THE PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF CORRUPTION AND ITS HISTORICAL FORMATION

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Annotation. *Corruption is a persistent social phenomenon that has accompanied the development of human societies from ancient civilizations to the modern globalized world. This article examines corruption through a philosophical lens, emphasizing its ethical, social, and institutional dimensions, as well as tracing the stages of its historical formation. By integrating philosophical analysis with historical inquiry, the study seeks to reveal corruption not merely as a legal or economic deviation, but as a manifestation of deeper moral and structural contradictions within social systems. The article argues that understanding the philosophical foundations and historical evolution of corruption is essential for developing effective and sustainable anti-corruption strategies in contemporary societies.*

Keywords: *corruption, philosophy, social ethics, historical development, governance, moral responsibility.*

Introduction. Corruption is one of the most persistent and complex social phenomena affecting human societies across historical epochs and political systems. Despite significant progress in legal regulation, institutional reform, and technological governance, corruption continues to undermine public trust, weaken state institutions, and distort social justice. Its resilience suggests that corruption cannot be fully understood or effectively addressed solely through legal or administrative frameworks; rather, it requires a deeper philosophical and historical examination.

From a philosophical perspective, corruption represents a fundamental deviation from ethical norms that govern social life and public authority. It emerges when personal interest overrides moral responsibility, and when power is exercised without accountability to the common good. In this sense, corruption reflects not only individual moral failure but also systemic weaknesses in social values, institutional design, and political culture. Philosophical inquiry thus provides a critical lens through which corruption can be examined as a moral and social problem, rather than merely a technical violation of rules.

Historically, corruption has accompanied the formation and evolution of political authority. From ancient civilizations to modern nation-states, the concentration of power, unequal access to resources, and limited oversight mechanisms have created conditions conducive to corrupt practices. Although the forms of corruption have changed over time, adapting to different economic and political contexts, its underlying logic— the misuse of entrusted power for private gain—has remained largely consistent. Tracing the historical formation of corruption therefore allows for a better understanding of its persistence and transformation.

This article aims to explore the philosophical foundations of corruption and to analyze the stages of its historical development. By integrating ethical theory with historical analysis, the study seeks to illuminate the deeper causes of corruption and to highlight the importance of moral values, social responsibility, and institutional accountability in addressing this enduring challenge. Such an approach contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of corruption and offers a theoretical basis for developing more effective and sustainable anti-corruption strategies in contemporary societies.

Conclusion/Recommendation. This study has examined corruption as a complex and enduring social phenomenon through a philosophical and historical lens. The analysis demonstrates that corruption cannot be reduced to

a purely legal or economic issue; rather, it reflects deeper ethical distortions, social imbalances, and institutional weaknesses. Historically, corruption has evolved alongside political authority, adapting to different cultural, economic, and governance systems while preserving its core characteristic—the misuse of entrusted power for private gain. This continuity explains why corruption remains resilient despite repeated reforms and regulatory efforts.

From a philosophical standpoint, corruption signifies a breakdown of moral responsibility and social trust. It emerges when ethical principles such as justice, accountability, and integrity lose their normative force within individual behavior and institutional practice. The historical review further confirms that corruption flourishes in environments marked by power concentration, weak oversight, and the normalization of unethical conduct. Consequently, effective responses to corruption must go beyond punitive measures and address the moral and social foundations that sustain it.

Based on the findings of this study, several key recommendations can be proposed. First, anti-corruption strategies should incorporate ethical and philosophical dimensions alongside legal and administrative reforms. Strengthening moral education, particularly in public service and leadership training, can help reinforce values of responsibility, integrity, and service to the common good. Second, institutional frameworks must prioritize transparency, accountability, and public participation to reduce opportunities for abuse of power and to restore trust in governance systems. Third, historical awareness should inform contemporary anti-corruption policies, as understanding past patterns and failures can guide more context-sensitive and sustainable solutions.

In conclusion, combating corruption requires a comprehensive and integrated approach that addresses both its structural conditions and its ethical roots. By combining philosophical reflection, historical insight, and

institutional reform, societies can move toward more accountable, just, and morally grounded systems of governance.

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