CORRUPTION IN POLITICS: THE WAYS TO ELIMINATE IT

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ABSTRACT

The concept of corruption is generally used to mean all actions and behaviors constituting bribery, embezzlement, favoritism etc. It is important to note that, "corruption" is the name given to the certain types of corruption (mainly; bribery, embezzlement, favoritism), which has political characteristics. Political corruption has a wider meaning than corruption. In other words, political corruption is an umbrella concept which also includes corruption. This paper explores political corruption, the abuse of public office for private gain. The goal of this paper is to provide the terminology of political corruption.

Key words: *Political corruption, bribery, embezzlement, extortion.*

The paper proceeds as follows in explaining political corruption. First, the meaning of political corruption will be explained. Both narrow and broad meaning of corruption will be clarified. Secondly, the types of political corruption will be explored. In literature, the term of corruption is often equated with "biribery." However, there are many different types of political corruption. Besides bribery, the other types of political corruption (extortion, embezzlement, peculation, rent seeking, pork-barreling, negative logrolling etc.) will also be explained.

DEFINITION AND PROPERTIES OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION

There are many behaviors and actions that negatively affect political ethics. The behaviors and actions that damages political ethics are called political corruption. However, the meaning of political corruption in the literature is still not clear. Apart from the political scientists that are acquainted with the subject, the social scientists, politicians and public use "bribe" and "corruption" to illustrate the damage in political ethics. The concept of "corruption" on the other hand has a much narrower meaning than political corruption.

Before mentioning the types of political corruption, it is better to put forward the basic properties of the concept. It is possible to enlist the basic characteristics of political corruption as follows: (Aktan,1992. ; Aktan,1997:1063-77)

- Political corruption appears in the political process. Political process is the structure where the decision-making of the government takes place.
- Political corruption occurs in the relationship between political actors (politicians, bureaucrats, interest and pressure groups) that possess a role in the political process.
- The political actors which has a right to make decisions due to political corruption, uses their political power and authority to violate the present legislations, norms and ethical rules.

- The public officials that abuses their power and authority provide themselves or others with in-kind or financial "interests".
- Political corruption is generally confidential.
- Political corruption shows characteristics that extends to all parts of the society. Economic corruption, academic corruption (scientific corruption) etc. are types of political corruptions which appear in institutions and political rules that are not properly formed.
- With the presence of political corruption democratic institutions loses their functionality within time. Interests and pressure groups evolves as a consequence of political corruption.
- Political corruption may be present in the governmental systems such as monarchy, oligarchy, or democracy. Shortly, all governmental systems possess political corruption within varying types or levels. The political systems where political corruption is widespread can be called kleptocracy.*
- There is a close relationship between political corruption and the changes and developments that takes place in the socio-economic structure. Parallel with the changes in the socio-economic structure, political corruption becomes more prevalent.

TYPES OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION

Political corruption appears in the political system in various types and ways. We may summarize them under the following short headings;

Bribery

The concept of bribery means the abuse of power and authority by providing persons or institutions certain privileges in return for financial or other benefits. In short, bribery is defined as the abuse of power and authority in return for maintaining personal benefits. The abuse of power and authority can be done in two ways.

- The abuse of power and authority in order to accelerate procedures that is in accordance with the law. It is apparent that these procedures will be causing benefits for some at the expense of others. An example is receiving financial or other benefits in return for concluding procedures in a shorter time.
- The abuse of power and authority in order to accelerate procedures which are against the law. As an example, a person may receive a traffic license by providing financial benefits prior to entering an exam either/or passing the exam.

The first type of abuse of authority and position in return for certain benefits (i.e.mentioned above) is called "acceleratory bribe" or "light bribery", while the latter type is called "distortion bribe" or "heavy bribery". (Berkman, 1983:23)

For example, a motorist may bribe a police officer not to issue a ticket for speeding, or a narcotics smuggler may bribe a judge to lessen criminal penalties.

It is important to state that the act that causes bribery is either materialized through the demand of a public official or suggested by the persons or institutions that the public official is involved with. In other words, when the public official starts the act, it is the "demand for bribe", when on the other hand, the institutions and persons involved start the act it results with the event of "taking of bribe". The concept of "demanding bribe" is only one aspect of bribery. The public official when demanding bribe is in a position of active subject. This situation may be defined as "active bribery", but it is essentially used to mean "forced bribery". However the difference between bribery and tribute isn't clear. For instance, a public officer may lead a person to propose bribery without openly asking the person involved money or other benefits. As an example, a person may pull goods from the customs within a

shorter time by providing the customs official money or bribery (light bribery); the custom officer openly requesting a bribe (tribute) by threatening to intentionally slow down the procedures or creating of problems is called a tribute. As stated above bribery is a political exchange which is materialized with requires the participation of two sides. These political parties may establish connections with each other as well as being related with other intermediate persons or institutions. The process of political exchange in direct relationships will be easier if one of the parties knows that the other party is willing give/take the bribe. Bribery may also be pursued by an expert, business bureau, some politicians and bureaucrats which does peddling. In these circumstances a part of the bribe is paid to the intermediate person or institution. Bribery is a type of political corruption which has been existent since the old ages. Bribery has occurred when state and person relations has commenced.

Extortion

Extortion constitutes another type of bribery. Extortion is essentially a special type of bribery offense. Bribery is materialized as a result of the agreement between two parties; the bribe taker and the bribe giver. In this framework, bribery is the result of the mutually consented agreement between the two parties. Extortion, on the other hand is the act of one party forcing the other to give the bribe. This is the reason why extortion offense is different from bribery. In summary, it may be true to say that extortion occurs when a civil servant obtains money, behaviour, or other goods and/or services from citizens by wrongfully threatening or inflicting harm to his person, reputation, or property.

Embezzlement and Peculation

Embezzlement means; stealing from the safekeeping and/or using those entrusted as if ones property. According to political terminology embezzlement is defined as illegal use of money or asset type of public resources by the public officials for personal spending or use. For example, the public official may cover the petroleum costs of his/her personal car from public funds. Embezzlement from this angle is synonym to theft.

Favoritism

Favoritism is a type of political corruption that occurs during the political decision-making process. Favoritism as a concept means unrightful and illegal favoritism and support. Favoritism is colloquially called favor done by influential persons. There are different types of favoritism; we can shortly define them as follows:

(1) Nepotism

Nepotism is the act of favoring one's family members in a situation where doing so is considered inappropriate. In other words, nepotism is defined as the employment or designation of a person according to its family ties with bureaucrats or other public officials regardless of their talents, abilities, success and their educational level etc. Nepotism is more common in societies where traditional ties and relations are dense.

(2) Cronyism

Cronyism is similar to nepotism, but it applies to friends and prior associates rather than exclusively to family. Cronyism is defined as the employment of public officials according to friendship ties rather than competence and equality principles. Basically, there is no difference between cronyism and nepotism. However, the person in favor in cronyism is not a relative but a friend or similar persons. Fellowship favoritism is a special type of cronyism. In the present context, factors like being from the same city or to grow up in the same territory continue to be widespread reasons for favoritism in traditional societies.

(3) Political Favoritism (partisanship)

Political favoritism is defined as providing illegal and unrightful benefits in different ways by the elected political parties to the

group of voters which supported them during the elections. Shortly, in political favoritism political parties are in a way awarding their political supporters for the help they have given during their election stage. Political favoritism may also be called political partisanship. Partisanship is the waste of public resources both at the high and low level bureaucracy. Extreme partisanship or zealotry is common especially in the local public service units. In political science terminology politician's favoritism towards their own partisans is also called as political clientalism or clientalistic politics. In short, clientalism is the support and protection of the partisan (client) by the political party.

Today political favoritism or political clientalism is common in many countries. Political parties are inclined to open new positions and create new positions in the public institutions in order to employ their own partisans.

Patronage

Once the political party comes to power it is common in the political process to remove the existing high level bureaucrats working in the public institutions with new persons by considering factors like political partisanship, supporters, ideology, and nepotism-cronyism. In literature this situation is called "patronage". Extreme patronage means some ministers have unlimited power and authority to make assignments to various positions and to employ new consultants etc. Zealotry and extreme patronage is one of the widespread types of political corruption present in many societies.

Pork-Barreling

Pork-barreling is another type of political corruption that can occur during the political process stage. Pork-barreling is the abuse of the budget and resources by the ruling party in order to allocate the budget to the electoral districts where it could maximize votes. In reality, political parties in power tend to allocate more resources to settlement areas they have received most of the votes. The allocation of the budget by the Prime Minister and Ministers to their own electoral districts (i.e. to guarantee re-election) is very widespread type of political corruption. In short, in this type of corruption the distributions of public resources in the areas with the most need are disregarded and services are taken to settlement areas of the political party in power.

LOGROLLING AND VOTE BUYING

Logrolling is a type of political corruption which occurs especially during the legislation procedure. Political parties may mutually support the laws they have proposed to the parliament (i.e. legislative body) if it is in the interest of political parties. This in a way, is a mutual voting trade. There is no doubt that the vote trade in some instances may be useful in simplifying the decision making process. As an example, a decision in parliament over certain topics may be subject to firm and tough rules. The decision making on a certain topic may be restricted to a certain proportion of the total number of the parliament members. In this situation political parties may mutually ensure the approval of the draft legislation they have proposed to the parliament. Both parties (part in power and the opposition party) use their votes to mutually support each other.

Another topic that could be evaluated in logrolling is "vote buying". In logrolling mechanism political parties may secretly propose financial benefits to the other party's deputy for the approval of the draft legislation they have proposed to the parliament. A wider application of vote purchasing is as follows; the transfer of a political party's deputy to another political party (i.e. after elections) by benefiting from the other party's financial or other means is a different type of political corruption. The transfer of a deputy to another party is in a way an increase in the number of votes especially in rural areas where the deputy as a person is more important than the party's program and philosophy the eyes of the voter. So if deputy switches from

party A to B he/she will still gain the support of the voters. In the present context, the purchasing of deputy is a common type of political corruption seen in the political process. There is also a market for purchasing deputy's and votes.

LOBBYING

During the political decision making process interest and pressure groups lobbies the ruling party, the other opposition parties, bureaucracy and voters, and hinders optimal decision making in the public sector. Lobbying activities by special interest groups (companies and conglomerates, employees and employer syndicates, chamber of trade and industry and other occupational unions etc.) usually take place as follows:-Interest and pressure groups can financially or by other means support political parties prior to election. In the first type of method, that is, campaign finance, if the party the interest and pressure groups supported wins the election then these groups tries to be effective on the ruling party in order to seek interests and rent.-The interest and pressure groups aftermath the elections try to influence some of the member of parliaments (MPs) to act in their own interests. The second type of method in English is called "Influence peddling"; MP's or bureaucrats try to affect other bureaucrats or MP's in order to provide advantages to persons or institutions through peddling. Interest and pressure groups emphasize that the "itinerant" is influential, dominant and able to finish the work. The itinerant is also called "law broker". Law brokers can enable the passing of laws and by-laws by providing interests to the legislative organ and cabinet.

RENT SEEKING

The activities by the pressure and interest groups to gain artificial economic transfer created by the government is called "rent seeking". The important factor here is, understanding the difference between the real and artificial rent. Real rent, occurs according to the supply and demand relations in the economy and this concept usually refers to land providing income without having to work after a certain time. Artificial rent, on the other hand is, the limitations put by the government on some economic activities and/or organizations of the economic activities by the government itself. So rent seeking is the waste of available scarce resources for interest and pressure groups to gain artificial rent created by the government. If we were to open up the definition; the term rent seeking covers the activities and expenditure of the interest and pressure groups to acquire economic and social transfer by government.

The main economic and social transfers are as follows;

- Monopoly seeking
- Tariff seeking
- License seeking
- Quota seeking
- Altruism seeking
- Subsidy seeking

However, rent seeking does not have the same meaning as political clientelism. As mentioned before political clientelism is the protection of partisans by the political party. In this framework, it could be said that partisans (clients) are more fortunate in rent seeking than others.

THE LEAKAGE OF PUBLIC SECRETS AND ROBBERY

Public secrets are some activities of the legislative, executive and judiciary bodies which are kept outside the knowledge of the public for various reasons.The intelligence agencies in various countries are responsible for collecting, analyzing and storing data in the legislative-institutional framework. This information most of the time is stored outside the knowledge of the public, as public secrets. There is the possibility of this information (i.e. which should be confidentially stored) being revealed or transferred to some persons or institutions by the public officials for their own self-

interest. In these circumstances, the person leaking the public secrets receives pecuniary or non-pecuniary benefits. As an example, it is possible to gain interests by secretly leaking information and documents regarding the national security.

This type of political corruption mainly occurs while the government is performing its executive functions. The announcement of some confidential administrative and economic decisions taken by the government at an unexpected time is only one aspect of the contemporary political decision-making mechanism. However, the economic decision expected to be taken may be transferred by some ministers, high level bureaucrats and some MP's from the ruling party to some opportunist spectators and interest groups in return for personal gains.

SUASION

"Suasion" can be defined as providing those that have supported the ruling party prior to election with opportunities after the election. (Stanbury & Fulton, 1984) Suasion is a different form of personal favoritism and service favoritism. Politicians try to live up to the expectations of pressure and interest groups in order to avoid loss of votes in the coming elections. For example an X company which gave financial assistance to A candidate prior to municipality elections can ask for the asphalting of the road in front of the company. The asphalting of the road regardless of the queue is a type of suasion. The ruling party may offer persons or institutions subsidies or social aids to the persons and institutions who have given support. The ruling party may form semi- public institutions to offer its partisans these types of opportunities and guarantee re-election. In application these types of institutions are mainly formed outside the budget and are administered in a special manner, that is, outside the legal and institutional framework of other public institutions (legislative, executive and judiciary organs)". An example is the "extra-budgetary funds" existent in many countries.

POLITICAL MANIPULATION

Another type of political corruption is the "political manipulation" of voters (i.e by misleading voters) by the politicians in order to maximize votes. Political manipulation occurs in the following ways;

EXCESS COMMITMENTS AND LYING

Election is an indispensable part of democratic regimes. The right to be elected and to elect is a part of the political freedom. Politicians come to office with the elections and go with the elections. Politicians have to adopt two separate types of strategies; the strategy prior to election and the strategy after the election. In the strategy prior to election politicians use the means of media to directly visit voters, arrange meetings and explain their party program. At this stage politicians have to make commitments in order to be elected or to maximize votes. The excess amount of commitments, lying and deception are means to gain votes. Lying and deception and excess commitments are methods used by the candidates in their own electoral districts. In the strategy adopted aftermath the election the political party in power is in an advantageous position because it can use most of the public means.

Propaganda

Another form of political corruption is propaganda. The difference between propaganda and lying is; in lying the real information is not giver or transferred to the voter. In propaganda the real information is given but it is only one-sided. The ruling party is in an advantageous position in the re-election stage. The ruling party can use mass communication devices for propaganda, especially in countries where radio and television are under the monopoly of the state.

Overload Information

A different political manipulation is the revealing of overload and complex information by the ruling

party after election. In this way the activities of the political parties conducted illegally and against the laws are hard for the public to understand. Overload information basically means conducting activities in a legal confidentiality.

Secrecy and Opacity

A democratic system includes the openness principle. Openness is the knowledge of the public about the political decision-making stage. However in real political life some information may not be given to the citizens and kept confidential. Secrecy and opacity is a form of political corruption adopted by politicians and bureaucrats. In this way various types of political corruption may be diffused. Openness as stated above means that the state does not hide any documents or information from the public. However, some confidential information and documents (i.e. concerning national security) cannot be given to the public. This type of confidential information and documents that needs to be preserved, the openness principle should be fully adopted in democratic states. It is significant that the documents showing the revenue and expenditure of the government are clear. Citizens should know how the taxes they are spent.

There are three factors which enables political manipulation:

- The ignorance of the rational voters
- The irrelevance of the rational voters
- The depolitization of the rational voters

The ignorance of the rational voters means that the voters do not have enough information in choosing public property and services. Ignorance is a result of heterogenic educational and cultural levels within the society. The unavailability of mass communication devices also increases ignorance of the voters.

The rational ignorance of voters means the following. As it is known in public economy free rider motivation is dominant among the voters. The voter knows that whether he votes or not he/she will be offered public goods or services. The free rider motivation and the ignorance of the voters avoid optimum decisions to be taken in the public economy.

Another factor that causes political manipulation is depolitization, in other words, the abatement of the interest in information and political participation. Depolitization may be an intentional strategy of the state. The state may prohibit or prevent some parts of the society in order to curb the interest in politics. These three factors enables politicians to lie and deceive, make excessive commitments, propaganda, information overload and keeping some information confidential, thus maximize votes.

CONCLUSION

In general, corruption refers to abuse of power for personal gain. In its narrow meaning, corruption is an illegal payment to a public servant to obtain a benefit. But, “political corruption” is broader concept than “corruption.” Political corruption includes all kind of power abuse by all political actors (politicians, bureaucrats, special interest groups, voters.) It is important to understand all dimensions of a disase in order to implement effective cures. This paper does not aim to provide cures, but only tries to diagnose the disase.

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