Problems of Nationalism: Corruption and Power Abuse in National and State Life

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Abstract

Corruption and abuse of power are serious challenges in government and society. Corruption is rooted in the abuse of power that occurs without transparency and strict oversight. The negative impacts of corruption not only harm the state financially, but also undermine public trust in government institutions and exacerbate social inequality. Efforts to prevent corruption can be made through stricter law enforcement, education from an early age, oversight by the public and the media, and increased transparency in administration and finance. Case studies in residential areas show that responsible and transparent leadership plays a crucial role in rebuilding public trust in institutions or communities affected by the abuse of power. Additionally, policy-based approaches such as the Corruption Risk Assessment (CRA) implemented in South Korea and tax reporting mechanisms like Tax Receipt in Australia have proven effective in enhancing transparency and reducing corruption opportunities. Through a combination of stricter regulations, government ethics education, and active public participation, corruption can be significantly curbed to create a cleaner and more accountable governance system.

Keywords:
Corruption, abuse of power, transparency, law enforcement, government ethics

1. Introduction

Corruption and abuse of authority are serious threats that must be addressed immediately, given their destructive impact on various aspects of life, including the economy, society, and politics. This phenomenon not only causes the loss of public funds that should be used for development, but also weakens public trust in the government and related institutions. With the increasing complexity of corruption practices, whether in the form of nepotism, bribery, embezzlement, or policy manipulation, systematic and sustained efforts are needed to analyse and tackle the root causes of this problem. The lack of oversight and low awareness of the importance of integrity further exacerbate the situation, causing corruption to occur not only in government but also in social communities and local organizations.

The urgency of this research lies in the need to understand the patterns of corruption in depth and formulate effective strategies to eradicate it. Many countries have implemented various approaches in the fight against corruption, such as tightening regulations, increasing transparency, and educating the public, but the main challenge remains the sustainability and effectiveness of these strategies. Without strong oversight and active participation from the public, efforts to eradicate corruption are often ineffective. Therefore, this research plays an important role in exploring the main causes of corruption, assessing its impact on various aspects of life, and offering concrete solutions that can be applied at various levels of government and social communities. Using case studies in residential communities, this research also provides insight into how corruption occurs on a small scale and how active community participation can be a key factor in overcoming it. The results of this research are expected to contribute

significantly to policy formulation and increased public awareness in order to create a more transparent, accountable, and corruption-free government and social system.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

A review of the literature shows that corruption is influenced not only by economic factors, but also by social, political, and institutional aspects. According to Muh Ilham (2022) in Tackling Corruption in Indonesia: Lessons Learned and Future Directions, corruption remains a major problem in Indonesia, with the country's ranking in the Corruption Perceptions Index still low. The study highlights that weak government institutions, lack of transparency, and weak law enforcement are the main factors that allow corruption to flourish.

In Indonesia, several studies show that corruption often occurs due to a weak legal system and a culture that tolerates irregularities. According to Transparency International (2024), Indonesia still faces major challenges in improving its Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) score, which reflects perceptions of corruption in the public sector. Corruption and abuse of power can only be controlled through stricter law enforcement, but also through policy reforms that ensure transparency and accountability in government. According to research by Bambang Slamet Riyadi (2024) in The Sociology of Law: Corruption and Abuse of Authority in Indonesia, corruption in state administration often occurs due to weak regulations and a lack of oversight of public officials.

This study emphasizes the need for corruption mitigation through more stringent policies and an increased role for oversight institutions in controlling the actions of state officials. In addition, research by Seno Wibowo Gumbir and Ratna Nurhayati (2024) in "An Overview on the Abuse of Power in the Perspective of Corruption Law and Government Administration Law in Indonesia" shows a lack of harmony in legal regulations related to corruption and government administration.

In addition to academic references, an interview with Mr. Bayu Rama Loksono provided an additional perspective on corruption that occurs on a local scale. He revealed that abuse of power does not only occur in government, but also in social organizations such as community associations. Low transparency and lack of active community participation are often the main causes of small-scale misuse of public funds.

3. Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with literature study and interview methods. The literature study was conducted by analysing various sources that discuss corruption and abuse of power, including academic journals and policy reports. Interviews were conducted with Mr. Bayu Rama Laksono to get a direct perspective on the phenomenon of corruption and efforts to preferent it.

Data collection was conducted through document analysis and in-depth interviews information from the interviewees was then categorized and analysed using descriptive methods. The main focus of the research is to understand the factors that make corruption difficult to eradicate and explore solutions that can be applied at various levels of society, from government to small communities.

4. Result

Corruption and abuse of power have complex causes stemming from various aspects, including structural, legal, psychological, cultural and social. One of the main factors contributing to the rise of corruption is weak oversight in government systems and organizations. In many cases, institutions that have ineffective control mechanisms tend to provide loopholes for officials to abuse their power for personal gain. When the supervisory system is not running optimally, individuals with high positions can easily commit corrupt acts without fear of serious consequences.

In addition, indecisiveness in law enforcement is an important factor in the increase of corruption cases. Many perpetrators of corruption escape severe punishment, so there is no deterrent effect that can prevent other individuals from doing the same. Psychologically, when the punishment of corruptors is not firm and does not have a significant impact, individuals who have the opportunity to commit corruption tend to feel that the risks faced are much smaller than the benefits they get. This phenomenon is further exacerbated by a legal system that does not always Favor justice, but is often influenced by political and economic forces.

Cultural and social factors also play a role in strengthening corrupt practices in society. In many cases, there is a mindset that assumes that corruption is something normal and has become part of the social system. Phrases such as "everyone does it" reflect how corruption has been considered the norm in certain environments, so that individuals who want to act honestly experience pressure to go with the flow. This culture of permissiveness towards corruption makes people reluctant to report or take action against corrupt practices because it is considered that it will not bring meaningful change.

Peers have a greater influence in shaping social norms and values in the workplace, so if the majority of individuals in an environment support transparency, they can exert collective pressure to prevent corruption. Conversely, managers who have good intentions to support integrity often face challenges in enforcing anti-corruption policies if the norms within the work group are not in line with the principles of transparency. Evidence on the causes of corruption can be found in various reports, official data, news, and direct observation. For example, many studies show that weaknesses in the supervisory system have led to an increase in corruption in various sectors, such as cases of corruption in state-owned companies due to weak internal controls. Meanwhile, reports on law enforcement in various countries show that corrupt people often get much lighter sentences than other crimes that have less impact. This reinforces the argument that lax laws are a major factor in the rise of corruption.

By understanding the factors that cause corruption, effective measures can be designed to address them. Tightening the supervision system, stricter law enforcement, and cultural change through early integrity education are solutions that can be implemented to reduce corruption. In addition, the active role of the public and media in monitoring government policies and decisions is also important in preventing abuse of power. With a collective awareness of the importance of transparency and accountability, corruption can be reduced and a clean and fair government can be realized.

Table 1. The Cause of the Theory

CAUSE	ASPECT	EVIDENCE
Weakness of supervision	Structural Aspect	The Indonesian Survey Institute (LSI) shows that nearly 50% of Civil Servants (PNS) consider the lack of supervision as the main factor of corruption. The Pertamina case is linked to weak internal and external supervision, which allows for data manipulation and tender rigging. Suboptimal internal government supervision is a major cause of rampant corruption in various regions.
The Absence of Strict Punishment	Legal and Psychological Aspects	The Attorney General's Office is still searching for evidence of state losses in the Sritex corruption case, indicating that many corruption cases have not received clear penalties. Although the Anti-Corruption Law allows for severe penalties, including the death penalty, no corrupt officials have been sentenced to such punishment.
"Everyone is like that too"	Cultural and Social Aspects	The general stigma in society believes that the activity of 'corruption' is a norm for those who have the opportunity and ability. This is evidenced by the results of interviews with several informants. Corruption has become a part of the culture in Indonesia, where the society views it as something normal and difficult to eradicate, thus becoming a long-standing tradition that is deeply rooted in daily life.

Corruption and abuse of power are serious problems that affect various aspects of people's lives. It often occurs in governments, corporations and even small communities, where individuals with power abuse it for personal or group interests. One common form of abuse of power is nepotism, where public officials appoint their relatives or closest people to important positions without considering competence. As a result, the quality of public services declines, public trust in the government system weakens, and opportunities for more deserving individuals to contribute are limited.

Corruption and abuse of power have a significant impact on society. Based on an interview with Mr. Bayu Rama Loksono, a common pattern of abuse of power was found, one of which is nepotism, where individuals with high positions appoint their relatives to important positions without considering competence. The impact of these actions is evident in reduced public trust in government institutions, increased social inequality, and the loss of billions to trillions of rupiah from the state budget that should have been allocated for public welfare. The lack of deterrent effect for perpetrators of corruption is a factor that exacerbates the situation, as the punishment received is often too light compared to the magnitude of the impact of corruption itself.

To address corruption and abuse of power, several key solutions have been identified based on the analysis. One of them is the tightening of the legal system, where harsher penalties for perpetrators of corruption are expected to have a deterrent effect and reduce the number of corruption cases. In addition, early integrity education is also an important strategy, as awareness about corruption should be instilled from an early age so that future generations have a stronger understanding of transparency and ethics in leadership. The implementation of anti-corruption education in the school curriculum can help shape the character of more responsible individuals and suppress the culture of corruption in society.

According to Transparency International, corruption occurs due to a combination of weak oversight systems and strong economic incentives to abuse power (2023). This is consistent with the findings in the field interviews that in many cases, individuals in high positions tend to take advantage of loopholes in ineffective monitoring systems to gain personal or group benefits. An interview with one of the interviewees identified as Mr. Bayu Rama Laksono revealed that abuse of power often occurs when public officials have broad access to budgets or policies without adequate control mechanisms. In addition, large economic incentives, such as the opportunity to gain financial benefits through government projects or access to strategic resources, further encourage corrupt behaviour.

In some cases, corruption also occurs due to social norms that are permissive of corrupt practices, where abusing power is considered normal and even necessary to gain an advantage. This is in line with Transparency International's view that when society considers corruption as something that cannot be avoided, corrupt practices will continue. In addition, the lack of transparency in public administration exacerbates the situation, as without adequate access for the public to oversee the use of public budgets and policies, opportunities for corruption are greater.

These findings emphasize the need for reforms to oversight systems and tougher legal policies to reduce the economic incentives that allow corruption to flourish. Strengthening independent audit mechanisms, increasing transparency of public finances, and active involvement of the public and media in government oversight are important steps in reducing corruption. With stricter policies and a strong anti-corruption culture, abuse of power can be minimized, and a cleaner and more accountable government can be realized.

In addition to legal and educational approaches, oversight by the public and media also plays a very important role in preventing corruption. Communities that actively monitor public policies and decisions can help identify and prevent corrupt practices before they develop further. Investigative journalists also contribute to uncovering corruption cases, ensuring that relevant information reaches the public, thus maintaining transparency.

In addition, transparency in finance and administration should be implemented in every institution, by ensuring that financial reports and public policies are accessible to the public, so that the use of funds can be effectively monitored.

Case studies show that corruption and abuse of power occur not only in government systems but also in small communities. When the leadership of a community association became non-transparent, the community began to lose trust and eventually made structural changes by electing new, more accountable leaders. This confirms that transparency and accountability are principles that should be applied in all aspects of life, whether in large institutions or in smaller social settings. With the implementation of the right policies, strong oversight, and continuous education, corruption and abuse of power can be reduced, so that people can enjoy a fairer and cleaner government and system.

5. Discussions and Conclusions

Corruption is not just an administrative crime. It is a systemic flaw in the economic, social and political environment that erodes the values and identity of the nation. When corrupt practices become a latent culture prevalent among bureaucrats and the public, the entire nation has lost its moral compass orientation as a human being and nationalism as a citizen. The collapse of public trust in state institutions and agencies will trigger bad perceptions that normalize corrupt practices, because people will basically imitate what they see and what they think is commonplace. If this phenomenon continues, it will trigger a collective identity crisis for all citizens. The next generation, which is projected to take control and dominate the country in 2030-2045 with the slogan "Golden Indonesia", will instead grow up in a state of structural systemic disability and will question the meaning of integrity, honesty, and even a sense of nationality. In this condition, the society will collectively be divided and the sense of unity will be eroded in pseudo-identities based on class/caste, ethnicity, religion, and race. This polarization of society erodes the spirit of unity in diversity that is the basis of the Republic of Indonesia.

The impact of corruption also spreads to various sectors like a domino effect. The situation is indicated when the education sector is controlled by the fraudulent practices of nepotism, rent, and buying and selling seats. When access to quality education becomes the privilege of a few and not a human right. This will have a continuing impact on other sectors because structurally, the educational environment is the initial chart after the family environment as the forerunner of how a nation is formed and determines its fate. An educational environment affected by a culture of corruption will produce a generation that is socially apathetic, cynical about law enforcement, and sceptical of any political & democratic dynamics. The further impact will also have the effect of citizen identity crisis, collective trauma, social depression, community polarization, horizontal conflict, disintegration and social radicalization.

Conclusions Corruption and abuse of power are serious challenges in governance and social life. Based on analysis and interviews with Mr. Bayu Rama Laksono, it was found that corruption often stems from abuses of power that occur without transparency and strict oversight. The negative impact of corruption not only harms the state financially but also diminishes public

trust in government institutions and creates social inequality. Efforts to prevent corruption can be made through stricter law enforcement, education from an early age, oversight by the community and media, as well as increased transparency in administration and finance. Case studies in residential areas also show that responsible and transparent leadership plays a significant role in rebuilding public trust in institutions or communities affected by power abuse. Suggestions Based on the research results, some recommendations that can be applied to reduce corruption and abuse of power include:

1. Increased Penalties for Corruption Offenders – Harsher penalties can provide a deterrent effect and prevent repeated corruption practices.
2. Integration of Anti-Corruption Education in the Curriculum – Education about integrity and ethics in leadership needs to be provided from an early age so that future generations have a higher awareness of the importance of transparency and accountability.
3. Strengthening the Role of Media and Society in Oversight – The public should play an active role in monitoring government policies and actions, and be brave enough to report indications of corruption.
4. Implementation of Transparency Policies in Public Administration – Each institution must ensure that financial reports and policies are accessible to the public to avoid manipulation and misuse of funds.
5. Adoption of the Corruption Risk Assessment (CRA) method from South Korea – Reducing the risk of corruption indications in the public service sector by mapping institutional vulnerabilities and assessing corruption risks in regulations and policies that have not yet been implemented.
6. Adoption of Australia's Tax Receipt Reporting Policy – A mechanism for transparent budget usage reporting to the public provided to all taxpayers as a form of transparency and accountability aimed at maintaining taxpayer trust and minimizing corruption risks.

Sectoral recommendations:

1. The government, through the Ministry of Education and Culture and the Ministry of Research and Technology, needs to implement anti-corruption education based on the entrepreneurial leadership curriculum. This step must be accompanied by the instilling of integrity values from the orientation period or basic period for students.
2. Additionally, the government must ensure transparency in the use of budgets and taxes by relying on open data accessible to the general public and subject to participatory audits.
3. Within the community, it is important to establish policy monitoring forums and participatory auditors involving influential community leaders to ensure effective policy oversight.
4. Meanwhile, the media and government relations play a role in promoting the reporting of budget usage, educating the public, and shaping public narratives and opinions to enhance awareness of the importance of transparency and accountability.

With the implementation of this strategy, it is hoped that corruption and abuse of power can be significantly reduced, allowing society to have a cleaner and more integrity-based government system.

6. Limitations of Research

This study is based on secondary data, so it does not capture changes in corruption trends over time. Longitudinal studies involving observations over several years can provide a more

comprehensive perspective on patterns of corruption and the effectiveness of anti-corruption policies.

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