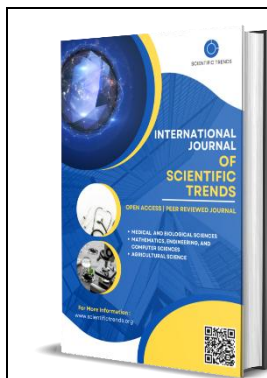


# The Philosophical and Social Essence of Corruption and the Stages of its Historical Development

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## Abstract

This article analyzes the philosophical and social essence of the phenomenon of corruption, its forms of manifestation in social life and the stages of historical formation. The study covers the evolution of corruption from ancient civilizations to modern democratic societies, its impact on social consciousness and its impact on public administration. The article shows the place of normative, ethical and sociological approaches in explaining corruption processes.

**Keywords:** Corruption, social phenomenon, philosophical analysis, moral crisis, public administration, social development, historical development, sociological approach, principle of justice, social trust, public institutions, spiritual values, bribery, fight against corruption, social consciousness.

## Introduction

Corruption is one of the most pressing problems in today's globalization environment that seriously harms the development of society, citizens' trust in state institutions, and the establishment of the rule of law. Although corruption manifests itself in different forms in any social macro and micro system, there are common social, political, moral, and institutional factors that give rise to it. The philosophical and social interpretation of corruption requires studying it not only as a violation of the law, but also as a complex social phenomenon that directly affects the spiritual and moral foundations of society. In philosophical sources, corruption is interpreted as the abuse of position or authority for personal gain. This is not only a violation of state governance, but also the erosion of the moral standards of society. Its most widespread forms include bribery, the provision of services in exchange for illegal benefits, nepotism, conflict of interest, and the use of state resources for personal purposes.

According to the philosophical approach, corruption is:

- an increase in the moral vacuum,
- the priority of personal interest over the common good,
- a violation of the principle of social justice,
- a weakening of the categories of trust and responsibility.

Thus, corruption is a systemic violation that occurs in the institutional, moral and cultural layers of the social system.

The social nature of corruption and its shaping factors

The formation of corruption is explained by many factors. One of the most important of them is the instability of the legal environment. If laws are confusing, contradictory or do not fully work in practice, this creates ample opportunities for their different interpretation and abuse. In particular, the lack of independence of the judiciary and the incomplete implementation of the principle of inevitability of punishment contribute to the continuation of corrupt actions.

In this regard, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev said in his 2020 address to the Oliy Majlis:

“Unless all segments of the population are involved in the fight against corruption, unless society is vaccinated with the ‘honesty vaccine,’ we will not be able to achieve the goals we have set. We must start fighting corruption not with its consequences, but with its roots.”

This idea confirms the fundamental importance of preventing corruption, raising legal awareness, and strengthening moral immunity.

Studying the stages of historical development of corruption, we see that in each period the structure of the political system and the level of openness in state administration played an important role. If in ancient states bribery and the purchase of positions were commonplace, then in the Middle Ages feudal structures, and in modern times the expansion of the bureaucratic apparatus, created the basis for new forms of corruption.

The political and economic roots of corruption are also widely analyzed in modern scientific literature. American researcher R. Klitgaard proposes the following model as a corruption formula:

$$\text{Corruption} = \text{Monopoly} + \text{Discretion} - \text{Accountability}$$

This model confirms that corruption is inextricably linked with the closedness of the political system, weak accountability and weak control mechanisms. Also, low political competition, the adoption of government decisions only at high levels, and the underdevelopment of public control serve to deepen corrupt processes.

Weak functioning of the law - the historical roots of corruption

Russian lawyer Y.A. Tikhomirov points to the “weak functioning of law in the system of public administration” as the main cause of corruption. In his opinion:

- confusion of the regulatory framework,
- different interpretations of documents,
- ineffectiveness of control mechanisms,
- low inevitability of punishment

have caused the historical continuation of corrupt processes.

Indeed, if the law does not work effectively in practice, it becomes only a set of norms on paper. This leads to an increase in crimes such as bribery, abuse of power, and conflict of interest. These historical processes show that corruption has always been strong in societies with a weak legal system.

The impact of corruption on the development of society: a historical and modern perspective.

- erodes social trust,
- slows down economic development,

- weakens the stability of the political system,
- poses a direct threat to national security,
- has been manifested as one of the factors that caused the decline of states in the process of historical development.

Today, corruption is particularly harmful to developing countries. It increases social inequality, leaves the poor vulnerable, and prevents the state from effectively fulfilling its social functions. Historical sources explain the decline of many empires and states precisely in connection with corruption, abuse of power, and loss of trust in state institutions.

An integrated approach is important in the scientific study of the phenomenon of corruption. Because corruption is not only a legal or economic process, but also a historical and social phenomenon with a deep socio-philosophical content. Therefore, this study combines several methodological concepts and analyzes the essence of corruption from a systematic, historical, and axiological perspective.

The theoretical basis of the study is philosophical, sociological, legal and political science theories related to the phenomenon of corruption. The following scientific literature was selected as the main theoretical sources:

- R. Klitgaard's work "Controlling Corruption" (1988) - to study corruption from the point of view of institutional analysis, to analyze the relationship between monopolies in the system, the level of discretion and accountability mechanisms;
- S. Rose-Ackerman's work "Corruption and Government" (1999) - to determine the relationship of corruption with political, cultural and normative factors;
- A. Shleifer and R. Vishny's article "Corruption" (1993) - to analyze the relationship of corruption with the economic foundations, market relations and mechanisms of public administration;
- Also, the conceptual ideas of local scientists (Sh. Kurbonov, A. Erkaev, O. Qosimov, etc.) about the socio-moral essence of corruption and its impact on society were used as a scientific basis.

The concepts of social systems theory, moral philosophy, institutionalism, and philosophy of values were chosen as theoretical bases. The methodological basis of this study is based on a philosophical-sociological approach that interprets corruption as a spiritual and moral violation of the social system. This approach reveals the interrelationship between the value system, spiritual immunity, and institutional stability of society.

In the 21st century, globalization processes have given rise to new forms of corruption. Technological development, increased information flow, and the system of economic interests are affecting human values.

Philosophically, this situation is explained by the strengthening of "spiritual relativism", that is, the norms of good and evil take on a relative character. This creates the risk of accepting corruption as a "normal life strategy." Therefore, the fight against corruption requires a philosophical approach that is not limited to administrative measures, but is aimed at spiritual and moral education and the formation of collective consciousness.

## Conclusion/Recommendation

Corruption is a multifaceted philosophical and social phenomenon that affects all spheres of social life. Its elimination is associated with the establishment of universal human values in society, such as justice, responsibility, honesty and transparency. From a philosophical point of view, the fight

against corruption means purifying the human mind, raising spiritual culture and putting society on the path of just development.

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