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INTERNAL FACTORS OF CORRUPTION AS DEVIANT BEHAVIOUR

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Abstract. The article examines the internal causes and international dimensions of corruption that contribute to it and attract considerable public attention in many countries. It also presents opinions and proposals on possible measures to combat corruption.

The determinants of corruption can be divided into internal and external factors. The internal world highlights an individual's internal readiness to actively participate in corrupt activities. This aspect covers purely rational behaviour and behaviour that goes beyond this clear pattern. Rational choice is based on a decision-making process in which individuals seek to maximise their utility. This is achieved by comparing the

expected benefits with the expected costs of deviant behaviour, including opportunity costs and the risk of being caught or punished. The pure rational choice approach leaves no room for moral considerations that may influence the calculation, although real-life experience shows that morality is of great importance.

The author notes that in recent years, a behavioural approach enriched by the inclusion of psychological aspects and biases has been applied in models that attempt to better explain deviant behaviour in general and corrupt behaviour in particular. It is argued— —that even a rational decision-maker may ultimately resort to seemingly irrational behaviour, which is guided not only by rational calculation but also by the surrounding environment.

Contemporary research shows that the decision-making process is largely determined by the social environment, and existing evidence points to the importance of social norms and values, as well as the influence of reputation, in explaining corrupt behaviour. Thus, many aspects that make up a person's inner world can be considered key factors in explaining corrupt behaviour. However, decisions about corrupt behaviour are not determined solely by factors within the inner world.

Instead, it is interaction with the social environment that influences or prevails over a person's inner world. In addition to inner readiness, various components, such as typical values, rules and norms that exist in a given society, have a strong influence on human behaviour and on the decision whether or not to commit corrupt offences. In this regard, the author considers sociological and criminological factors that determine corrupt behaviour. Cultural aspects, education, and gender composition in leadership positions indirectly influence the level of corruption.

From a criminological point of view, corruption is at the heart of general crime and contributes to its spread. The criminological view of deviant behaviour is interdisciplinary in nature. In particular, there is an interdependence between

sociological and criminological factors that determine crime in general and corruption in particular. The author considers the theory of differential association, the theory of deformation, and the theory of social learning as criminological factors.

In conclusion, it is noted that corrupt behaviour is caused by a multitude of different mechanisms that originate at both the individual and collective levels. Pure rational choice theories do not provide a sufficient explanation for the emergence or absence of corruption. The decision to commit or not to commit corrupt offences is also determined by limited rationality, human values, and norms on which a person has been raised. One of the aspects highlighted in the article is the relevance and influence of moral and ethical considerations on corrupt behaviour. Rational choice approaches completely ignore this aspect and do not sufficiently explain the emergence of corruption. Adding ethical considerations allows for a more balanced picture of the driving forces behind corruption.

***Key words:** corruption, deviant behaviour, corrupt behaviour, internal factors, economics, politics, sociological factors, criminological factors, differential association theory, deformation theory, social learning theory, moral and ethical norms.*

Problem statement. Currently, there is growing concern about corruption around the world. This is due to several factors. First, corruption is universal; it exists in all countries, both developed and developing, in the public and private sectors, as well as in non-profit and charitable organisations.

Secondly, allegations of corruption now play a more important role in politics than ever before. Governments are losing credibility, the careers of world-renowned public figures are being destroyed, and the reputations of respected organisations and businesses are being severely tarnished by corruption. The international media feeds

on this. The growing trend of using corruption as a tool to discredit political opponents, the media's interest in it as a highly liquid commodity, and the general public's interest in seeing prominent figures in awkward situations have led to scandalous and corrupt behaviour attracting international attention.

Thirdly, and this is the main issue discussed in this article, corruption can be a serious obstacle to economic development and modernisation in countries. Many now believe that the fight against corruption should be a priority on the agenda of all countries in the world, as it is the main obstacle hindering the economic, political and social development of states.

Growing public interest and concern about corruption has led to a large number of scientific studies on this topic. It should be acknowledged that there are still gaps in the current state of knowledge on this issue, and much remains to be done. Nevertheless, the theoretical and empirical research that has been conducted to date has provided a new perspective on the problem. We have a clearer understanding of the root causes of corruption, its consequences, and ideas and approaches for possible measures to prevent it. At the same time, we have gained a better understanding of why corruption persists in many countries and why it is difficult to overcome.

The article examines the internal causes, consequences and international dimensions of corruption, which appear to have given rise to it and which are attracting considerable public attention in many countries. It also sets out opinions and proposals on possible measures to combat corruption.

State of research. The causes and nature of corruption have been studied in the works of both foreign and domestic scholars. Among foreign researchers, we can highlight Gary S. Becker, A. Getz and J. Wolkem, D. Dollar, Johann Graf Lambsdorff, Daniel Traisman, B. Fess, B. Hasted and many others. Domestic scholars have also made a significant contribution to the study of the phenomenon of corruption, in

particular L. Bagriy-Shamatov, V. Gvozdecky, O. Dudorov, V. Zhuravsky, M. Karmazina, M. Melnik, E. Nevmerzhitsky, and S. Stetsenko. Despite numerous scientific studies of corruption, this problem requires further study.

The purpose of this article is to analyse the internal determinants of corruption and its possible consequences, to examine different approaches to their identification, as well as ways and means of overcoming it.

Presentation of the main material. The determinants of corruption can be divided into internal and external, but this is only a conditional division, as there are factors that determine corrupt behaviour and relate to both the internal and external worlds.

The internal world highlights an individual's internal readiness to actively participate in corrupt activities. This aspect covers purely rational behaviour and behaviour that goes beyond this clear pattern.

Rational choice in the context of crime has its roots in the fundamental research of Gary S. Becker, who analysed the rejection of deviant behaviour based on cost-benefit calculations [9]. Since then, modern economic theories on the causes of crime have developed. Rational choice—whether to engage in corrupt behaviour or not—is based on a decision-making process in which individuals seek to maximise their utility. This is achieved by comparing the expected benefits with the expected costs of deviant behaviour, including opportunity costs and the risk of being caught or punished. This general approach can be used to understand a specific type of criminal behaviour, namely corruption, by shedding light on the decision-making process of both parties - the one who receives the illicit benefit and the one who provides it. Although the opportunity costs and risk calculations will certainly differ for each party, the basic decision-making process is similar. Opportunity costs related to time allocation: every time time is spent on criminal activity, less time is available for legal activity.

Thus, opportunity costs represent the amount of income foregone in favour of alternative activities. Risk calculation: consideration of the risk of being caught or punished. Certain actions are less likely to be noticed and prosecuted and thus determine an individual's risk assessment.

Both factors are also effective ways to deter corrupt behaviour – for example, by imposing harsher penalties and increasing the likelihood of corruption being detected. Some researchers point out that both increased certainty and severity of punishment are effective measures to deter criminal behaviour [3].

Other researchers, such as B. Fess, note that increasing the severity of punishment—for example, to the death penalty, as in China—may even lead to disastrous consequences [6]. It is logical to assume that in such circumstances, judges will be more cautious in passing sentences, since a conviction will be associated with high costs for both the defendant and the judge, given the risk of a potentially wrong decision.

If corruption is detected, the percentage of actual convictions may decrease, making tougher sanctions harmful at best and futile at worst. From a criminological perspective, in a situation where deviant behaviour becomes more attractive due to a reduction in expected costs, all other things being equal, such a relaxation may encourage even more deviant behaviour. Ultimately, a decrease in the number of convictions and an increase in the number of unreported cases may prompt the government to introduce even tougher sanctions, leading to a vicious circle [23, p. 303].

However, most often human behaviour does not go beyond clear rational decision-making, but is limited to how carefully it is considered [11]. As described above, the pure rational choice approach leaves room for moral disputes that can influence calculations, although real-life experience proves that morality is of great importance. However, morality differs not only in different societies, but also at the

individual level, and even in different countries, especially when factors such as emotions are taken into account. In essence, a combination of all these aspects is necessary to achieve a stable internal position. Thus, in recent years, a behavioural approach that enriches the rational perspective by incorporating psychological aspects and biases has been applied in models that attempt to better explain deviant behaviour in general and corrupt behaviour in particular. It is argued that even a rational decision-maker may ultimately resort to seemingly irrational behaviour, which is guided not only by rational calculation but also by the surrounding environment. This approach has expanded the decision-making space of the so-called "homo economicus" to include factors such as reciprocity, emotions, social image, etc., in order to paint a more realistic picture of human behaviour [18].

It is evident that the growing number of approaches complements rather than replaces the rational choice approach. Perhaps the problems of rational choice in its pure form are not capable of explaining the actual scale of existing corruption. For example, J. Lambsdorff argues that rational choice theory leads to two seemingly contradictory conclusions: with and without corruption. On the one hand, we should observe corruption more often (which is indeed the case) because, at least in the absence of norms, values, etc., criminal behaviour is guided solely by rational choice [14]. On the other hand, in the context of one-off bribery, as is usually the case, reputation plays no role, which means that the person providing the illegal benefit has no incentive to respond to the behaviour of the person receiving such a benefit. Even in repeated situations, the exchange eventually stops, leading to the so-called Endspiel effect (), which assumes that the bribe recipient will violate the mutual agreement at some point. This means that, using reverse induction, the bribe giver will also refrain from giving an unlawful benefit. Given these seemingly contradictory results, recent

studies show that the decision-making process is largely determined by the social environment and the behaviour of colleagues [25].

Among other things, theoretical and experimental studies suggest that the effect of "behavioural contagion" is mediated by social proximity to peers [10, p. 1007]. Human traits and behaviour are predominantly based on social interaction. People are not born with certain behaviour patterns, traits, and values, but acquire and adapt them through social interaction. These patterns and values can change and evolve over time and can be considered to be under constant exogenous influence. Moreover, existing evidence points to the importance of social norms and values, as well as the influence of reputation, in explaining corrupt behaviour. Reputation is a powerful force for strengthening and expanding morality.

Thus, many aspects that make up a person's inner world can be considered as key factors in explaining corrupt behaviour. However, decisions about corrupt behaviour are not determined solely by internal factors.

Instead, it is interaction with the social environment that influences or prevails over a person's inner world. The social nature of humans encourages consideration of peer group membership and reputation, making it unlikely that behaviour in general, and unethical behaviour in particular, is purely selfish. Let us consider the sociological and criminological factors that deepen our understanding of corrupt decision-making and are based on a person's inner world.

It can be assumed that, in addition to internal readiness, various components, such as typical values, rules and norms that exist in a given society, have a strong influence on human behaviour and on the decision whether to commit corruption offences or not. There are many sociological factors, criminological aspects and theories that can influence the level of corrupt behaviour.

Sociological factors. The general culture in a particular country can have a significant impact on individual decisions regarding corrupt behaviour. B. Hasted studied the influence of various cultural aspects and described "the cultural profile of a corrupt country as one characterised by a high level of uncertainty avoidance, high masculinity and a large distance from power"[2].

Other researchers have also come to a similar conclusion. For example, A. Getz and J. Volke, after analysing power distance and uncertainty avoidance, again showed a significant positive correlation between cultural factors and the level of corruption [16, p. 15]. Two dimensions of national culture (power distance and individualism) mitigate the link between human development and corruption [19, p. 95].

This is also true when norms and values are transferred from different cultures through migration [8, p. 467].

In addition to cultural aspects, studies also point to the importance of education in shaping propensity for corrupt behaviour. The level of education tends to increase as a country's economy develops, which helps to reduce corruption [4]. However, this does not apply to white-collar corruption, where the opposite is true: the higher the level of education, the more sophisticated the corruption schemes.

Studies also indicate that gender composition in leadership positions indirectly affects the level of corruption [12, p. 195]. For example, D. Dollar et al. found that a higher number of women in parliament is usually associated with lower levels of corruption [5, pp. 425–426]. Similar results are characteristic of inter-state studies [1]. As a rule, women tend to obey social rules and are less prone to serious risks, and therefore resort to corruption less often [15].

Criminological factors. From a criminological point of view, corruption is at the heart of general crime and contributes to its spread [26]. The criminological view of deviant behaviour is interdisciplinary in itself. In particular, there is an interdependence

between sociological factors and criminology, as aspects such as culture and education influence the overall level of crime and, consequently, the level of corruption. The inclusion of rational decision-making also represents an obvious connection with the inner world.

E. Sutherland and D. Cressey put forward the theory of differential association, concluding that criminal behaviour is usually learned and adopted through interaction with other people [7, pp. 136-139].

Aspects such as social class, race, and instability of living conditions, lack of housing are not only factors that contribute to involvement in criminal activity, but also increase the likelihood that people will interact with individuals with similar personalities and living conditions. This theory is widely supported by empirical studies that focus on social learning of both criminal and conformist behaviour [21, pp. 186-90].

At the same time, social learning is not limited to small neighbourhoods or specific areas, but also involves a cumulative perspective at the societal level. The strain theory, first developed by R. Merton in 1938 — at a time when the most common hypothesis explained criminal behaviour by biological predisposition — emphasises the importance of social structures and social preconditions in the emergence of criminal behaviour [20].

Whenever people feel that society treats them unfairly—for example, by restricting access to quality school education—they face a stressful situation, which in turn undermines their self-control [21, p. 140].

This theory suggests that in such circumstances, people may seek to change the goals set by society and create their own goals that contradict existing norms and values. They probably believe that the ends justify the means, which contributes to their decision to engage in criminal activity. However, the basic theory of deformation

has undergone changes over time, which ultimately led to the creation of a more generalised theory.

Even people in stable personal circumstances – for example, with well-paid and secure jobs – are potentially willing to put everything at risk and resort to criminal behaviour. Such behaviour may be the result of a dual self-perception. Although well-educated white-collar workers should be able to fully assess the consequences of their corrupt behaviour, L. Benson argues that such offenders often do not consider themselves criminals, but rather good employees, justifying their actions solely by their desire to ensure the success of the company [17, pp. 398-406].

Such biased self-perception may be the result of both hypocrisy and different understandings of what is right and wrong.

Research shows that understanding what constitutes a bribe or a gift, for example, depends on context and varies significantly from country to country. However, apart from different perceptions in different countries, the process of rationalisation is present in every society and is a key determinant of white-collar crime and corruption in particular. The ability to rationalise unethical behaviour supplants feelings of guilt and shame, making corrupt behaviour justifiable if there are sufficiently compelling reasons for it [22].

According to the social learning theory presented earlier, such a working environment can be considered extremely negative. If managers act corruptly without feeling guilty, such behaviour can influence the decision-making process of other employees. This is important given the extremely high costs associated with white-collar crime. Prosecuting and quantifying such crimes is extremely difficult [15], and even though there are numerous cases involving large losses, the actual consequences remain hidden.

Furthermore, high levels of corruption combined with weak institutional structures permeate society and ultimately lead to an increase in overall crime rates, creating an unfavourable and fertile environment for even greater corruption.

Conclusions. Over the past decades, research into the causes and consequences of corruption has developed significantly. Studies using theoretical, empirical and experimental approaches have broadened our understanding of corruption and helped to develop effective countermeasures. Corrupt behaviour is not only the result of internal cost-benefit analysis, but rather a function of the underlying social and economic environment. For this reason, an interdisciplinary approach is necessary to understand the complex nature of corruption. Research shows that corrupt behaviour is driven by a variety of mechanisms that originate at both the individual and collective levels. Moreover, although decisions about corrupt behaviour are deliberate – unlike impulsive decisions when it comes to general crimes – there are many conflicting mechanisms that influence it. Pure rational choice theories do not provide a sufficient explanation for the emergence or absence of corruption. The emergence of more reliable measures of corruption has stimulated a wide range of research attempts to explain the mechanisms of corruption that go beyond clear rational decision-making. Instead, studies emphasise the importance of bounded rationality, human values and the norms on which people have been raised in decision-making.

One aspect highlighted in the article is the relevance and influence of moral and ethical considerations on corrupt behaviour. Rational choice approaches completely ignore this aspect and do not adequately explain the emergence of corruption. Adding ethical considerations allows us to paint a more balanced picture of the driving forces behind corruption. People are guided not only by simple cost-benefit heuristics, but also by moral and ethical considerations shaped by the social, economic, legal and political environment in which they live.

Taking moral considerations into account is important for understanding the spread of corruption. Greater awareness of ethical considerations and the impact of one's own behaviour on others is likely to increase self-awareness and control, and reduce the likelihood that people will engage in inappropriate behaviour. Perhaps ethics is what distinguishes humans from animals, and its absence is likely to contribute to a vicious circle of systemic wrongdoing.

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