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Original Research Article

Policy advisory system actors or policy entrepreneurs? An analysis of policy advice quality in Kenyan anticorruption policymaking

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Abstract

This paper explores PAS actors and policy advice quality dynamics within anticorruption policymaking processes in Kiambu and Nairobi City counties, which are two devolved systems of government in Kenya. It is based on empirical research that sought to determine the level of policy advice quality provided by three critical PAS actors—the state, business, and civil society. These actors were of particular interest as they were mentioned in corruption scandals, linked to sycophancy as they sought to curry favor, and exhibited signs of disengagement, due to frustrations within the policymaking process. The study was framed within the multiple streams framework (MSF) and interrogated policy advice quality through the SERVQUAL model of reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness. The analytical strengths of MSF and SERVQUAL were considered suitable in Kenya's context where corruption is systemic, in an effort to overcome the limitations of previous approaches that have looked at corruption as a principal-agent problem. Two focus group discussions with key stakeholders were held in each county. Sixty-three respondents from 10 strategic functions, 12 members of the public, and 24 suppliers from each county were interviewed. The results demonstrate the analytical capacity of MSF and SERVQUAL, and provide a theoretical framework within which to ground third-generation policy advice research. The paper addresses the main research problem of inadequate data from the global south, and the lack of measurements for policy advice quality. It also contributes conceptual tools that deepen our understanding by presenting MSF and SERVQUAL as useful models for consideration.

Keywords: MSF; SERVQUAL; policy advisory system actors; policy advice quality; Kenyan anticorruption policymaking

Theoretically, policy advisory systems (PAS) are important mechanisms through which policymakers receive recommendations and guidance on policy issues (Craft & Howlett, 2012). Within PAS, are actors, such as state, business, and civil society groups, who are critical cogs of the policymaking ecosystem, as they collect, analyze, and interpret data and information that supports decision making within the policy advisory system (Craft & Howlett, 2012). In the "first wave" of scholarship on PAS, the effectiveness of these actors (which reflected on the quality of their policy advice) depended to a large extent on their proximity to key decision makers, a situation which favored insiders in government such as state PAS,

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and which led to "politicization" (Craft & Howlett, 2013). Thus, state PAS actors became more effective in influencing policy outcomes, than business and civil society PAS actors, during this wave and were deemed to provide better policy advice than their counterparts.

To counter "politization" and the influence of state PAS actors, there was a scholarly move for governments to utilize consultants drawn from the business and civil society PAS actors, which led to the "externalization" of policy advice and assumptions that such external advice was of a higher quality as it was not "politicized" (Craft & Howlett, 2013). This tilted the scale and moved policy outcome effectiveness from state PAS actors to business and civil service PAS actors, who were considered more independent. This situation led to the "second wave" of scholarship on PAS which called attention to policy content (as a measure of policy advice quality) and more comparative studies to provide contextual information within the policy advisory system (Hussain et al., 2023).

It is in this context that this paper interrogates the policy advice quality provided by state, business and state PAS actors in Kenya, tracing their movement from "politicization" to "externalization" and to the second wave. The focus on policy content is timely as many case studies have shown the blurring of lines between "politicization" and "externalization" and policy advice quality has become a recurring theme across the two "waves" of PAS scholarship. Evidence from Brazil, China, and Russia specifically affirmed the need for sociocultural context in defining the concept of policy quality advice among PAS actors (Takala et al., 2018) and this research paper seeks to extend scholarship in this area. Studies done on international policy advisory actors, such as the World Bank, further demonstrate the importance of considering local political realities when giving policymakers advice (Dercon, 2023). This may explain why studies in Nigeria found that despite having access to quality information on science, technology, and innovation, lawmakers did not utilize the evidence in policymaking (Sanni et al., 2016), further cementing the need to interrogate social–cultural factors within PAS scholarship.

This paper provides contextual data that address Kenya's unique set of challenges due to systemic corruption within Kenya's devolved system of government, where addressing complex issues such as corruption involves a diverse array of policy advisory actors whose contributions significantly impact the quality and effectiveness of the resulting policies (Boone et al., 2019). These actors include governmental bodies, international organizations, businesses, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), and independent policy experts, who fall within the business and civil society PAS actors studied in this research. Government bodies, particularly the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC), play a central role in formulating and implementing anticorruption policies. The EACC's mandate includes advising the government on necessary policy changes and ensuring compliance with existing laws and hence they can be classified as state PAS actors. However, studies show their effectiveness as state PAS actors is often hampered by political interference and insufficient resources, which can compromise the quality of their advice (Transparency International Kenya, 2020). This is further complicated by Kenya's sociocultural context, where corruption is "communalized" and attempts to take action against corrupt individuals provokes the wrath of the particular ethnic community where the culprit comes from (Njenga & Mugo, 2021). Additionally, Kenya's rather hierarchical society shows large social inequalities across gender and geographical locations, with the gap between the rich and the poor being one of the highest in the world (Njenga & Mugo, 2021). Compounding this, is the structure of PAS in Kenya, where there is no formalized system for the PAS actors to engage in policy advisory work, as policymakers mainly rely on reactive, ad hoc and transplanted policies offered by a myriad of actors, majority of whom do not have the technical capacity to offer advice and provide "cut and paste" solutions, which are rarely tailor made for Kenya's context (Njenga & Mugo, 2021).

Thus, we see a sense within which Kenya's policy advisory system is still stuck in the first wave of PAS scholarship, where "politization" occurs with insiders in government providing the bulk of the policy advice, despite the presence of international organizations, such as the United Nations and the World Bank who provide critical support in terms of funding, expertise, and best practices (World Bank, 2022). These organizations help bridge the resource gaps faced by local agencies and offer a global perspective that could potentially enhance policy quality but whose policy uptake is not well documented (World Bank, 2022). Furthermore, the World Bank's governance indicators and corruption perception indices provide valuable data but it is not clear how these inform quality policy decisions in the anticorruption policymaking process. It is therefore important to delve deeper into the policy actor dynamics among the state, business, and civil society PAS actors, as research evidence from Kenya shows that policymakers

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did not always find advice from these development cooperation actors helpful and the usefulness of such advice depended mainly on its content and how it was delivered (Linnea, 2019).

Other NGOs and civil society organizations that are instrumental in advocating for transparency and accountability in Kenya include Transparency International. These conduct research, raise public awareness, and lobby for policy reforms and are construed to be part of the civil society PAS actors for purposes of this paper (Transparency International Kenya, 2020). Their grassroots connection allows them to provide grounded, context-specific advice that reflects the needs and concerns of the Kenyan populace (Transparency International Kenya, 2020). Academia also contributes significantly to the policy advisory landscape through research and expert analysis and conduct studies that highlight corruption patterns, assess the effectiveness of existing policies, and propose evidence-based solutions and are considered part of the civil society PAS actors in this research paper. For example, research by the University of Nairobi has provided insights into the socioeconomic impacts of corruption and the efficacy of anticorruption strategies (Njenga & Mugo, 2021). Independent policy experts offer specialized knowledge and often act as consultants to both government and nongovernment entities (Njenga & Mugo, 2021) and form part of the civil society PAS actors in this research.

The profiles of these Kenyan PAS actors and the trajectories of their advice quality, varied. For instance, the state PAS actors were known to be politically influenced and pursued policies that aligned with their political "godfathers" agenda (Njenga & Mugo, 2021). Thus, the trajectory of their policy advice would more or less follow the "politization" wave in PAS scholarship. The business PAS actors on the hand would be viewed within the "externalization" wave, as they were drawn from outside government. However, studies showed they were influenced by politicians, and as such, did not pursue independent agendas but tried to maximize their interests through sycophancy (Njenga & Mugo, 2021). The civil society PAS actors on the other hand, were within the "externalization" wave of PAS scholarship. Evidence shows that these were independent and tended to push policies that were for the greater public good (Njenga & Mugo, 2021). Thus, there is a way that Kenya is caught up in the second wave of PAS scholarship where "externalization" of PAS advice has occurred through the use of such civil society PAS actors. Their impartiality can enhance the credibility of the advice provided, although research shows their influence is sometimes limited by political and bureaucratic hurdles, and Kenya is still caught up in the "politicization" wave and has not moved fully into the "externalization" wave (Cheeseman & Peiffer, 2021).

Although anticorruption policymaking in Kenya is currently centralized within the national government, evidence shows that subnational governments are responsible for implementing national-level anticorruption policies and are expected to be at the forefront of anticorruption initiatives within their jurisdictions (EACC, 2015). Furthermore, the 2010 Kenyan Constitution requires the devolved units of government to enhance accountability, reduce corruption, and improve service delivery (EACC, 2015). However, research shows that corruption continues to undermine the effectiveness of these reforms, particularly in larger counties like Kiambu and Nairobi City, where the concentration of political and economic power has led to entanglements between state actors, businesses, and civil society (UNDP, 2022). Further evidence shows that PAS actors, which include state officials, private sector representatives, and civil society organizations, play critical roles in the policy advice process, but their effectiveness varies due to competing interests, power dynamics, and often compromised ethical standards (EACC, 2015).

Despite these PAS actors playing a critical role in policymaking, there is inadequate empirical evidence interrogating the quality of policy advice they provide to policymakers. This paper looks at three critical players in the policy advisory system in Kenya's subnational governments: the state, business and civil society. The state consists of public sector employees working within the county government who are also insiders in government. The business consists of private sector stakeholder groups who are external to government. The civil society consists of nonprofit organizations, think tanks, expert panels, and consultative groups that offer advocacy support to vulnerable stakeholder groups, and are external to the government. State actors were of particular interest in this study as they exhibited less than desirable behaviors and had been mentioned in corruption scandals in both Kiambu and Nairobi City counties (EACC, 2021). Business actors were of interest as they were linked to sycophancy (and toadyism) as they sought to curry favor from state actors, while the civil society actors exhibited signs of disengagement due to frustrations from state and business actors within the anticorruption policymaking process in both counties (EACC, 2021).

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Theoretical framework

Current approaches have viewed the development of quality of policy advice as linear, moving from "politicization" to "externalization" within the PAS scholarship (Craft & Howlett, 2013). This approach has situated PAS actors' proximity to the policymakers and determined policy advice quality based on such distance. Thus, state PAS actors are considered more knowledgeable of the inner workings of government and it is assumed their policy advice would be of a high quality. Conversely, business and civil society PAS actors would be considered external to the policymakers and so their advice would be deemed to be of a higher quality due to their independence from government.

This paper attempts to fill the gap left by this linear approach through the application of novel tools such as MSF and SERVQUAL. The SERVQUAL model is utilized to interrogate the quality of policy advice provided by state, business, and civil society PAS actors and MSF is used to complement SERVQUAL due to its ability to explain the chaotic nature of policy-making, where the quality of policy advice provided by a PAS actor is not always taken into account in determining policy outcomes. MSF's logic would assist us understand the behavior of PAS actors in influencing policy advice quality, which is akin to policy entrepreneurs in the policy process. MSF would also help us understand the chaotic nature of policymaking, where policies get dropped and others get selected, without regard to their quality.

The paper introduces SERVQUAL as a suitable model for interrogating the quality of policy advice from PAS actors. Thus, for policy advice to be deemed to be of good quality, it must meet the SERVQUAL criteria of reliability, assurance, tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness (Prentkovskis et al., 2018; Raza et al., 2020). Applying this model to policy advice quality means that the policy advice given by these actors should be dependable and accurate, if it is to meet the criteria of reliability. It must also meet the assurance criteria by inspiring confidence and trust, through the PAS actor's expert knowledge and courtesy in policy delivery (Prentkovskis et al., 2018). Furthermore, the PAS actor should have physical facilities in the form of equipment, personnel, and communication materials available for policy advice, in order to meet the tangibles criterion (Prentkovskis et al., 2018). For the empathy criterion, the PAS actor's officers must give individual attention and have a caring attitude to the policymakers when delivering policy advice (Prentkovskis et al., 2018). The responsiveness criterion is met when the PAS actor's officers are willing to help and provide prompt policy advice to the policymakers (Prentkovskis et al., 2018).

By utilizing the SERVQUAL model, the study makes a departure from current scholarly approaches that have portrayed corruption as a principal–agent problem (Brierley, 2019), which has subsequently informed anticorruption policymaking processes. There is need for new approaches, given the ineffectiveness of current anticorruption measures in countries with systemic corruption, particularly in Africa (Brierley, 2019).

The paper further introduces MSF as a viable framework that helps overcome some of the limitations of previous models. MSF helps navigate the fluidity, ambiguity and complexity inherent in anticorruption policymaking processes, and has particularly been deemed suitable for devolved jurisdictions and comparative studies (Herweg, 2023). By doing so, the paper hopes to make insightful empirical and theoretical contributions that will contribute to anticorruption theory making in Africa.

MSF was developed by John Kingdon to explain how policies are formulated through the convergence of three independent streams: the problem stream, which recognizes issues that require attention, the policy stream which provides solutions or proposals that are viable, and the politics stream, which provides the political will, the public opinion or the government action that makes policymaking possible (Herweg, 2023). MSF thus seeks to explain what happens in the policymaking process and why some policies get dropped while others are selected. Its fundamental philosophical underpinning is that policymaking is a chaotic process that does not happen in any particular order (Zohlnhofer et al., 2015). It portrays policymaking as a complex, unpredictable, and ambiguous process that could be likened to "streams" with parallel processes, where solutions are chasing problems. The theory postulates the existence of three "streams" that flow parallel to each other, in the policymaking space.

The "problem stream" consists of various players, such as the state, business, and civil society, all engaging in contestations about issues that they would like to be recognized as problems (Herweg, 2023). The stream deals with issues that require attention from the government. Problems are recognized through indicators, focusing events, or feedback from existing programs. However, simply identifying a problem does not automatically place it on the agenda. The ripening of this stream occurs when an issue becomes identified as a "problem" that the government needs to resolve (Barkhorn et al., 2013). The

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ripening of this stream may also be due to "focusing events" such as scandals in government that may cause the public to take up an issue and demand action, or *force majeure* situations, such as earthquakes (Knaggard, 2015).

The theory additionally postulates the existence of a parallel "policy stream" that is dominated by a myriad of players engaging in contestations about solutions to problems, unaware of the problems or contestations in the "problem stream" (Knaggard, 2015). This is where policy formulation occurs. In this stream, various ideas and solutions are generated, debated, and refined by policy communities, experts, and analysts (Knaggard, 2015). Proposals are developed and evaluated for their feasibility, acceptability, and potential to solve the identified problems (Knaggard, 2015). It is within this stream that the substantive discussion of ideas and solutions takes place, and where these ideas are shaped into policy proposals that can be brought to the forefront of the agenda (Knaggard, 2015). In this stream, various solutions or policy alternatives are proposed and debated by experts, analysts, and policymakers. It is within this stream that ideas are developed, refined, and selected based on their feasibility, acceptability, and potential impact (Knaggard, 2015). Agenda setting occurs here as these ideas gain traction and become seen as viable solutions to the identified problems. The stream consists of players such as think tanks from civil society and business and government (Hutchinson et al., 2019). Policy formulation also occurs in this stream as different solutions and proposals are crafted and developed by policy entrepreneurs and experts, awaiting a suitable opportunity to be adopted when the streams converge. These actors are deemed to engage in lobbying and influence peddling, as they seek to ensure their preferred policy position is adopted (Aviram et al., 2019). The theory foresees "focusing events" for this stream occurring when new information comes into the stream, prompting actors to change their positions on an issue (Wals et al., 2019).

The "political stream" on the other hand consists of matters that are within the political domain. These could be issues of general public interest, or changes in the administration of government (Ruvalcaba-Gomez et al., 2020). This stream involves the political climate and public mood, including changes in government, shifts in national mood, interest group campaigns, election results, and other political dynamics (Knaggard, 2015). Shifts in the political stream can create favorable conditions for certain issues to be prioritized on the policy agenda. However, the stream is equally heavily contested, as solutions and problems are dropped by various political players, depending on the political mood of the time, in a chaotic policymaking process (Ruvalcaba-Gomez et al., 2020). Thus, political calculations are made, based on what is expedient for the political class, and there is no predictable outcome in this stream (Hoefer, 2022).

Closely related to these three streams, is the "policy window" which represents an unpredictable opening in the policymaking process when a policy might be enacted (Herweg, 2023). Agenda setting in the MSF framework is a dynamic process that occurs when the three streams intersect during a window of opportunity. The "coupling" or coming together of the three streams, is said to create a "policy window" when policymaking might be possible. However, due to the difficulty in "coupling" a "policy window" does not automatically open up when the three streams converge, as the process is quite chaotic. The timing of such a window is said to be haphazard and may be for only a short duration (Hoefer, 2022). The theory also sees occasions when no policymaking takes place despite the opening of a "policy window" and situations where a "policy window" does not open up for several years. Thus, the streams are unpredictable, and possibilities of action and inaction, are all outcomes within the policymaking space. Closely tied to the three streams and to policy windows, MSF postulates the presence of "policy entrepreneurs." These are players within the "policy stream" that lobby for their preferred pet projects (Ederfors, 2020). They often invest massive resources to get their way, influence policy agendas and gain attention for their preferred policy outcome (Engler & Herweg, 2019).

Although MSF and SERVQUAL model are two distinct concepts from different fields, with MSF being a public policy theory and SERVQUAL being a service quality management theory, they provide useful lenses for understanding decision-making and performance in public service delivery, and can be interrelated in contexts where the quality of policy advice seeks to improve outcomes or reforms (Raza et al., 2020). For example, MSF's problem stream may be instrumental in identifying problems and service quality gaps by bringing to the surface public service issues such as inefficiency and corruption that require government intervention (Zohlnhofer et al., 2015). The SERVQUAL dimensions such as lack of reliability and unresponsiveness in the delivery of policy advice from state actors could serve as concrete indicators that public service reforms are needed (Zohlnhofer et al., 2015). For example, a

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low score in reliability (through failure to deliver services as promised) or unresponsiveness (through delays in service delivery from the state actors) could highlight pressing public sector inefficiencies that require government intervention (Raza et al., 2020).

When we interrogate the policy proposals to improve advice quality from various PAS actors within MSF's policy stream, the SERVQUAL model can be integrated to shape reforms aimed at improving the level of policy advice (Zohlnhofer et al., 2015). Proposals might focus on improving tangibles under SERVQUAL such as modernizing government facilities or providing much needed equipment for PAS actors, or enhancing assurance and empathy through staff training programmes that seek to improve customer interaction and trust in public institutions (Raza et al., 2020).

Further, the politics stream within MSF may create the political momentum required for reforms, based on public demand for quality services (Zohlnhofer et al., 2015). It is worth noting that the politics stream within MSF reflects the political climate and public sentiment. If citizens express dissatisfaction with poor public services-highlighted by the lack of reliability or empathy from PAS actors- politicians may seize the moment to champion for public sector service reforms (Zohlnhofer et al., 2015). Thus, the SERVQUAL dimensions could help policymakers quantify service issues and rally political support for initiatives aimed at enhancing policy advice quality among PAS actors.

A good example to illustrate how MSF aligns with SERVQUAL is the issue of healthcare reforms (Zohlnhofer et al., 2015). In such a scenario, MSF might identify within the problem stream, poor health services as a crisis that has been exacerbated by low reliability and a lack of responsiveness from PAS actors whose poor advice causes long waiting times at the hospitals and poor quality of care (Zohlnhofer et al., 2015). The policy stream in such a situation would propose interventions such as better staffing, improved technology, or customer service training to enhance assurance and empathy. The politics stream would then align these reforms due to public demand for more accountable and responsive healthcare services, thus opening a policy window for reforming the policy advisory system and public service delivery (Zohlnhofer et al., 2015).

Thus, although MSF and SERVQUAL belong to different theoretical fields, they interrelate when used to improve policy advice quality. The SERVQUAL model can operationalize and measure the quality of policy advice provided by PAS actors while MSF helps to explain how, why, and when policies aimed at improving the quality of policy advice emerge. By focusing on the convergence of problems, policies, and politics, MSF creates an opportunity for policy changes that address gaps highlighted by the SERVQUAL dimensions. Thus, MSF is a robust framework for understanding how policy issues emerge, are framed, and adopted within policymaking systems. Although its usefulness in analyzing policymaking in conditions of uncertainty has been recognized in the USA and many western countries, and now spans over four decades of scholarship, there is little evidence of its applicability in low-and middle-income countries such as Kenya (Ruvalcaba-Gomez et al., 2020). This paper is an attempt to fill this gap.

Research design and methodology

The paper is based on research that utilized a qualitative interpretative and phenomenological research design. This approach aims to explore the respondent's experiences and how they made sense of those experiences, through their own lived-in stories, without distortion (Alase, 2017). This approach is informed by the Dasein research tradition, through the philosophy of Martin Heidegger, which is a form of being aware of one's personhood, in relation to other humans while at the same time, being alone with oneself (Frechette et al., 2020). This approach was preferred due to its exploratory capability to investigate lived in experiences at a deeper level and to bring to the surface, issues that may be taken for granted (Alase, 2017). The paper is based on a study that carried out qualitative interviews and focus group discussions (FGDs). The FGDs consisted of participants representing key stakeholders from each county. Such stakeholders included professionals, politicians, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), persons living with disability, religious groups, business groups, youth, women, and minorities. Thus, each FGD had nine participants. These were conveniently sampled from lists supplied by the County Governments of Kiambu and Nairobi. A semistructured interview guide with a set of discussion questions and prompts for the session was utilized to guide the discussions. The researcher guided the discussions in an informal venue where the participants felt free to discuss the topic at hand.

In addition, in-depth interviews were conducted with 63 respondents from 10 strategic functions within each county's government, namely: supply chain, finance, revenue, payroll, human resources, authority to incur expenditure, communications, information communications technology (ICT), public

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Table 1. Units of analysis and observation.

Units of analysis	Units of observation	Total
2 Counties	10 Public officers (executive)	20
2 Counties	8 Public officers (legislature)	16
2 Counties	9 Key stakeholder groups	18
2 Counties	12 Suppliers (executive)	24
2 Counties	12 Suppliers (legislature)	24
2 Counties	12 Members of the public	24
Total:	**63 Units of observation**	**126**

Source: author.

participation, and sub-county administration. These respondents were conveniently sampled from lists provided by the County Governments. The interviews took place at their work places, and informal venues for participants who needed privacy. Each interview took about one hour. A semistructured interview guide was utilized to guide the interview and provide prompts for each session.

Interviews were also held with 12 members of the public who were conveniently sampled from various service delivery points at the time of the research, from each county. This decision was informed by the literature review, which revealed a need to sample members of the public drawn from various service delivery points, such as water billing points, revenue collection points, markets, car parks, slaughter houses, and hospitals. The choice of 12 was informed by research showing that non probabilistic sample sizes are deemed to reach saturation within the first 12 interviews, with key elements and critical meta-themes present as early as the sixth interview (Maher et al., 2018).

Twenty-four suppliers of goods and services to each County Government were also interviewed, providing a comprehensive view of the stakeholders involved in the anticorruption policy process. These suppliers consisted of 12 traders from the executive and 12 from the legislative arms of the county governments and were singled out for interviews as they faced certain vulnerabilities while trying to get tenders to supply goods and services, and to obtain payments for their suppliers, in the counties. The numbers of how many to interview was guided by empirical studies showing that qualitative samples reach saturation within the first 12 interviews and major thematic elements emerge as early as the sixth interview (Maher et al., 2018).

The two counties identified for this study were purposively sampled. The study identified these counties for having been mentioned adversely in government reports with deteriorating public services and the impeachment of their governors and their arraignment in court for corruption (Auditor General, 2018).

Additionally, the two counties were fairly cosmopolitan and bordered each other, with residents working and residing in either, hence faced similar challenges (Auditor General, 2018). An observation guide was utilized for the collection of nonverbal cues and contextual information during the interviews and focus group discussions, thus enhancing the richness of the data collected. This multimethod approach enabled the researcher to capture a wide range of perspectives and experiences related to the PAS actors' roles and the quality of policy advice they provide. The units of analysis and observation were as shown on Table 1.

Data analysis and findings

The collected data consisted of a massive trove of information. It was transcribed verbatim and then subjected to a rigorous, qualitative, thematic analysis using NVIVO software. The first step undertaken in analyzing the data was data familiarization. The researcher went through the materials, transcripts, and field notes, writing down the preliminary ideas that emerged through reading of the materials. The process of data reduction was an iterative process, where the researcher would go through the materials and amend the emerging themes, as part of the analysis. The process of bringing structure and meaning to the data was lengthy. It involved coding and summarizing the massive data into simpler patterns, with the help of NVIVO software. It also involved noting any theoretical ideas emerging from a reading of the materials and looking out for key issues and areas of interest. After accumulating several codes, various themes emerged. This required the researcher to go back and forth and look at the

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Table 2. SERVQUAL category and selected quotes.

SERVQUAL category	Selected quotes
Reliability	*Hawa wanabiashara wanapenda kuwekwa kwa makamati na serikali na sioni kazi yao. Lakini ma NGOs wakiwekwa, tunaona matunda. Wanatutetea. Wanakuwanga na wataalamu na ma-think tanks mingi yakutusaidia*. (These business PAS actors push to be appointed into advisory committees by the government and I do not see their impact. But when civil society PAS actors (NGOs) are appointed, we see the fruits. They fight for us. They have experts and think tanks to help us). (Respondent N45).
	Hawa watu wa gava, huleta mambo ya kumaliza ufisadi wakati wanajua tuko na uchaguzi. Wakati hakuna uchaguzi, wizi mtupu ya mali ya uma, inaendelea. (These state PAS actors acknowledge the issue of tackling corruption when they know we are about to have elections. When there are no elections, all that happens is theft of public funds). (Respondent K19).
Assurance	*Wanabiashara wanaenda huko kuhakikisha vile wanataka ndivyo serikali itatenda. Hawaendi huko kushughulikia sisi raia…na wale wako serikalini wanaenda huko kushughulikia wanasi-asa. Wale wanaoweza kwenda huko kututetea ni wana NGO tu*. (The business actors participate in the policymaking forums to ensure what they want is what the govern-ment will do. They do not go there to safeguard the interests of the public…and those actors from government go there to take care of the politicians' interests. Those who can participate to fight for us, are the civil society actors) (Respondent K29).
Tangibles	*Hawa wa civil society ndio wanawezana na hiyo maneno. Wanang'ang'ana mpaka serikali inachukua hatua. Wenye biashara hawaonangi tukifinyiriwa. Na kazi ya serikali ni kutufinyiria…* (Those from the civil society are the ones who are able to press for those decisions. They fight until the government takes action. Those in business do not see us suffering. And the work of the government is to oppress…) (Respondent N22).
	These civil society groups are good at negotiating and ensuring consensus is achieved among different players during policy formulation. They help everyone to make a settlement and agree on the way forward. (Respondent K10).
Empathy	These bureaucrats are good at balancing interests during implementation. They do not always follow the policy but amend it to suit various interests, especially those from businesses. (Respondent K61).
Responsiveness	*Watu wa biashara wanakuwanga na monitoring na evaluation zao wanafanya on government policies, zile zinawa-affect. Halafu wanakusanya ushahidi ndio wapindue policy zile zinawagusa vibaya*. (Business PAS actors carry out their own monitoring and evaluation on govern-ment policies that touch on their operations. They collate evidence to overturn policies that adversely affect them). (Respondent K35).

Source:author.

relevant literature, in order to position the body of knowledge within PAS scholarship. Simultaneously, the researcher reflected on the textual data, noting similarities and differences.

During coding, K was used to represent Kiambu county and N for Nairobi City county. All the interviewees were assigned Numbers 1 to 63 as part of the anonymization process. Specific aspects researched through the text data included key words and themes that affected policy advice quality such as PAS actor resources, PAS actor priorities, PAS actor interests, PAS actor values and ethical views, political interference, power dynamics, corruption, conflict of interest, competing interests, resource availability, technical capacity, political goodwill, and bureaucratic hurdles. The voices and opinions that emerged from specific categories of respondents were captured and formed part of the results in this paper. After coding and applying the MSF logic and SERVQUAL model to the data, the emerging themes were segregated into five different categories, using the SERVQUAL criteria of Reliability, Assurance, Tangibles, Empathy, and Responsiveness. These categories are reported as findings in this paper and they reflect the opinions of public officers holding strategic positions within the anticorruption policymaking processes in Kiambu and Nairobi City counties, suppliers to the county governments, key stakeholders, and members of the public, within these two counties. The SERVQUAL categories and quotes under each section are provided in Table 2.

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Table 3. Factors affecting quality of policy advice within state, business, and civil society PAS actors.

	Factors affecting quality of policy advice	State PAS actors	Business PAS actors	Civil society PAS actors
1.	Actors' resources	Respondents felt these were well resourced and mainly relied on the Business and Civil Society actors	Respondents felt these were well resourced and would come to the aid of the State and Civil Society actors	Respondents felt these were not well resources and relied on donors and resources from the state and business actors.
2.	Actors' priorities	Respondents felt the state actors did not prioritize anticorruption issues and would only act if pressurized by the business and civil society actors.	Respondents felt business actors did not prioritize anticorruption policymaking unless the issue at hand aligned with their interests.	Respondents felt the civil society actors prioritized anticorruption policymaking but did not receive adequate support on this from the state and business actors.
3.	Actors' interests	Respondents felt the state actors were not interested in anticorruption policymaking as they were beneficiaries of corruption.	Respondents felt the business actors were only interested in prioritizing anticorruption when an issue converged with their own interests.	Respondents felt the civil society actors were interested in anticorruption but did not receive adequate support from the state and business actors.
4.	Political interference	Respondents felt that state actors experienced political interference which made anticorruption policymaking difficult.	Respondents felt the business actors were influenced by politicians to drop anticorruption agendas.	Respondents felt some civil society actors were intimidated to stop pushing for anticorruption agendas by state and business actors.

Source: author.

Furthermore, in order to contribute more effectively to comparative policy analysis and PAS literature, Table 3 is hereby presented, highlighting a summary of the respondents' views on the differences in the quality of policy advice from the three PAS actors.

The findings were also analyzed within MSF's streams to demonstrate how anticorruption issues came into the policy agenda and explain policy outcomes, as presented below:

Problem stream

The PAS actors' ability to deliver dependable advice that is accurate was tested within the MSF logic at different stages of the policymaking process. In the problem identification stage, which is the first step towards policymaking in MSF logic, PAS actors competed to influence the formulation of problems. They tended to conceptualize problems differently and work at cross purposes with each other. For example, respondents drawn from the youth who were a key stakeholder within the focus group discussions felt that the state PAS actors were not interested in identifying corruption as a problem but rather more interested in suppressing it. They also felt that these officials were corrupt and did not prioritize or advise policymakers to address it. They also said it was mainly the civil society PAS actors that were more interested in raising the problem of corruption and utilizing their own resources to bring out the issues. They claimed the business PAS actors were involved in corruption and acquiescent to the issues and preferred not to antagonize the government policymakers, to safeguard their own business interests.

Thus, the state PAS actors were compromised and could not offer advice that met the SERVQUAL standard of reliability. They were not willing to support the advisees and provide accurate and dependable advice, due to their conflicted nature. This situation, when looked through the lenses of "politicization" where PAS actors found within government were insiders and could therefore not offer

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independent advice, is quite telling of the level of policy advice quality. The fact that the state PAS actors were more interested in suppressing the corruption problem is also quite worrying. Instead of advancing the public interest, they were more concerned in promoting their own private interest. Thus, the situation depicts state PAS actors who had become a liability to the public.

According to MSF, the state PAS actor's presence in the problem stream would subvert the ripening of the problem stream. Such actors could engage in thwarting the actions of other players that may be trying to package the issues as problems that the government needs to solve. The data show that the respondents felt the state PAS actors were corrupt and this is supported by evidence from studies showing corruption scandals among state PAS actors in Kenya (EACC, 2015). Furthermore, according to MSF logic, an issue must first be recognised as a problem before it can be addressed by the government and hence the actions of these state and business PAS actors shows the problem stream is not likely to ripen any time soon. Thus, anticorruption policymaking is unlikely to happen unless the other players in the problem stream such as the civil society PAS actors, are able to overcome this resistance.

The data show that the civil society PAS actors were championing the public interest and raising the issue of corruption with the policymakers. Thus, these actors could be deemed to give policy advice quality that was accurate and dependable in accordance with the SERVQUAL model. These civil society PAS actors could be deemed to be acting as policy entrepreneurs within the meaning of MSF as they championed the greater public good and invested their resources and time, to influence anticorruption problem identification. They were quite active in the MSF problem stream and could thus be deemed to be helping shape the progress and ripening of this stream.

The business PAS actors on the other hand were not active in the problem stream, as they did not want to jeopardize their businesses by being politically incorrect. They were careful and treading in silence, to avoid problems with the government. This shows their business interests were paramount, and not the greater public good. If we subject the quality of their policy advice against the SERVQUAL model, we find that they fell short of the requirement of reliability, as they could not be relied on to give accurate and dependable advice on corruption. The respondents also felt these PAS actors were involved in corruption and this may explain why they were not very active in MSF's problem stream. Thus, they preferred to play sycophancy to the policymakers' interests and to curry favor with government. This made it difficult to identify corruption as an issue that the government needed to solve.

Respondent from the NGOs were quick to point out that the public mostly loses interest in corruption issues due to the hard stand taken by state PAS actors and moves on. They gave the example of public pressure on corruption scandals that were reported in the media by civil society PAS actors in both Kiambu and Nairobi city counties, and later dropped from the public agenda, after the public lost interest in the cases, and politicians were let to go scotch free. Thus, policy formulation does not always happen even when the window of opportunity occurs and it was frustrating that the efforts of civil society PAS actors did not always bear fruit.

According to respondents from the religious community, when it came to problem identification at the counties, there was a lot of vested interests especially from the political stream as exemplified by state PAS actors, where the issue of governors who had been charged with corruption were required to step aside from office, but in actual sense, they did not vacate office, but continued in office and used the opportunity to cover up their corruption. The respondent explained that state PAS advisors would support these politicians in drumming up public sympathy and using diversionary tactics to ensure the public did not focus on the critical issues surrounding corruption. This further confirms the autopoietic nature of corruption where state PAS actors and factors in the political stream would serve to thwart anticorruption efforts. This means the quality of state PAS actors' advice would not meet the SERVQUAL standard of empathy.

Policy stream

At the policy formulation stage, the data from respondent N45 shows the business PAS actors were eager to serve in government advisory committees and the respondent did not see the value they brought to these committees. Thus, when viewed from the respondent's standpoint, the quality of the business PAS actor's advice was poor. In SERVQUAL terms, the policy advice quality from these actors did not meet the reliability criteria as they could not be dependable.

However, these data contradict empirical evidence from a study that found that business PAS actors in Kenya were actually able to influence public policy when appointed into government policy advisory

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committees, through the provision of research evidence (Irwin & Kyande, 2023). Other studies done in Kenya found that when policy advisory actors from the state dominated the public policymaking process, many nonstate policy advisory actors (like those found in business) felt constrained, and it was only a few private multinational companies and international NGOs that were successful in influencing public policy (Barasa et al., 2017). Thus, to some extent, these studies affirm this data.

At the agenda-setting stage, respondents from those living with disability viewed the civil society PAS actors as more reliable, as they actively fought for the public's viewpoints and had experts and think tanks to provide research evidence. This shows that the civil society PAS actors met the SERVQUAL standard of accuracy and reliability in providing quality advice. They could also be deemed to be policy entrepreneurs due to their commitment and devotion to their preferred policy outcome. According to the MSF logic, the business PAS actors and the civil society PAS actors could be construed to be within the "policy stream," where policy contestations took place, as policies chased problems, in a chaotic process that characterizes MSF's three streams.

The knowledge and ability of the PAS actors to inspire confidence and trust in those they are advising and within the public was tested within the MSF's streams Within the policy stream for instance, where agenda setting takes place, as solutions chased problems, fierce policy contestations occurred among the various PAS actors, as reported by respondents from the religious class who viewed the conflicts as destructive. The respondents felt business PAS actors promoted their own interests while state PAS actors promoted weak policies that would not be effective in tackling corruption, as they did not wish to deal with corruption. Thus, business PAS actors were interested in setting an anticorruption agenda that served their own interests and not that of the public and other stakeholders. The data further show business PAS actors fighting within the policy stream with the civil society PAS actors, to ensure their interests prevailed, as reported by respondents from the religious community. When viewed from the SERVQUAL model, this kind of self-serving policy advice, does not meet the standards of assurance, as it does not inspire confidence or trust among the members of the public and the policymakers receiving the advice.

When the state PAS actors' actions are viewed through the MSF logic, we see them participating in the policy stream as state technocrats or political appointees. According to respondents drawn from the nongovernment sector during the focus group discussions state PAS actors participated in the policy implementation by promoting the interests of politicians who often appointed them into policymaking positions. By promoting the interests of the political class instead of the greater public good, the quality of their policy advice could not be deemed to meet the SERVQUAL standard of assurance, as it did not inspire confidence or trust among the members of the public. Contrary to this position, civil society PAS actors were viewed as champions of public interest as reported by respondents from the minority stakeholders during the focus group discussions. This means their policy advice quality met the SERVQUAL standard of assurance as it inspired trust and confidence among the public. The contrasting interests and contestations between these actors show the chaotic nature of policymaking under conditions of uncertainty as expounded by MSF theory.

Respondents who held strategic public offices further raised the issue of external focusing events that sometimes upset the agendas of PAS actors in the policy stream. They gave the example of increased traffic accidents in Kenya due to bribery of police and county enforcement officers by public vehicle operators, so that they could turn a blind eye to their defective vehicles and condone over speeding and breaking of road rules, and the role the media played in highlighting these issues to the public. They explained that it took the tragic loss of lives of school children, which were highlighted in the media, for the government to start cracking down on corruption in the road sector. The data showed the media was an important civil society PAS actor who pushed the public interest agenda on this issue. Thus, the level of policy advice quality from this actor met the SERVQUAL test of assurance, as it inspired confidence and trust in the process. On the other hand, the state PAS actors in the form of police and county enforcement personnel were beneficiaries of corruption and actively promoting corruption, to the detriment of the public. Thus, their policy advice quality did not meet the SERVQUAL standard of assurance, as it did not inspire confidence or trust in the public due to its being tainted by corruption. The public vehicle operators who are part of the business PAS actors were also in this category, as they were only interested in their bottom line, which was to make money. Thus, their level of policy advice quality, could not meet the SERVQUAL standard of assurance, as it was also tainted with corruption. Bribing suited business interests, at the expense of the greater public.

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The data showed civil society and business PAS actors mobilizing resources to influence agendas in the anticorruption policymaking processes. This was reported by respondents from the legislative arm of the county government who further said that this was prominent during discussions that touched on public and business interests, with civil society PAS actors taking the side of the public and business PAS actors pushing for their own interests. This led to a push-and-pull situation due to clash of opinions, which according to MSF logic, is characteristic of policy contestations within the policy stream. In terms of the SERVQUAL model for assurance, the business PAS actors could not be deemed to provide advice that met the assurance criteria, as they only pushed for their own interests and not the greater public good. Respondents from the legislative arm of the county governments explained that civil society PAS actors would normally organize themselves into coalitions with other actors, to create numbers and pressurize others to join their cause. The respondent added that these PAS actors also mobilized members of the public and invested their own resources in the anticorruption policy processes. This meant their policy advice quality met the SERVQUAL standard of assurance, as it inspired trust. Within the MSF logic, we see the business PAS actors acting as policy entrepreneurs as they are interested in pushing for their preferred policy outcome. In the same way, we can deduce the civil society PAS actors played the role of policy entrepreneurs within this context by utilizing their own resources and mobilizing others, in order to obtain support for their preferred policy outcome.

The researcher analyzed the PAS actors' accessibility to equipment, information, personnel, and tools they required to produce quality advice within the SERVQUAL model of tangibles at different policymaking stages and within MSF's three streams The data collected showed a lot of activity within the policy stream from the three PAS actors and the presence of various tools, equipment, information and resources. Respondent drawn from the women stakeholders during the focus group discussions singled out civil society PAS actors as deeply invested in policy formulation as they carried out research to generate evidence to inform policymaking processes. The respondent also said they acted as policy entrepreneurs by pushing for specific policy outcomes. In MSF logic, policy entrepreneurs play an important role in bringing to the attention of key decision makers in the politics stream the solutions to the problems they have identified (Ederfors, 2020). They are also good at exploiting focusing events to bring about policy change. Therefore, in terms of the SERVQUAL model, they score highly on the policy quality advice scale, due to the availability of these tangibles.

The researcher analyzed the PAS actors' accessibility to equipment, information, personnel, and tools they required to produce quality advice within the SERVQUAL model of tangibles at different policymaking stages and within MSF's three streams The data collected showed a lot of activity within the policy stream from the three PAS actors and the presence of various tools, equipment, information, and resources. Respondent N22 singled out civil society PAS actors as deeply invested in policy formulation as they carried out research to generate evidence to inform policymaking processes. The respondent also said they acted as policy entrepreneurs by pushing for specific policy outcomes. In MSF logic, policy entrepreneurs play an important role in bringing to the attention of key decision makers in the politics stream the solutions to the problems they have identified (Ederfors, 2020). They are also good at exploiting focusing events to bring about policy change. Therefore, in terms of the SERVQUAL model, they score highly on the policy quality advice scale, due to the availability of these tangibles.

Respondent K10 was of the opinion that business PAS actors were not alive to the suffering of the public when it came to the issue of corruption as they did not invest in information, tools, equipment and resources to fight it. The respondent had also observed their indifference to the issue of corruption, in general. Such business PAS actors would not subsequently offer advice that would meet the SERVQUAL standard of tangibles in the absence of critical resources required to make quality decisions.

In contrast, the data show that civil society PAS actors were good at helping focus attention to the MSF solution-problem package, and gathering support for the same within the policy stream in a bid to influence policy outcomes. Information from respondents within government confirmed the civil society PAS actors were lobbying and canvassing their cases within the policy stream. This further confirmed their role as policy entrepreneurs in accordance with MSF logic. Other respondents such as religious leaders decried the poor decisions made by state PAS actors due to what they termed as "politicization." Some of those decisions included the decision for public officials who were charged with corruption, to stay in office, according to respondents from the religious groups. The respondent argued that this decision was made based on advice from state PAS actors who were under pressure

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from the political class. Respondents from the youth groups further added to this and said that politicization affected the business PAS actors, as they had to "sing the government's song." In other words, they were expected to endorse what the state PAS actors had recommended. The politicization equally affected the civil society according to respondents from the professional groups who shared that civil society would sometimes feel frustrated by the state and business PAS actors' efforts to thwart their moves and the collective reluctance to enact anticorruption policies, to an extent that they would start disengaging from the policymaking processes. When viewed from the SERVQUAL logic, the policy advice quality from such disengaged civil society PAS actors would be deemed to lack tangibles, as they would be unwilling to support the policymaking process and provide the requisite resources required to make policymaking happen.

The state PAS actors were said to take hardline positions and did not invest in anticorruption policymaking, as reported by respondents from those representing minorities, which shows their policy advice quality would not meet the SERVQUAL standard of tangibles. The civil society PAS actors were depicted as full invested and championing the interests of the public and hence meeting the SERVQUAL standards of tangibles. Within MSF logic, both of these PAS actors were policy entrepreneurs, albeit for different reasons and for different players. While the civil society PAS actors safeguarded the greater public good, the state PAS actors safeguarded their political bosses (who got away with corruption and were not held to account). Thus, the state PAS actors facilitated state capture.

The study analyzed PAS actors' packaging and customization of policy advice within the SERVQUAL model of empathy across various policymaking stages and within MSF's logic. Empathy within SERVQUAL model incorporates providing quality advice that is personalized and customized to meet the specific needs of the policymaker and the public. It requires that PAS actors are alive to the wants and needs of the consumers of their advice. The data collected shows that policy implementation activities that involve transforming enacted policies into action, mainly took place within MSF's policy stream. Respondents from NGOs shared that policy implementation was mainly carried out by state bureaucrats, who also doubled up as state PAS actors. Respondents from this group specifically gave the example of the wealth declaration policy whose objective was to identify corruptly acquired wealth among county public officials. The respondent reported the implementation of this policy was done by the same county officials who were the target of the policy and who were also supposed to provide policy advice on the same issue. Thus, we see the state PAS actors shaping the implementation agenda and acting as policy entrepreneurs at the same time. Such conflict of interest was likely to affect the quality of the advice they provided. Such advice could not be said to meet the SERVQUAL standard of empathy as it did not meet the needs and aspirations of the policymakers and public. Furthermore, the presence of such conflicted state PAS actors within the policy stream may explain the chaotic contestations found within the policy stream, as expounded by MSF logic, where policymaking is not an exact science in each of the three streams of MSF.

Respondents from strategic offices in government shared that state PAS actors were modifying policies before implementing them, especially the ones proposed by business PAS actors. The respondent said these modifications were to the detriment of the public and always favored the business PAS actors. Thus, we see a balancing of interests occurring at the policy implementation stage and policy amendments occurring due to interests from various directions. This means the state PAS actors were doubling up as street level bureaucrats. According to MSF logic, balancing of interests is one of the focusing events that could lead to the opening of a policy window. If the changes are substantial and affect other stakeholders, the issues are likely to gain traction and enter the problem stream, triggering another round of policymaking.

Respondents within strategic government functions felt the agenda-setting stage was substantively influenced by business PAS actors who were conflicted within the county government's anticorruption processes. The respondent attributed this to their involvement in advisory roles at policy formulation and problem identification stages within MSF logic. The respondent said this was problematic because they were chief beneficiaries of government policies. The respondent gave the example of private companies that were awarded tenders to collect revenue from the counties. In so doing, the private companies were involved in the policy formulation and implementation of revenue collection policies. Thus, the private companies were conflicted and could not be expected to offer independent service when it came to revenue policies. This means their advice could not meet the SERVQUAL standard of empathy and in accordance with MSF logic, the presence of such business PAS actors within the policy

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stream may explain the fluid and chaotic nature of policymaking under MSF, where solutions chase problems, and problems do not chase solutions.

Given the data that showed the business PAS actors were conflicted during policy agenda setting, it is not surprising that respondents from strategic offices in government felt these actors were not compliant with anticorruption policies during the implementation stage. For instance, they kept ignoring the provisions of the anticorruption policies regarding bribery and cooperated with corruption cartels within government, as it suited their own business interests, as reported by these respondents. This confirmed that business PAS actors could not be trusted and their policy advice quality did not meet the SERVQUAL standard of empathy. Within the MSF logic, having business PAS actors active within the policy stream as policy implementors created more chaos for policymaking, as more contestations would occur within this stream, as interests between state and business PAS actors fought for attention.

Other respondents from the professional groups felt the business PAS actors implemented the anticorruption policies selectively, implementing them half-heartedly and ignoring those that were not in their best interests. The respondent said the business actors would often leave government projects incomplete, and could get away with it, as they had the connections. Thus, there was impunity and lack of accountability. The data show us a situation where business PAS actors played a critical role in perpetuating the same corruption they are required to fight, and due to impunity and political connections, they are not held to account. The fact that they can get away with it, due to impunity, shows that corruption is an autopoietic system that was capable of self-replication through the same actors that were supposed to eradicate it within the policymaking process. Thus, the interests of business PAS actors and state PAS actors converged and would be fighting to prevail within MSF's policy stream.

Respondents from strategic offices in government additionally shared that civil society PAS actors were rarely involved in policy monitoring and evaluation, especially during critical stages of key projects that were prone to corruption. The respondents generally felt this led to poor oversight over anticorruption policies as large projects presented opportunities for corruption to thrive. In MSF, this is a critical step within the policy stream, as it had the capacity to flow into the problem stream, when issues that had not been implemented properly would evolve into new problems, kickstarting a new cycle of policymaking. Thus, policy monitoring and evaluation is an important stage within policymaking as it is through this phase that the policy is tested and retested in practice and lessons learned and ploughed back into the policymaking process. The phase often signals the beginning of another round of policymaking, as new issues emerge and old issues are redefined and enter the problem stream. As such, corruption continued within the counties due to a breakdown in this cycle. Thus, the absence of civil society at the monitoring and evaluation stage was a weak area in the anticorruption policymaking process.

The study analyzed PAS actors' willingness to support those they advised by providing prompt advice during the various policymaking stages within the SERVQUAL model of responsiveness. Respondents from strategic offices in government were of the view that during and after policy implementation, periodic monitoring and evaluation of anticorruption policies was mainly carried out by the county governments (state PAS actors), stakeholders in civil society (civil society PAS actors) and to some extent, by the business community (business PAS actors). They specifically felt this function was almost entirely left to the Auditor General's office, which carried out audits of county government expenditures and exposed embezzlement of public funds and other types of corruption. Thus, many state PAS actors at the county level did not participate. Respondent K42 shared that the state PAS actors who carried out the monitoring and evaluation from the national government, did not provide prompt advice to the counties, as their reports were presented to other bodies, such as parliament and the counties did not get to know the action areas that they need to take action on. The respondents further shared the presence of other government agencies, such as the Ethics and Anticorruption Commission (EACC) and the inspectorate of state corporations who also carried out some level of monitoring and evaluation of the anticorruption policies and said that the recommendations of these agencies were never ploughed back to inform anticorruption measures within the counties due to lack of communication between these bodies and the counties.

Additionally, the respondents shared that some county government departments and agencies had their own internal monitoring and evaluation mechanisms, which were carried out by state PAS actors within the county governments. They faulted the role of these internal state PAS actors for failing to

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provide prompt advice to the implementing authorities within the counties. As such, they did not provide prompt advice and failed short of the SERVQUAL standard of responsiveness. Such internal state PAS actors would fall within MSF's policy stream.

The respondents further shared that some business consortia such as the Kenya Bankers Association (KBA), the Kenya Association of Manufacturers (KAM) and the Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA), were important business PAS actors within the counties and they carried out their own monitoring and evaluation, to ensure the implementation of certain anticorruption policies that might adversely affect their businesses. Thus, we see the state and business PAS actors' involvement in monitoring and evaluation, for diverse reasons. The policy advice quality of these actors would not meet the SERVQUAL standard of responsiveness as each actor would be trying to present their own interests, and would not be responsive to the needs of the policymakers and the public. Furthermore, according to MSF, these actors would be busy within the policy stream, engaging in contestations around their various standpoints.

Respondents from the youth groups shared that the business PAS actors would collect evidence that would then be used to overturn government policies that did not favor them. Thus, we see the private sector heavily investing in generating evidence to support their policy position. This means that they would become a knowledge broker. According to MSF logic, such business PAS actors would be active players within the policy stream and try to lobby others, and especially state PAS actors, to their side. By so doing, they would be taking the role of policy entrepreneurs, where they would be advocating for their preferred policy position. As such, any advice they would give to policymakers and the public would not meet the SERVQUAL standard of responsiveness.

Respondents from the youth groups were of the view that civil society actors spent most of their resources on monitoring and evaluating government projects to ensure public money was not stolen and disseminating their reports to various stakeholders. The respondent shared that they were donor funded and one of the donor requirements would be the provision of timely reports to the county governments with a copy to the donor. Thus, we see a situation where the level of policy advice given by civil society PAS actors would be prompt and meet the SERVQUAL standard of responsiveness, as they were pursuing the greater public good. These civil society PAS actors would also be active within the policy stream, where they would try to share their evidence and lobby for certain positions, and thus act as policy entrepreneurs, in line with MSF logic. However, due to their limited funding resources, their effectiveness would be limited.

According to respondents from the executive arm of the county governments, the civil society PAS actors provided information about what was happening in the anticorruption policymaking process to various stakeholders by carrying out public awareness. The respondent shared that they also fostered integration and interaction among themselves and other actors involved in anticorruption policymaking, such as the media, community-based organizations (CBOs), academia, external consultants, non-government organizations NGOs and neighbourhood watch groups. Respondents from the non-government groups further added that these civil society PAS actors also networked with like-minded partners and acted as knowledge brokers by sharing information and resources with institutions and individuals that were willing to fight corruption. The policy advice quality emanating from these civil society PAS actors could then be deemed to meet the SERVQUAL standard of responsiveness as it was prompt. We also see them acting as policy entrepreneurs by investing their own resources to galvanize support for anticorruption efforts. Thus, they would be key players within MSF's policy stream.

They further shared that the civil society PAS actors acted as mediators when disagreements occurred between the state PAS actors and business PAS actors during the formulation, implementation and monitoring of anticorruption policies. Thus, we see them playing a critical role in negotiated settlements to ensure the anticorruption agenda is not derailed. This confirms their role as policy entrepreneurs within the meaning of MSF. Their advice quality would also meet the SERVQUAL standard of responsiveness.

Respondents from the strategic functions within the government were of the view that the quality of advice provided by county officials was often compromised by limited technical capacity, political interference, and a lack of adequate resources. To mitigate these challenges, county governments often collaborated with other advisory actors to enhance quality, according to them. Thus, we see a situation where state PAS actors collaborate with business and civil society PAS actors to gain capacity and resources. This situation was captured in a report that showed the role of civil society and businesses

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in supporting county officials (Commission on Revenue Allocation, 2021). Due to their limited capacity, state PAS actors would not on their own, give policy advice that meets the SERVQUAL standard of responsiveness. The situation shows that within MSF's policy stream, where the three actors would have to engage in contestations, the making of concessions would happen when resources and information exchanges take place and could perhaps influence the course of the policy stream, and ultimately determine the policy outcomes.

The respondents shared that local civil society PAS actors played a crucial role in advising county government on the effectiveness of anticorruption measures. The respondent said their policy advice quality was always prompt and could thus be deemed meet the SERVQUAL standard of responsiveness. The respondent singled out organizations such as the Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) and the National Taxpayers Association (NTA) for engaging in this area and in activities such as advocacy, public education, and watchdog activities. The respondent explained that their grassroot presence enabled them to provide context-specific insights and mobilize community support for anticorruption initiatives and especially the monitoring and evaluation of anticorruption programmes. This confirms studies that have shown the impact of social audits carried out by civil society PAS actors such as NTA who highlighted inefficiencies and corruption in many county projects and by so doing, informed policy adjustments and other interventions from state PAS actors (National Taxpayers Association, 2020). Thus, we see civil society PAS actors heavily involved in the anticorruption monitoring and evaluation, and bringing in change. This confirms MSF's logic of civil society PAS actors' participation in the policy stream.

Respondent from the strategic functions said that academic institutions and research bodies also contributed to the quality of policy advice at the county level. They shared that universities and local research institutes conducted empirical studies that identified corruption patterns and assessed the impact of existing policies and interventions. According to them, these studies offered evidence-based recommendations that often guided the formulation and implementation of effective anticorruption strategies. Thus, from a SERVQUAL model point of view, their advice could be deemed to be met the standards of responsiveness. This position is confirmed by research carried out by Moi University, which provided valuable data on corruption in public procurement processes in several counties (Muthoni & Mwangi, 2021). The use of such quality advice by state PAS actors in the counties could enhance anticorruption policymaking within the MSF's policy stream.

Respondent from county governments added that external consultants and international organizations equally offered additional expertise and resources to county governments. The respondent explained that these actors provided technical assistance, capacity-building programs, and best practice models from other regions and countries. Thus, these civil society PAS actors could be deemed to provide advice that met the SERVQUAL standard of responsiveness. These data confirm evidence provided by UN agencies which shows their involvement in building the capacity of subnational government officials in the implementation and monitoring of robust anticorruption policies (UNDP, 2022). It also confirms their role within MSF's policy stream.

Political stream

Respondents representing the professional groups during the focus group discussions felt that state PAS actors were least interested in anticorruption policymaking, until elections time. This kind of behavior does not meet the test of reliability in terms of the SERVQUAL standard of policy advice quality, as these actors were not dependable. Their sporadic behavior may be explained by their location within government, hence prone to "politicization". According to MSF logic, such state PAS actors operate in the "political" stream, where the political interests of the politicians (many of whom are policymakers), remain supreme, until dislodged by focusing events, such as electoral calendars as we see in this example from the respondents from the professional groups.

The state PAS actors who were technocrats in the county government were reported to utilize emergencies as opportunities for maximizing their personal interests through corruption. This was reported by respondents representing business stakeholders during the focus group discussions. They gave the example of the COVID 19 crisis, where rampant corruption in the procurement of emergency equipment and materials was reported. This means that the state PAS actors' policy advice quality did not meet the SERVQUAL standard of assurance, as it could not be trusted in such a crisis. Respondents

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from nongovernmental organisations gave another example of terror attacks within one of the counties, which exposed the county government's lack of intelligence and situational awareness of what was happening, even though security was a nondevolved area. Thus, state PAS actors who were supposed to be vigilant in matters of security and expected to raise the issues with policymakers, were not vigilant. Their policy advice quality could not therefore meet the SERVQUAL standard of assurance, as it could not be trusted.

In such emergencies, which MSF refers to as focusing events, the problem, policy and politics streams sometimes converge, due to the external factors that dramatically align various interests within the three streams, leading to the opening of a window of opportunity where policymaking can take place. Such focusing events, by their very nature, are sudden and attention grabbing, and cause the streams to come together, albeit for a short period, creating a window of opportunity. However, it does not mean that whenever there is a window of opportunity, policymaking takes place. The MSF logic sees this window as unpredictable, and sometimes it can stay open with no policymaking going on and sometimes, it can take years to open up. The chaotic nature of the policy window opening is characteristic of solutions chasing problems.

Conclusion

These results confirm the role of state, business, and civil society PAS actors as policy entrepreneurs within the anticorruption policymaking process, and their influence over the overall quality of policy advice which was an outcome of their diverse actions. The results show the blurring of lines between the state and business PAS actors due to conflict of interest, which affected their policy advice quality. The results also show the state PAS actors acted as street-level bureaucrats. Thus, effective anticorruption policymaking within the subnational governments would require the fostering of stakeholder collaboration, and building the technical capacity of county officials to leverage high quality advice from the business and civil society PAS actors. Additionally, political commitment at both the national and county levels is essential to safeguard the integrity of the advisory processes and ensure that the policies developed are both effective and sustainable.

The results demonstrate the extent to which MSF and the SERVQUAL model may be deemed applicable in the analysis of PAS actors and policy advice quality within subnational governments in a low-income country, like Kenya. The paper has explored the applicability of MSF in PAS and by so doing, expanded the analytical capacity of MSF as a suitable theoretical framework within which we could ground third generation policy advice research. The paper has addressed the main research problem of inadequate data from the global south, and the lack of measurements for policy advice quality. The paper contributes conceptual tools that deepen our understanding by presenting SERVQUAL as a useful model for consideration. The paper further contributes to comparative analysis and to the literature on PAS and policy advice quality by presenting MSF as a suitable framework within which to ground PAS scholarship.

Conflicts of interest

None declared.

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