



CAUSES AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES OF CORRUPTION

Nishanova Farida Mamasharifovna

Namangan State University.

Namangan, Uzbekistan.

ORCID ID <https://orcid.org/0009-0001-8056-6949>

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Abstract: This article systematically analyzes the causes and factors of corruption in the economic, political, social, legal and moral spheres. The economic (decrease in gross domestic product, decrease in investment attractiveness, reduction in tax revenues), social (poverty, decrease in the quality of education and healthcare, erosion of social capital), political (weakening of democratic institutions, decrease in international prestige) and moral and moral (erosion of moral standards, legal nihilism) consequences of corruption are covered in detail. A comparative analysis of the state of corruption in Uzbekistan and the world is presented based on the Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International for 2016-2025.

Keywords: Causes of corruption, economic consequences, social consequences, political consequences, moral and ethical consequences, Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), Transparency International, legal nihilism, social injustice.

Causes and factors of corruption. The causes and factors of corruption are complex and multifaceted, covering economic, political, social, legal, and moral spheres. A systematic analysis of these causes and factors is a prerequisite for developing an effective anti-corruption strategy.

Economic factors. Economic factors play an important role in the emergence and spread of corruption. Excessive state involvement in the economy - the more the state participates in the economy, the greater the volume of resources controlled by civil servants. This expands the scope for corruption. Uneven distribution of economic resources - the lack of transparency in the distribution of resources (natural resources, government orders, licenses, subsidies) creates a favorable environment for corruption. Low competition - the lower the competition in the economy, the higher the opportunity to obtain benefits through corruption. Low salaries of employees - when the salaries of civil servants cannot meet their basic needs, the tendency to corruption increases. This leads to the widespread spread of especially petty corruption.

Political factors. The characteristics of the political system directly affect the level of corruption. Weak democratic institutions - countries with an independent judiciary, free media, and weak civil society tend to have higher levels of corruption. Excessive centralization of power - corruption is widespread when power is concentrated in one hand and control mechanisms are weak. Low political competition - the lower the political competition, the less likely it is that the government and officials will be held accountable for their corrupt actions. Weaknesses of the electoral system - lack of transparency in election financing, misuse of state resources in election campaigns lead to corruption.

Social factors. The social structure and cultural characteristics of society also affect corruption. Weakness of civil society - in societies with weak non-governmental organizations, trade unions, and the media, the effectiveness of the fight against corruption is low. Tolerance

for corruption - the higher the tolerance for corruption in society ("that's how it is", "I have no other choice"), the more widespread corruption is. Lack of information - citizens' lack of sufficient information about the activities of state bodies, the spending of budget funds, and public procurement hides corruption and makes it difficult to fight it. Crisis of confidence - if society has low trust in state institutions, the judiciary, and law enforcement agencies, citizens' activity in the fight against corruption decreases.

Legal factors. The characteristics of the legal system directly affect the level of corruption. Legislative shortcomings - the vagueness, complexity, contradictions of laws, the possibility of their different interpretations create a fertile ground for corruption. Weakness of control mechanisms - the ineffectiveness of internal and external control over the activities of state bodies reduces the ability to detect and prevent corrupt actions. The inevitability of punishment - the inevitability of punishment for corruption crimes, the failure to hold perpetrators accountable, encourages corruption. According to the Klitgaard equation, if the amount of "probability of being caught $\times$ punishment" is smaller than the income from corruption, the probability of corruption is high [1, p.72]. Lack of independence of the judicial system - in cases where the judicial system is not independent and cannot actively participate in the fight against corruption, the effectiveness of the fight against corruption decreases sharply.

Moral and ethical factors. Moral and ethical factors play an important role in the emergence of corruption. Weakness of moral standards - the weaker the moral standards such as honesty, justice, and conscientiousness in society, the higher the tendency to corruption. Violation of the value system - the formation of a value system that is approved when achieving material wealth, luxury, and well-being by any means, even by breaking the law and violating moral standards, encourages corruption. Insufficient moral education - insufficient education of such qualities as honesty, justice, conscientiousness, and respect for the law in the family, school, and higher educational institutions reduces immunity against corruption. The existence of "white" and "gray" zones - border zones between law and morality ("legal but not ethical" or "moral but not legal" situations) creates favorable conditions for the development of corruption [2, p.106-110].

Economic consequences of corruption. The economic consequences of corruption are multifaceted and include the following:

Misappropriation of state budget funds – as a result of corruption, a large part of state budget funds are misappropriated, which leads to a reduction in funding for social programs, education, healthcare, and infrastructure projects. According to estimates by the International Monetary Fund, corruption accounts for 2-5 percent of the world's gross domestic product [3, p.15].

Decreased investment attractiveness – high levels of corruption reduce the willingness of foreign and domestic investors to invest in the country's economy. Investments are directed to countries with low levels of corruption and guaranteed rule of law. According to the World Bank, foreign investment flows to countries where the level of corruption improves by 1 point (on a 10-point scale) increase by an average of 20-30 percent [4, p.28].

Distortion of the competitive environment – corruption distorts the competitive environment in the economy. Businesses with corrupt connections receive preferential terms, limiting the ability to ensure fair competition. This leads to a decrease in economic efficiency.

Slowing economic growth – corruption slows economic growth. According to Transparency International research, countries whose corruption index improves by 10 points see a 0.5-1 percent increase in GDP growth [5].

Reduced tax revenues – corruption reduces the efficiency of the tax system. Corrupt agreements with tax inspectors lead to tax evasion, underreporting of taxes, and illegal receipt of tax benefits. This leads to a decrease in tax revenues to the state budget .

Increased bureaucratic barriers – corruption increases bureaucratic barriers. Officials artificially complicate legal procedures, creating opportunities for citizens and entrepreneurs to take bribes. This complicates business activities and reduces economic efficiency.

Social consequences. The social consequences of corruption cause serious damage to the social structure of society and relations between different segments of the population.

Increased social injustice – corruption exacerbates social injustice. State resources and benefits (government orders, licenses, subsidies, social assistance) are distributed to individuals and groups with corrupt connections, while vulnerable segments of the population are deprived of these opportunities.

Impoverishment of the population - corruption leads to impoverishment of the population. As a result of the embezzlement of state budget funds, funding for social programs (pensions, benefits, scholarships) is reduced, which worsens the situation of the most vulnerable segments of the population.

Declining quality of education and healthcare – Corruption seriously undermines the quality of education and healthcare systems. In education – bribery in exams, buying diplomas, teachers giving high marks to incompetent students; in healthcare – corrupt practices such as “gratuities” to doctors, providing extra services, writing fake prescriptions are widespread. This hinders the intellectual potential of society and the formation of a healthy generation.

Crisis of trust – corruption reduces citizens' trust in state institutions, the judicial system, and law enforcement agencies. Nihilistic views are formed in society, such as "laws are not for the powerful and the rich", "justice can be bought with a bribe". This reduces the political and social activity of citizens, weakens the connection between the state and society.

Erosion of social capital – corruption erodes social capital – the trust, mutual assistance, and cooperative relationships between members of society. In a corrupt environment, people stop trusting each other, and the view that “everyone is lying, everyone is trying to deceive” is strengthened. This reduces the ability of society to unite and work towards common goals.

Brain drain – High levels of corruption lead to the migration of talented young people, qualified specialists and scientists abroad (“brain drain”). They seek opportunities to apply their knowledge and skills in countries where justice and the rule of law prevail, with low levels of corruption. This reduces the intellectual potential of the country and undermines its competitiveness.

Political consequences. The political consequences of corruption pose a serious threat to the stability of the political system and the development of democratic institutions.

Threat to the stability of the political system – corruption undermines the stability of the political system. Corruption scandals damage the reputation of the government and individual officials, reducing their trust in the people. This can lead to political crises, the resignation of the government, and the disintegration of political parties.

Weakening of democratic institutions – corruption leads to the weakening of democratic institutions (electoral system, parliament, political parties, media, civil society). Corruption in elections (voter bribery, ballot tampering, manipulation of election results) undermines the democratic nature of the electoral process. Corruption in political parties and parliament undermines their public trust and weakens their representative function.

Over-centralization of power – Corruption leads to over-centralization of power. Officials with corrupt connections seek to consolidate their power, weaken control mechanisms, and establish a single authority in decision-making. This reinforces the authoritarian nature of the political system.

Widespread political corruption – Political corruption – the abuse of political power by politicians and officials for personal gain – is one of the most dangerous forms of corruption. Political corruption includes corruption in election financing, lobbying in the legislative process, the use of public resources for political purposes, and the “revolving door” – the use of corrupt connections by officials in the private sector after leaving public service [6, p.18-22].

Disruption of the balance between the government and the legislature – corruption disrupts the balance between the government and the legislature. Through corrupt connections, the government can influence the decisions of the legislature and use them for its own benefit. This leads to a violation of the principle of separation of powers and an imbalance in the political system.

Reduced international reputation – high levels of corruption reduce a country's international reputation. Countries that rank low in international rankings (e.g., Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index) are viewed with distrust by the international community. This negatively affects the country's standing in international relations, its ability to attract foreign investment, and its cooperation with international organizations and donors [5].

Moral and spiritual consequences. The moral and spiritual consequences of corruption cause serious damage to the spiritual foundations of society and its system of moral values.

Erosion of moral standards – Corruption leads to the erosion of moral standards in society. Universal moral values such as honesty, justice, conscientiousness, and honoring one's word are devalued, replaced by pragmatic, utilitarian views such as "money makes all things possible" and "the end justifies the means".

The rise of legal nihilism – corruption in society increases the phenomenon of legal nihilism - disrespect for laws, disregard for them. Citizens begin to believe that laws are not fair, that they are written by the powerful and rich in their own interests. This undermines the principle of the rule of law, complicates the process of building a legal state.

Moral degradation – corruption leads to the moral degradation of society. In a corrupt environment, people are ready to violate moral standards, break laws, and harm others for their own benefit. This undermines the moral health of society and reduces its moral and ethical immunity.

Devaluing intelligence and education – corruption devalues intelligence and education. In a corrupt environment, it is not knowledge, experience, or ability that is important for success, but rather acquaintance with the "right" people, bribing them, and being "your own person". This devalues qualities such as hard work, acquiring knowledge, and improving skills in society, and they are replaced by the desire to "make easy money" and "get rich quick".

The rise of moral relativism - corruption in society reinforces the phenomenon of moral relativism - the relativity of good and evil, the change of moral standards depending on the situation. In a corrupt environment, views such as "taking a bribe is bad, but everyone takes it, and if I don't, someone else will", "paying money to speed up work is the norm", "we all do it that way" are widespread. This leads to the loss of clear moral criteria and the difficulty of moral assessment.

Intergenerational disconnection – corruption disrupts the spiritual connection between generations. Parents cannot teach their children such qualities as honesty, justice, and conscientiousness, because they themselves are exposed to corrupt practices in their daily lives, and sometimes they themselves commit such practices. This complicates the process of transmitting spiritual values from generation to generation, weakening the spiritual foundations of society.

Statistical analysis of the state of corruption in Uzbekistan. Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) is one of the most authoritative international measures of corruption. It is calculated on a scale from 0 (very corrupt) to 100 (very clean) [5].

Uzbekistan's dynamics in this index are as follows:

Year	Place	Score	Change
2016	156	21	-
2017	157	22	-1 step, +1 point
2018	158	23	-1 step, +1 point
2019	153	25	+5 steps, +2 points
2020	146	26	+7 steps, +1 point
2021	140	28	+6 steps, +2 points
2022	126	31	+14 steps, +3 points
2023	121	33	+5 steps, +2 points
2024	121	32	0 steps, -1 point
2025	124	31	-3 steps, -1 point

As can be seen from the table, Uzbekistan has made significant progress in the fight against corruption from 2016 to 2023. The country, which was in 156th place (21 points) in 2016, rose to 121st place (33 points) in 2023. During this decade, the country rose 35 places and grew by 12 points. In particular, the rise of 14 places in 2021-2022 was considered a great achievement.

However, a negative trend has been observed in the last two years. In 2024, the score fell to 32, and in 2025 to 31. According to the 2025 report, Uzbekistan ranked 124th out of 182 countries. This is 3 places lower than last year. The Transparency International report notes that although Uzbekistan has made progress in anti-corruption legislation and established an anti-corruption agency, systemic problems remain. In particular, it is noted that the weakness of non-governmental organizations, the decline of civic institutions, and the increasing concentration of power in the hands of the government are contributing to the increase in corruption.

Among Central Asian countries, Uzbekistan ranks second after Kazakhstan (96th) in 2025, and has a higher score than Kyrgyzstan (142nd), Tajikistan (166th), and Turkmenistan (167th).

The cleanest countries in the world include Denmark (89 points), Finland (88 points), Singapore (84 points), New Zealand (81 points), and Norway (81 points) [5].

Corruption remains a pressing problem not only in Uzbekistan, but also globally. According to Transparency International, the average corruption level in the world is around 43 points, with two-thirds of countries having an index below 50 points. This shows that the fight against corruption is one of the main tasks of the global community.

Conclusion. Corruption is not only a legal, but also a philosophical, moral, economic and social phenomenon. A deep philosophical analysis of its essence, a systematic study of its types, causes and consequences is the theoretical basis for developing an effective strategy for combating corruption. The economic, social, political and spiritual-moral consequences of corruption indicate the urgency and importance of combating it. The systemic reforms being carried out in the Republic of Uzbekistan to combat corruption, the adopted regulatory and legal documents and the implemented practical measures serve to create an environment that is intolerant of corruption in our country. However, according to Transparency International, the negative trend observed in the last two years (124th place in 2025, 31 points) indicates the need to further strengthen work in the field of combating corruption. The use of legal education technologies in the fight against corruption is of great importance, especially in the formation of an uncompromising attitude towards corruption among the younger generation, and in raising legal awareness and legal culture.

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