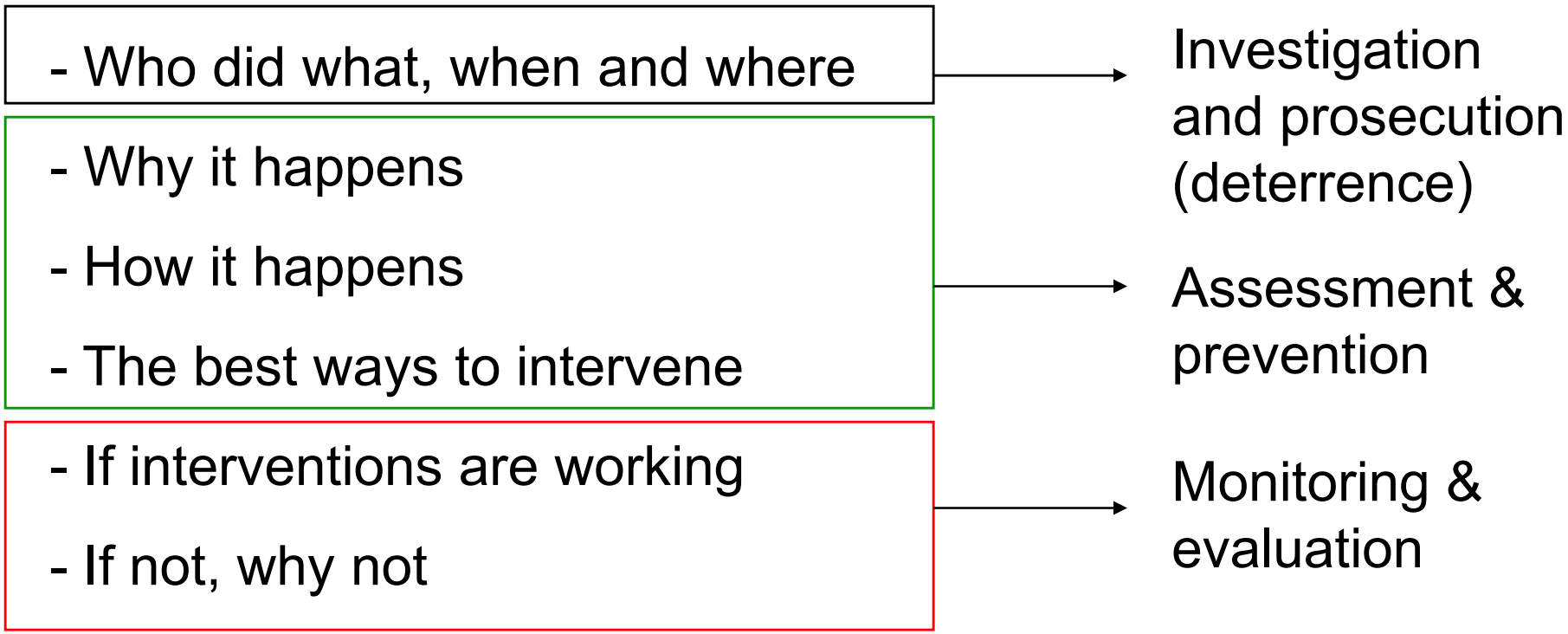
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Experience vs. perceptions of corruption

What do you need to know to fight corruption?



How do you get this information?

- interviews, focus groups, surveys

  - with citizens, about bribery-demand encounters and recommended interventions

  - with public officials, about their perceptions of corruption within a ministry

  -with private firms, about the impact working within a corrupt business environment

  - with offenders (privately) about how and why they engaged in corruption and what they recommend to prevent it

How do you get this information?

- Observation
  - Are paid-for services being delivered?
  - Can public information be readily accessed?
- Public administration data
  - Reported cases of corruption
  - Organizational mandates, powers and processes
- Literature reviews and experience sharing
  - What can be learned from others' experiences?

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Indicators

Measure of performance that is used to demonstrate change, and which details the extent to which results are being or have been achieved.

1. By counting

Number of high level corruption scandals in the past year.

2. Qualitative statement → number

In practice, election observers are able to effectively monitor elections. [Score: 100 75 50 25 0]

Corruption indicators

-Number of reported cases of bribery within the police

-Police ranked as second most corrupt institution in public national perception surveys

- Proportion of bribe payments to income among individuals in low-income neighbourhoods

- Existence of accessible and safe reporting mechanisms

- Proportion of sanctions to registered complaints

Corruption indicators

The incidence of corrupt transactions

The impact of corruption

The existence and effectiveness of AC mechanisms

UNCAC Self-Assessment

- Asks countries to report on implementation of each provision

- Asks countries how they evaluate the effectiveness of measures (e.g. criteria and measures used)

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Input based

- Existence and quality of formal rules found in documents, laws, regulations and the constitution
- Answer the question: "What has been done?"
- Actionable
- Say nothing about actual progress
- E.g. In law, the anti-corruption agency (or agencies) is protected from political

Output-based

- Assess deliverables to citizens in a country
- Answer the question: "Are citizens benefiting from specific institutions and policies?"
- Lack actionability
- Measure the actual improved governance
- E.g. In practice, the public feel informed about the activities and services of the anti-corruption agency.

Application

Over to you…

Can you and your colleagues match the input and output indicators that have been distributed?

20 minutes

What is the value of monitoring the input and outcome sides of reform?



Photo by S.P. Schuman/ State University New

Complementary indicators

Are there discrepancies *in law* and *in practice*?

Are laws and organisational reforms translating into impact on the ground? If not, why not?

- Inappropriate reforms?
- Economically perverse incentives?
- Vested political interests?
- Lack of capacity (e.g. human resources, information retrieval systems)?
- High tolerance of corrupt conduct by the public?
- Different understandings of what is corrupt conduct?

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Vote

Raise your hand every time you agree with a statement:

- Perceptions are better indicators of progress than facts
- Facts are better indicators of progress than perceptions
- Both perceptions and fact-based indicators are useful
- Neither is helpful, it is not possible to measure corruption



Quick challenge

Write a question you could ask in a survey, to find out about:

- people's experiences of corruption
- people's perceptions of corruption

Example fact-based question:

In some areas there is a problem of corruption among government or public officials. During 1999, has any government official, for instance a customs officer, police officer or inspector in your own country, *asked you or expected you to pay* a bribe for his service?

yes
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Example perception-based question:

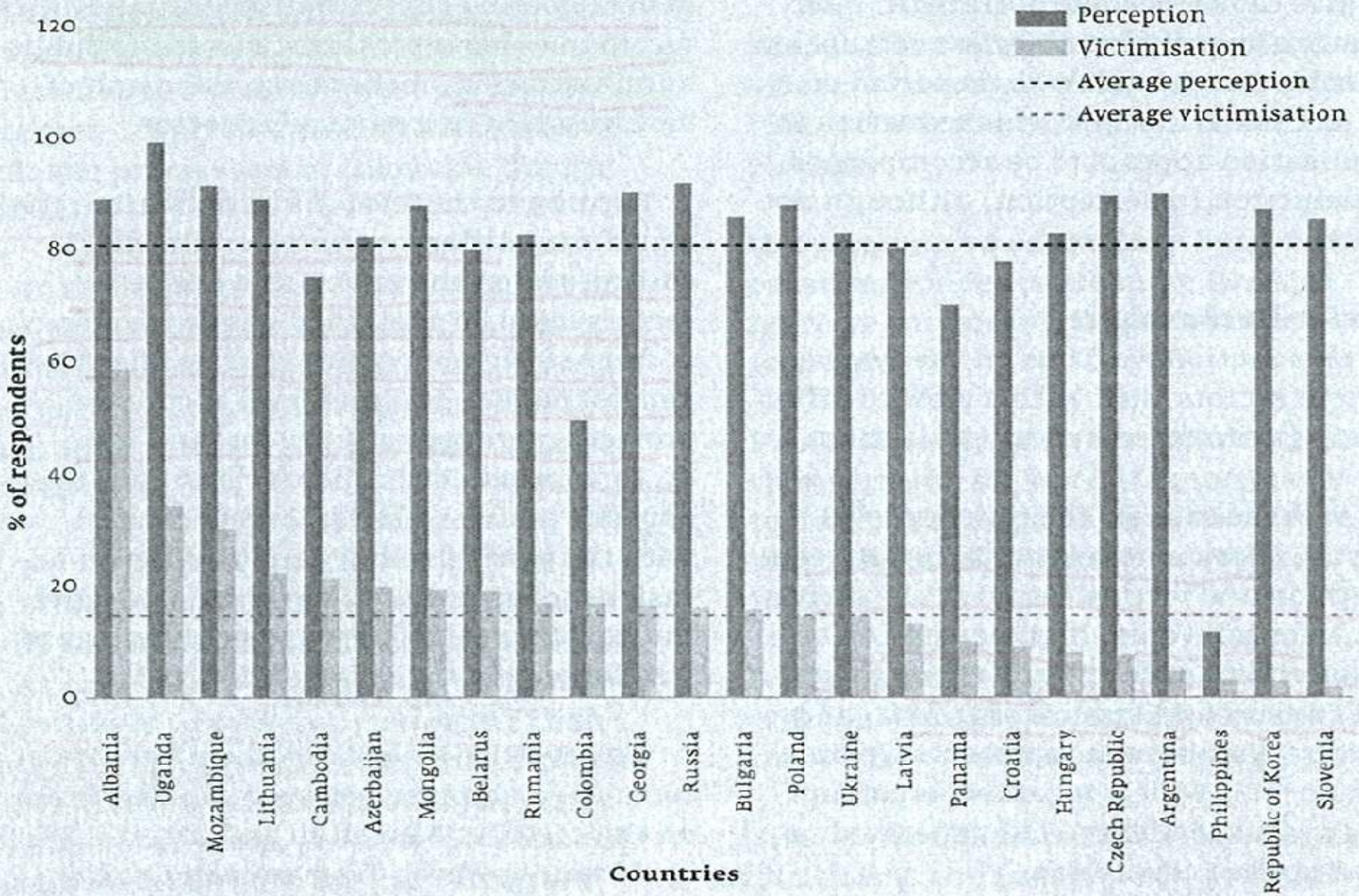
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Member of Parliament?
Elected municipal councillors?
Police officers ?
officials?
Inspectors?
Teachers/Professors?
Courts officials?

Officials in the Ministries?
Customs officials?
Tax/revenues

Private sector?

Graph 1: Perception (at least one sector is corrupt) and victimisation (over the previous twelve months) by country [7]



Source: ICVS 2000

Factors affecting perceptions

- whether you have been a victim of corruption
- age
- income
- gender
- personal safety
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- educational attainment
- professional activity
- levels of solidarity and social cohesion of residential neighbourhood

Observations

- Perception does not tell you about actual levels of corruption.

- There are many social factors affecting perceptions, other than victimisation.

- Perception may be higher, or even lower, than actual levels of corruption.

Group discussion

How can perception and opinion data help or hinder corruption monitoring?

Is data on public perceptions and opinions used in your country?

Drawbacks of perception data

- Seen as biased, leading some to minimize its use, or to rule it out entirely
- Politically sensitive, especially in polarized political climates, where the media is seen to have undue influence in magnifying public perceptions of corruption.
- Lag effect: perceptions often lag behind reforms.

Perception data matters because

- Fact-based data is harder to obtain.
- Agents base their actions on their perceptions
- High perceptions of corruption are correlated with low perceptions of state legitimacy
- High perceptions can fuel corrupt practices
- The gap between perception and reality can be a strong indicator of needed action. For example,
  - Are reforms not having an impact?
  - Is better communication of AC efforts needed?

Perception data matters because

- Perceptions and opinions reveal important information about how corruption works in a specific context.

Afghan Civil Servant Corruption Survey

Referring to the public sector, which of the following actions do you consider to be acts of corruption?

- Embezzlement
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Afghan Civil Servant Corruption Survey

The best way to combat corruption in the Afghan government is:

- Increase salaries of civil servants
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How is subjective data used?

- To inform corruption risk mapping, and decisions about AC interventions (e.g. Macedonia Responsibility, Transparency and Accountability Index)
- To check or test the functioning of accountability measures in practice (e.g. Global Integrity, CRINIS Political party finance index)
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Wrap up

- Corruption is hidden and is difficult to measure
- You need to use the full range of measures – fact and perception, input and output – to decide how and where are the best ways to intervene, and whether those interventions are working.
- When measuring the effectiveness of corruption reforms, it is important to look for evidence of implementation *in practice*, as well as on paper, and to consider reasons for discrepancies.

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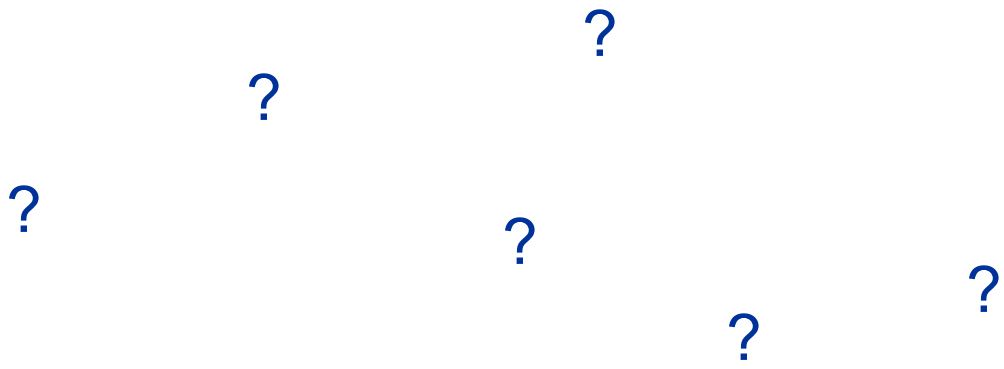
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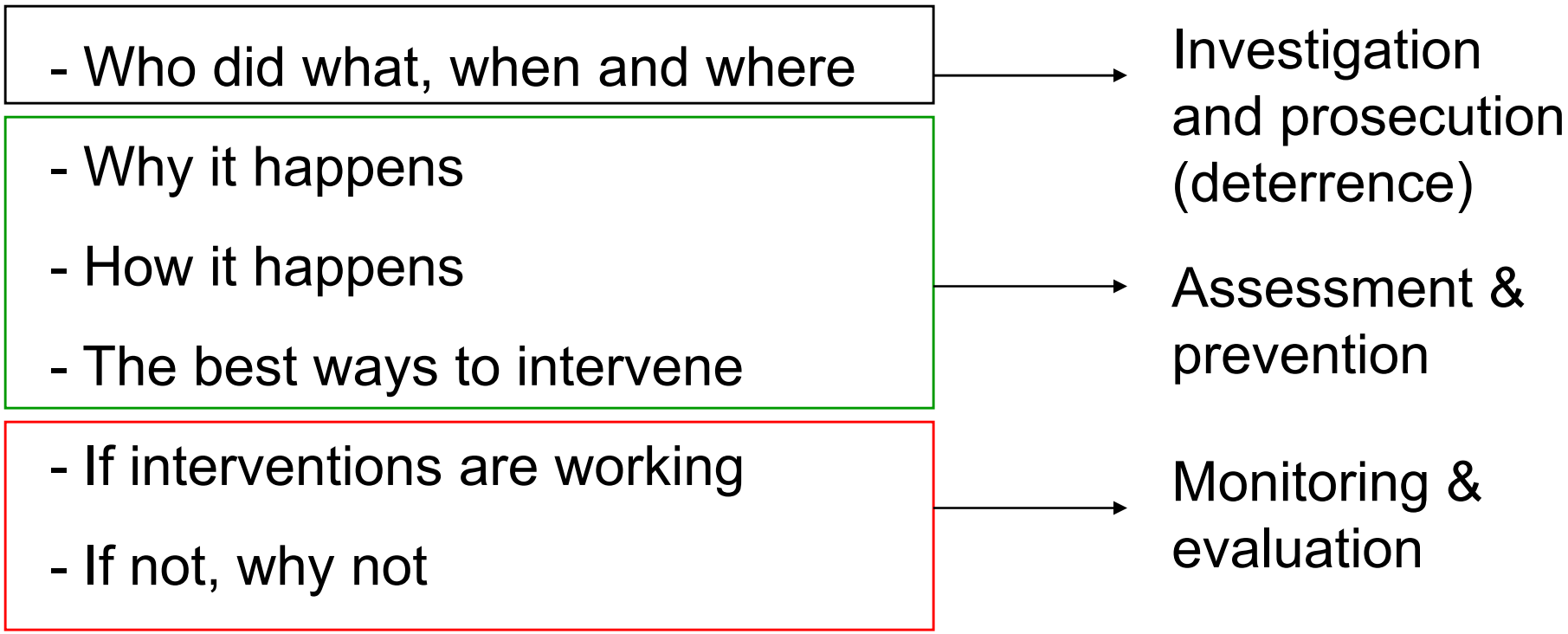
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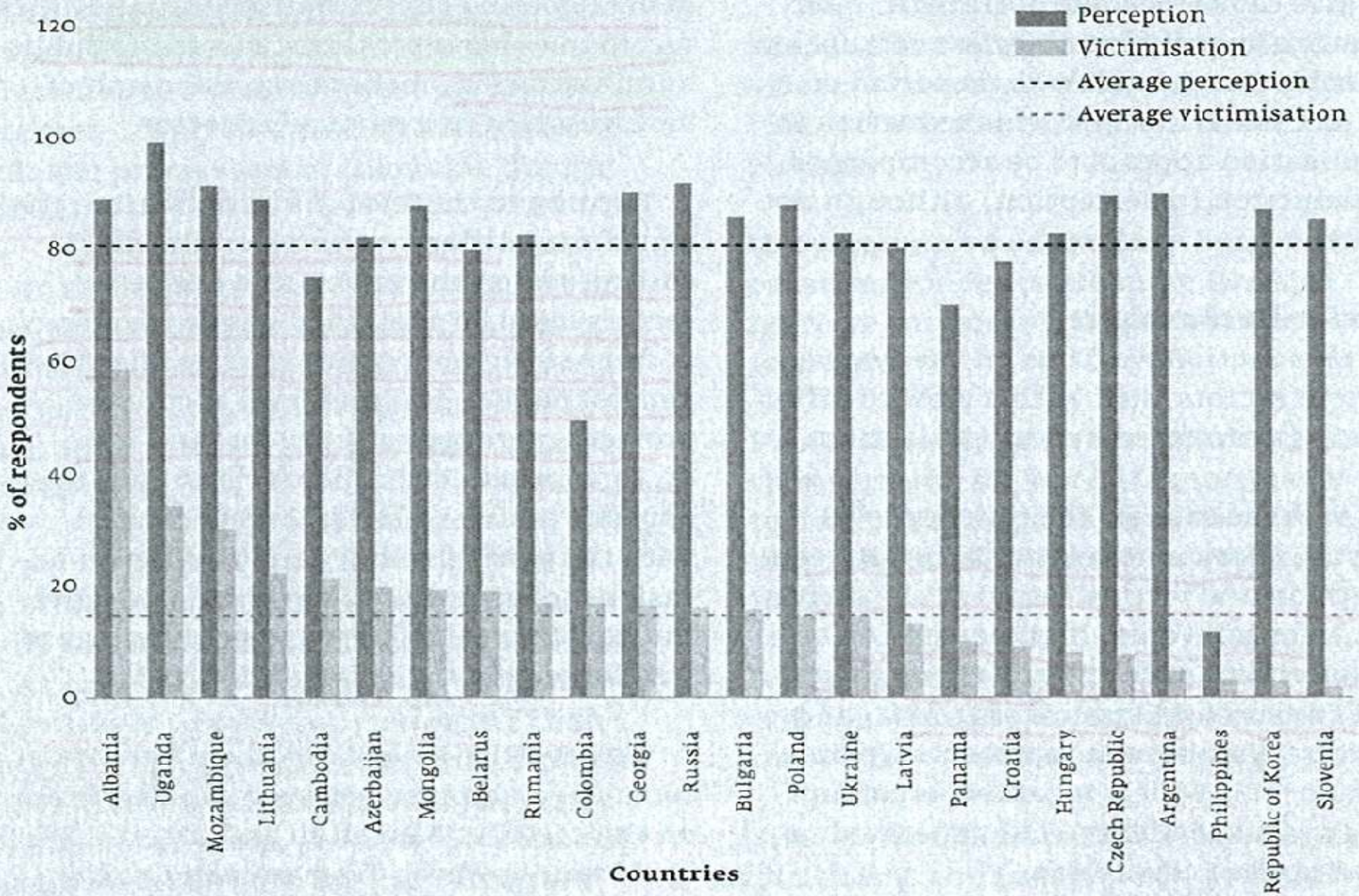
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