

Psychological Analysis of Corruption: A Review

Dr. Shrimanth B. Holkar^{1*}

ABSTRACT

All entities of human society have the same basic needs for pleasure and moral standing while, according to Vygotsky (Russian Psychologist) individuals think, evaluate, analyze, synthesize, abstract and select from a socially created fund of psychological artifacts. The motivation to construct new psychological phenomena is generated by social experience, and is socially distributed among classes, genders and ethnic groups. The scope and level of psychological innovation is in this manner collectively determined the lower the culture ranks economic goals, productivity, efficiency, science, the higher it ranks social cohesion, stability and religions, the lower the scope and level of innovation.

Keywords: Society, Values, Psychological Perception and Corruption.

“Corruption is like an ocean; it is too difficult to control”

Corruption is occurring because it is human nature to take the easy way out and to gain personal benefit from whatever means possible. Both nature (Biological) and ‘nurture’ (psychological) factors have a part in corruption. According to traditional English law “corruption of blood” designed the effect of an act of attainder of treason or felony, by which a person was disqualified from inheriting lands from an ancestor, and could neither retain those in his possession nor transmit them decent to his heirs. Currently, corruption is found in satisfying rules and obtaining licenses; access to publicly provided goods and services; decisions on the subject of public investment contracts; control over the application of tax fees; hiring within the public sector. Pavlov defined modern psychology by showing how stimulus-response reactions are created in the mind. He fed a dog repeatedly while ringing a bell at the same time. Later, he could ring the bell, and even in the absence of food, the dog would show physiological reactions of eating such as salivation. What this means is that memories which are stored together can be contracted through external stimuli and they will bring all related material to the surface and produce reactions similar to those stored in the memories. Corruption works that way. Certain stimuli cause patterns of behavior to be expressed as developed reactions. Repetition causes the reactions to become more developed over time. The reactions of corruption always have the same characteristics.

The starting point is the assumption that prevailing over someone else would be advantageous. This assumption is visible in playing a game like monopoly. To win, you have to have an

¹Associate Professor of Political Science, Govt. College (Autonomous) Kalaburagi, India

*Corresponding Author

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advantage over the other players. You create the advantage by buying more property, or some such thing, which allows you to dictate terms to your advantage and to the detriment of the other players. This same process occurs wherever a conflict develops. There is a tendency to assume that if oneself could prevail over the other persons, he would win and to better off. If that assumption is put in place in one's mind and left there, it grows into the basic cause of corruption. Built upon the desire to prevail are all other forms of corruption. Degrading others or their realities or property makes it easier to prevail. Gaining something from it is exploitation. Lying stifles, the competing influences of others. After the basic stimulus-response reactions were studied for some time in psychology, it was learned that positive reinforcements promote psychological conditioning. In a laboratory, food would often be used as the positive reinforcement. The way it works is that the desired response would yield the positive reinforcement, which would cause the same behavior pattern to be repeated over and over. This pattern is called operant conditioning. It is used as the primary method of training animals. When the animals do what is desired by the trainer, they get a reward, usually as food, which causes the animal to repeat the behavior. Corruption has a positive reinforcement which causes it to develop. The positive reinforcement is power. Acquiring power is the purpose of corruption, since power is needed to prevail over other persons. When succeeding, power is acquired and its desirability causes the behavior to be repeated.

While it is true that there are a lot of negative reinforcements for corruption, they develop slowly, while the positive reinforcement is instantaneous. The psychological conditioning occurs almost instantaneously, while the delayed effects have little influence. The reason for the difference is that the memories while are stored together must be acquired at the same time. The delayed memories are storied as separate memories. The stimuli only effect the memories are stored as separate memories. The stimuli only effect the memories which are stored together.

This means that the reward of power is stored in the same memories as the corrupt acts creating a positive reinforcement for repeating the behavior, while the negative effects are stored in different memories and do not influence the corrupt behavior on a stimulus-response basis, though they should have an analytical influence. The problem is that the stimulus-response behavior is so automatic and subconscious that it escapes the awareness of the perpetrator of corruption. An example that is visible is trivial habits, like chewing finger nails. The person doing it generally does not realize that he is doing so. But the response that gets stimulated with corruption is not a mechanical motion; it is a motive. It includes a set of related realities with attitudes and purposes embedded in them.

Jealousy is an example. It can be defined as a feeling of threat from the betterment of someone else. It gets developed from the need to prevail against the other person. If the other person ha advantages, then prevailing is more difficult. Not wanting the other person to have such advantage is jealousy. Jealousy is a motive, meaning a set of realities with the attitude that someone else must not be allowed to succeed and the purpose of preventing them from succeeding. Notice that it is built upon the more basic assumption that prevailing against someone would be advantageous. The desire to prevail against someone is domination. This means that the desire to dominate is the most basic cause of corruption. Flowing from it are all other corruptions, which are interdependent.

People perception of Corruption

The perception of people as "maximizing" usefulness, identified in the simplest case as the peoples pleasures or interests. Benjamin Benthans English philosopher proposed to measure

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human motivation as the sum of pleasures minus pains. Freedom to pursue pleasure, to act, to seek the means of action, and to pursue the agents ends might imply that all means are relevant. In what proportions corruption is a relevant means of needs satisfaction and of utility maximization? What is the level of punishment that can limit corruption? The conscious individual fashions that basic existential liberties considering dignity or some collective interest. Therefore, the allocation of the resource mobilizes two moral criteria: an ethic of liberty against an ethic of solidarity. The absence of moral view on freedom (“ones freedom ends where the other persons freedom begins”) explains also why human interactions lead to institutions lead to institutions, laws and rules of behaviours. Such cultural and temporary norms (motivation information and power) discriminate between admitted utilitarian behavior and corrupted acts. Corruption is a deviation from the ethical judgment about the situation to social entities. Such social entities are individuals, but also more or less constituted groups such as families, firms, regions, nations or cultures. The analysis of corruption is more successful the less it depends on intuitions and a priori judgments, and the more it builds on explicit statements about the conception of individual and of society.

Self-Seeking Behavior:

Mis multiplicity of elements in the analysis of corruption accounts for the emergence of three different points of view. One of them is utilitarian self-seeking behavior which is not in Hugrant contradiction with surrounding acknowledged traditions, but is not recognized by other cultures. Thus, on the hand, the process itself of capital accumulation in industrialized countries involve economic elites seeking influence by all possible means in the political, economic and media spheres. On the other hand, in traditional societies, giving tribute cannot be clearly distinguished from bribery.

Conscious deviation:

Another form of corrupt behavior is conscious deviation from norms such as, when corrupted or corrupter consider themselves as unjustifiably harassed by fortune or society and seek to get their revenge.

Malicious intent:

Another form of corruption is behavior with malicious intent, (enjoying corrupting or destroying depicted by Dostoevsky and Nietzsche). If resentment cannot be suppressed, a pertinent question is how to minimize or modify its effect, or to use it in being and not wasteful forms. Social entities involved in corruptive acts are mutating in the actual historical period of globalization.

Psychological Factors of Corruption:

At the simplest and most intuitive level, corruption is often a function of one of the seven deadly sins, greed. In a rare survey of Russian prisoners convicted of corruption, material interest was cited by more than 60% of the 347 respondents as a factor encouraging ongoing relations with criminal structures’, while almost 70% cited money as the basis for mutual relations between bride-givers and corrupters (Repetskaya 2000: 81, 83). Although selfishness will be considered in depth later in the chapter when the ramifications of neo-liberalism are explored, it would be absurd to suggest that greed suddenly appeared in 1979 (the significance of this date will emerge below). Moreover, there is a cause-and-effect issue here; since neo-liberals have been elected in genuine democracies-here meaning the closest we have in the real world to the ideals of most democratic theorists-it is far from clear whether neo-liberal ideology has become dominant because of clever political marketing (or propaganda, to use a dated term) or because it resonates with the inherent selfishness of many voters.

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Part of the reason for greed can be related to the emphasis so many societies place on material success. If Francis Fukuyama (1992; esp. 162-91) is correct in his view that one of the main driving forces of human development is the individuals desire for recognition by others—thymos—then the assumption that greater respect and status accrues to those having greater wealth can help to explain corruption relating to pecuniary gain. It can also explain some of the grayer forms of corruption relating to patronage and cronyism. While part of the explanation for such phenomena often relates to expected future paybacks of various kinds, another reflects the ‘feelgood’ factor for the patron; patronage can make the donor. (i.e., the patron) feel more powerful and influential, which relates to thymos.

Another common reason for corruption is that anti-social behavior simply appeals to some individuals. As Polish mobster Mariant Klepacki openly acknowledged, ‘Even if I had plenty of money, I would not go straight. It’s because of my temperament’ (The European, 30 September-6 October 1994). Some people including even officials who work for it simply enjoy beating, or attempting to be eat, the system.

Individuals often find themselves involved in corruption because of peer (horizontal) or superior (vertical) pressure. While it is tempting to describe this as weakness, the pressure is sometimes strong. For instance, a refusal to collude with colleagues may result in being cold shouldered, while refusing to yield to pressure from above can result in decreased promotion prospects or even the loss of ones job. In such circumstances, especially in countries in which there are high levels of unemployment and/or strong disincentives to whistle blowing, it would be more appropriate to describe the resistance to such pressure as a sign of strength, rather than refer to the weakness of those who capitulate.

Unemployment can relate to one of the most important psychological reasons for corruption, insecurity. The deeply psychological roots of personal insecurity, as with the other psychological factors considered here, are not the domain of a mere political scientist, and will in any case be largely peculiar to the given individual. Conversely, much insecurity relates to an individuals relationship to the system.

One psychological factor that needs to be acknowledged is a sensitive issue. It is important to consider the type of person who becomes an officer of the states coercive branches (mainly the police and the military) or a politician. Many probably most-apply or run for such positions because of admirable reasons, including a desire to help others, a sense of public duty, and a commitment to improve society. But there are also those in any society who choose such careers for more self-centred and questionable reasons, such as egotism, opportunism, and even in order to gain access to and make legitimate use of weapons. In the case of officials who have chosen their professions for ethically dubious reasons, their willingness to engage in corruption is compatible with their more cynical approach to life and society.

This point about the psychological traits to officials has been explored from a different perspective by Tarkowski (1995:38), who draws an interesting distinction between the approaches of politicians and bureaucrats. According to him, the former are much more oriented towards unconventional and creative solutions than are the latter, who tend to focus more on the observance and enforcement of rules. Many politicians are also more concerned with results (outputs, ends) than procedures (means), and thus more likely to bend the rules than should be the norm in a Weber an ideal type rule-if-law state. This has immediately

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obvious implications for what are in this study called penumbra types of corruption, although the ramifications of such a Weltanschauung sometimes extend to unambiguous corruption.

Whilst psychological factors need to be incorporated into any reasonably comprehensive analysis of the causes of corruption (see Roldan 1989), they are of limited value in explaining why rates and types of corruption apparently vary so much from country to country and region to region. Those who believe that greed is the basic cause of corruption, for example, need to explain why the corruption situation looks so different in Finland and Denmark from that in Bangladesh or Nigeria. For some, the answer to this question is simple-cultural differences, to which we now turn.

CONCLUSION

All entities of human society have the same basic needs for pleasure and moral standing while, according to Vygotsky (Russian Psychologist) individuals think, evaluate, analyze, synthesize, abstract and select from a socially created fund of psychological artifacts. The motivation to construct new psychological phenomena is generated by social experience, and is socially distributed among classes, genders and ethnic groups. The scope and level of psychological innovation is in this manner collectively determined the lower the culture ranks economic goals, productivity, efficiency, science, the higher it ranks social cohesion, stability and religions, the lower the scope and level of innovation. The long history of corruption and the fact that even making it an offence in some countries has not resulted in its elimination shows that stricter laws, stepped-up institutional controls and an improved political framework do not of themselves suffice to master the problem. In the confrontation with corruption a new meaning has a greater enhance of succeeding when joint efforts of the majority of the social entities, including the business sector, undertake action in correct moreover, disinterested outside institution would have the means of disturbing public opinion and with it the political pressure needed to reduce corruption.

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Conflict of Interest

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