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SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS OF THE ESSENCE, CHARACTERISTICS OF CORRUPTION, AND MECHANISMS FOR COMBATING

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Annotation: *This article provides a comprehensive examination of the scientific and legal definition of corruption, tracing the process of its historical development from ancient societies to modern institutional systems. It analyzes the various forms and manifestations of corruption in contemporary socio-political life, emphasizing its multidimensional nature as a legal, social, ethical, and institutional phenomenon. The study evaluates the impact of corruption on societal development from both social and legal perspectives, highlighting its negative consequences for public trust, democratic governance, economic stability, and the rule of law. Particular attention is given to the methodological shortcomings and theoretical challenges encountered in anti-corruption efforts, including gaps in legal regulation, weaknesses in institutional accountability, and insufficient integration of ethical principles into public administration. The research is based on a combination of systematic analysis, comparative legal analysis, sociological observation, and statistical methods. Through these approaches, the article substantiates the critical role of the judiciary and other public institutions in ensuring transparency, accountability, and effective enforcement of anti-corruption measures. The findings of the study contribute to the theoretical understanding of corruption and serve as a scientific foundation for the development of comprehensive and sustainable anti-corruption strategies at both national and international levels.*

Annotatsiya: *Ushbu maqola korrupsiyaning ilmiy va huquqiy ta'rifini kompleks ravishda tahlil qiladi hamda uning tarixiy rivojlanish jarayonini qadimgi jamiyatlardan tortib zamonaviy institutsional tizimlargacha kuzatib boradi. Maqolada korrupsiyaning zamonaviy ijtimoiy-siyosiy hayotdagi turli shakllari va namoyon bo'lish ko'rinishlari tahlil qilinib, uning huquqiy, ijtimoiy, axloqiy va institutsional hodisa sifatidagi ko'p qirrali tabiati yoritib beriladi. Tadqiqotda korrupsiyaning jamiyat taraqqiyotiga ta'siri ijtimoiy va huquqiy nuqtai nazardan baholanib, uning jamoat ishonchiga, demokratik boshqaruvga, iqtisodiy barqarorlikka va qonun ustuvorligiga salbiy ta'siri alohida ta'kidlanadi. Shuningdek, korrupsiyaga qarshi kurashish jarayonida uchraydigan metodologik kamchiliklar va nazariy muammolarga alohida e'tibor qaratiladi. Jumladan, huquqiy tartibga solishdagi bo'shliqlar, institutsional javobgarlik tizimidagi zaifliklar va davlat boshqaruvida axloqiy tamoyillarning yetarli darajada integratsiya qilinmaganligi ko'rsatib o'tiladi. Tadqiqot tizimli tahlil, qiyosiy-huquqiy tahlil, sotsiologik kuzatuv va statistik usullar uyg'unligi asosida amalga oshirilgan. Ushbu yondashuvlar orqali sud hokimiyati va boshqa davlat institutlarining shaffoflik, hisobdorlik va korrupsiyaga qarshi chora-tadbirlarni samarali amalga oshirishdagi hal qiluvchi o'rni asoslab beriladi. Tadqiqot natijalari korrupsiyani nazariy jihatdan chuqurroq anglashga hissa qo'shadi hamda milliy va xalqaro darajada kompleks va barqaror korrupsiyaga qarshi strategiyalarni ishlab chiqish uchun ilmiy asos bo'lib xizmat qiladi.*

Аннотация: *В данной статье проводится комплексный анализ научного и правового определения коррупции, а также прослеживается процесс её исторического развития от древних обществ до современных институциональных систем. Анализируются различные формы и проявления коррупции в современной социально-политической жизни, подчёркивается её многомерный характер как правового, социального, этического и институционального явления. В исследовании оценивается*

влияние коррупции на развитие общества с социальных и правовых позиций, акцентируется её негативное воздействие на общественное доверие, демократическое управление, экономическую стабильность и верховенство закона. Особое внимание уделяется методологическим недостаткам и теоретическим проблемам в сфере противодействия коррупции, включая пробелы в правовом регулировании, слабость институциональной подотчётности и недостаточную интеграцию этических принципов в систему государственного управления.

Исследование основано на сочетании системного анализа, сравнительно-правового анализа, социологического наблюдения и статистических методов. Посредством данных подходов обосновывается ключевая роль судебной власти и других государственных институтов в обеспечении прозрачности, подотчётности и эффективной реализации антикоррупционных мер. Полученные результаты способствуют углублению теоретического понимания коррупции и служат научной основой для разработки комплексных и устойчивых антикоррупционных стратегий на национальном и международном уровнях.

Keywords: *corruption, corruption analysis, essence of corruption, historical development of corruption, methodological foundations, socio-legal analysis, anti-corruption policy, systematic analysis, judiciary, public administration, legal deficiencies, social relations, institutional reform, effective preventive measures.*

Kalit so‘zlar: *korrupsiya, korrupsiya tahlili, korrupsiyaning mohiyati, korrupsiyaning tarixiy rivojlanishi, metodologik asoslar, ijtimoiy-huquqiy tahlil, korrupsiyaga qarshi siyosat, tizimli tahlil, sud hokimiyati, davlat boshqaruvi, huquqiy kamchiliklar, ijtimoiy munosabatlar, institutsional islohotlar, samarali profilaktik choralar.*

Ключевые слова: *коррупция, анализ коррупции, сущность коррупции, историческое развитие коррупции, методологические основы, социально-правовой анализ, антикоррупционная политика, системный анализ, судебная власть, государственное управление, правовые пробелы, общественные отношения, институциональные реформы, эффективные превентивные меры.*

Introduction. Corruption encompasses various forms of criminal and moral misconduct. Although there is no single universally accepted definition of corruption, the most widely used definition describes it as “the abuse of public or private office for personal gain.”

This broad definition includes various forms of corruption, such as the misuse of public funds, bribery, manipulation of tender results, embezzlement, collusion, extortion, conflicts of interest, and influence peddling.

Corruption may occur in different environments. For example, border or migration officers may accept bribes or gifts to allow certain goods to pass through customs [1]. Similarly, municipal officials may abuse their official authority to provide unlawful benefits in exchange for bribes. A relatively less severe form of corruption includes unfair or preferential treatment of certain individuals over others (for example, nepotism, favoritism, or granting advantages to relatives and acquaintances).

Literature Review. Some scholars and anti-corruption organizations propose clearer distinctions between different types of corruption, emphasizing significant differences among petty corruption, grand corruption, and political corruption.

Petty corruption refers to the abuse of entrusted power by public officials in their daily interactions with ordinary citizens. Such cases commonly occur in hospitals, schools, police departments, and other public institutions when individuals attempt to access essential goods or services.

Grand corruption involves the abuse of power at the highest levels of government in ways that harm the interests of society and citizens. It is typically committed for the benefit of a small group and causes large-scale damage.

Political corruption refers to the manipulation of policies, institutions, and resource allocation by political decision-makers in order to maintain or increase their power, status, and wealth.

Regardless of its form, corruption in both the public and private sectors may lead to the following consequences:

- Increased business costs;
- Concealment or facilitation of criminal activities;
- Misallocation of public resources;
- Undue influence over political processes;
- Erosion of public trust in the state;
- Slowing of economic development;
- Benefits to organized crime.

Research Methodology

Corruption is not only a legal violation but also a moral degradation and a manifestation of disregard for the fundamental values of society. Historically, it has existed in various societies, from ancient civilizations to modern states, appearing within public administration and social relations.

In Ancient Greece, Plato in his work *The Republic* argued that injustice among rulers, prioritizing private interests, and the erosion of moral values would ultimately lead the state to decline [2]. Aristotle regarded corruption as a degeneration of the political system [3]. These ideas remain relevant in contemporary society.

Public officials are required to make decisions based on the law (the constitution, statutes, and other normative legal acts), as well as on cultural and moral norms approved by society. In the emergence of corruption, however, these principles are replaced by the personal interests of public servants. At the same time, such individuals act as holders of specific administrative or authoritative resources.

While formally serving the state, they violate state laws and fail to protect national interests. This situation reflects the alienation of traditional bureaucracy from the interests of society and the country. As a result, national interests are replaced by group interests.

Thus, corruption may be understood as:

– Giving, receiving, or offering bribes, as well as committing other corruption-related offenses;

– The unlawful use of one's official public position to secure material benefits (property, services, privileges) for oneself or related persons (for example, close relatives), or to obtain other non-material advantages in violation of the law, as well as the unlawful provision of such benefits.

Analysis and Results. Corruption is not limited to public officials; it may also manifest among individuals who possess significant public authority or social prestige. Such individuals include:

- Members of parliament;
- Leaders and officials of political parties;
- Persons who, although not formally recognized as civil servants, perform organizational and administrative functions within state bodies;
- Individuals capable of influencing officials through their authority, social standing, or political status.

Corruption may therefore be defined as actions carried out by officials or persons with the capacity to influence public decision-making, aimed at obtaining material benefits (property,

services, privileges) or non-material advantages (reputation, influence, connections) contrary to the lawful interests of society and the state.

Corruption can also be observed within non-governmental organizations, including:

- Business associations;
- Public organizations;
- Charitable foundations.

These entities may increasingly become part of corrupt processes. Such situations manifest in the following ways:

– Using relationships with state authorities for personal gain;
– Misusing organizational resources (budgets, grants, premises) for private purposes;
– Prioritizing personal interests instead of solving social problems;
– Granting titles and statuses in exchange for money and obtaining privileges through them;
– The establishment of affiliated organizations by state bodies to pursue informal or hidden objectives.

According to V.V. Tolkachev, corruption can be classified into four types based on the sphere of activity.

First, according to the composition of subjects:

– High-level corruption involves politicians and senior federal officials and is associated with decision-making at the national level. This type of corruption occurs within bodies such as the Government of the Russian Federation, the Federal Assembly, the Supreme Arbitration Court, the Supreme Court, and other federal institutions, as well as at the level of federal subjects. It is characterized by large-scale decisions involving significant value, such as the adoption of laws, privatization (changes in forms of property ownership), state procurement contracts, licensing for the use of natural resources, and similar matters. At this level, political patronage, clientelism, lobbying, vote-buying, and “dirty” election campaigns may also take place.

– Low-level corruption arises in direct interactions between individuals and representatives of local self-government bodies. It typically involves everyday administrative procedures and public services.

– Special corruption manifests in non-state organizations. In such cases, employees of commercial or non-commercial entities may use material resources that do not belong to them for personal gain. This involves actions that contradict the interests of their own organizations but benefit third parties or other institutions. For example, obtaining credit funds for non-existent innovative projects and subsequently disappearing with the funds.

Second, corruption can also be classified according to the object of influence:

– Corruption in legislative bodies manifests in practices such as bribery to secure the adoption of favorable decisions, lobbying, protectionism (i.e., promoting personal interests), and appointing “preferred individuals” or relatives to positions in other state institutions. The damage caused by this type of corruption is significant, as adopted or amended legal norms reflect not national interests but rather the narrow interests of specific groups or individuals. This leads to social inequality, political apathy among the population, and distrust in democratic values.

– Corruption in executive authorities manifests through unlawful activities carried out in the exercise of official powers. Such activities include bribery, embezzlement, abuse of office, decision-making for personal benefit, protectionism, unlawful disclosure of official information, and similar actions.

– Corruption in judicial bodies results in serious consequences, such as the impunity of crimes committed by citizens or officials. It is mainly manifested in the form of bribery and undue influence over court decisions.

– Corruption in local self-government bodies is similar to corruption in legislative and executive institutions but differs in that it is not as large in scale.

– Corruption in commercial and non-commercial organizations remains insufficiently studied and requires deeper and more comprehensive analysis.

Third, according to the nature of its impact on regulated social relations, corruption may include:

- Criminally punishable offenses;
- Civil-law violations;
- Administrative and disciplinary infractions;
- Unlawful use of public status, including lobbying, protectionism, disclosure of official information to third parties, or transition to leadership positions in commercial or non-commercial organizations, and other similar practices.

Fourth, according to the scope (scale) of its spread:

– Regional corruption – operating within a specific territory and dependent on various local factors;

– National (domestic) corruption – existing within the framework of a single country and its legal system;

– Transnational (international) corruption – involving multiple states [4].

From this classification, it can be concluded that corruption represents one of the most pressing problems facing modern states worldwide. In many cases, its forms are similar or closely interconnected across different countries.

Philosophical Approach

From a philosophical perspective, corruption is a phenomenon connected with freedom, responsibility, and moral choice. Human freedom provides individuals with the possibility of choice; however, such choice must always be guided by moral standards.

According to the deontological ethics of Immanuel Kant, human actions must be directed by moral law. Corrupt behavior violates this law, as individuals place their personal interests above the interests of society. In Kant's view, such individuals act contrary to the "categorical imperative," meaning their actions cannot serve as a universal principle that everyone could follow[5].

From another perspective, utilitarian theory holds that human actions should produce the greatest benefit for the greatest number. Corruption benefits certain individuals rather than society as a whole and thus undermines the common good. Thinkers such as John Stuart Mill and Jeremy Bentham argued that such actions cause social harm and are therefore ethically condemnable.

In the context of Uzbekistan, where harmful behaviors that erode public trust have become widespread, addressing corruption requires not only legal measures but also moral and spiritual solutions.

Conclusion. Today, the essence of corruption should be assessed not merely as a crime or an economic problem, but as a crisis of social consciousness and culture. For example, when a public servant abuses his or her professional duties, this constitutes not only a violation of the law but also a breach of professional ethical standards. Such conduct damages professional integrity and undermines public trust in the civil service. For this reason, the Law of the Republic of Uzbekistan "On Combating Corruption," adopted in 2017, places particular emphasis on ethical principles [6].

When corruption becomes an internal element of culture, eliminating it becomes extremely difficult. Legal punishment alone is insufficient to halt this process; it is necessary to enhance moral responsibility within public consciousness and to create a form of "moral immunity." From a philosophical perspective, the problem can be mitigated only by restoring fundamental human values such as conscience, justice, and duty. In this regard, the role of education, civil society institutions, and the mass media is of paramount importance.

Key Issues and Recommendations

Problem	**Solution**

Lack of public awareness regarding mechanisms of public oversight	Organize mass educational programs and training sessions
Concealment of information by state authorities	Strengthen and actively develop the “Open Data Portal”
Limited activities of non-governmental organizations (NGOs)	Expand legal opportunities and guarantees within legislation
High corruption risk	Ensure transparency by strengthening public oversight

International mechanisms such as the United Nations Convention, the Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International, and recommendations of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) serve as important sources for effectively guiding national anti-corruption policies.

Future Measures

The following measures are recommended:

– Broader implementation of e-government systems (electronic government a system in which state bodies interact with citizens, businesses, and other organizations online through digital technologies);

– Expansion of open data platforms (publicly accessible datasets created by government agencies or organizations that are freely available for use);

– Introduction of mandatory ethics education programs for public servants;

– Legislative encouragement of public participation, media involvement, and civil society engagement.

Corruption is a complex social ill that begins with the moral degradation of the individual and can ultimately lead to the moral crisis of society as a whole. Addressing this problem requires the implementation of moral-educational, enlightenment-based, and social mechanisms, as well as strengthening civic duty and conscience among individuals.

The sources of corruption are multifaceted and require a combined historical, cultural, economic, and political analysis. While ancient corruption was more closely associated with individual interests, modern corruption has become institutionalized and global in nature. Therefore, combating corruption requires comprehensive and systemic approaches—improving legislation, reducing economic inequality, strengthening ethical education, and promoting international cooperation.

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