

Diagnosis of the Corruption Phenomenon and its Impact on Undermining the Objectives of Sustainable Development -Study on the Dimensions and Impacts –

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Abstract

The world has moved towards the realisation of sustainable development goals in order to guarantee the right of present and future generations and to stand against all obstacles such as corruption, which has increased its intensity in the modern era, especially in developing countries that suffer from high rates of poverty, unemployment and ethnic conflicts. In addition, the absence of democracy and good governance, which led to creating a suitable ground for corruption to spread in all forms and became one of the most important challenges facing the sustainable development process in the world, especially developing countries, and is considered a demolition of all efforts made. Therefore, corruption has been associated with the loss of human rights and the right of all peoples to economic, social and cultural development, the loss of human rights and the right of all peoples to economic, social and cultural development. This research paper examines economic corruption and its repercussions on sustainable development, especially in major key sectors of the country. It also aims to outline a comprehensive strategy to mitigate the effects of corruption, and focus on the basic pillars to achieve sustainable development. This can be achieved through adapting effective programs that include vital mechanisms to assist economies and societies to fight underdevelopment and head toward progress. This is evident through the neglect of large groups of society that suffer from marginalization, in addition to the lack of equitable distribution of income and thus living in inhuman conditions, and many social and political problems result from it. Corruption also affects all economic indicators Therefore, all methods, methods and policies must be exhausted to address this widespread and powerful phenomenon in the economies of developing countries in order to move forward in comprehensive sustainable development that preserves the rights of current and future generations away from favoritism and injustice.

Keywords: Economic corruption, sustainable development, Strategies.

- Introduction:

Corruption is a serious pathological phenomenon that is growing exponentially, and it does not include a specific country or culture, but rather a global dilemma that is rampant in most societies, but to varying degrees according to their specificity and the degree of development of each society. Moreover, corruption is not confined to the public sector; it also pervades the private sector. It is a phenomenon that cannot be reduced to a single factor or a set of factors, as it encompasses multiple dimensions—economic, social, and political—and impacts the trajectory of sustainable development in all its aspects (economic, environmental, etc.), which represent the highest stage in the evolution of developmental thought.

In the context of the evolution of the legal system (both locally and internationally) and due to the deterioration of economic conditions in most developing countries, there has been increased focus on combating corruption and mitigating its negative effects as a direct barrier to achieving sustainable development. This issue has garnered significant attention from researchers and scholars across various fields—political, economic, and intellectual studies—in academic circles. Corruption, in all its forms, harms the national economy and its foundations, causing a slowdown and regression in sustainable development levels, particularly in developing countries and the Arab region. This stems from the lack of rational exploitation of available resources and weak investments because of the ineffective application of laws, which leads to the spread of crime in all its forms, an increase in its rates, and the emergence of acts of violence. Thus, it threatens political and social stability in the countries of the Arab region and the world as a whole. Therefore, it is necessary to combine efforts between governments, civil society, the private sector and citizens to confront and combat the phenomenon of corruption to minimise its negative effects.

a. Objectives of the Study

- ✓ Analyse the concept of corruption in its most important dimension - economic corruption - and identify the areas where economic corruption affects sustainable development.
- ✓ Searching for an integrated strategy to mitigate the effects of corruption and prevent it, and focusing on the essential pillars to achieve sustainable development, through the implementing proficient programmes that incorporate the needed mechanisms and material to make economies and societies fight underdevelopment and begin the journey toward advancement.

b. Statement of the Problem

This research paper aims to address the phenomenon of economic corruption and its effects on achieving sustainable development. In

this context, this study attempts to answer the following research question:

- How does economic corruption contribute to undermining sustainable development goals?

Under the framework of the study, this paper will be inspected according to the following plan:

- The conceptual dimension of corruption - economic corruption as a model.
- Economic corruption as a major hindrance on strategies to achieve sustainable development.

1- The Conceptual Dimension of Corruption - Economic Corruption as a Model

In this section, we will define the meaning of the term corruption, then address the definition of corruption in its economic dimension, and highlight the divisions adopted in categorising it.

1.1- Definition of Corruption:

According to the World Bank, corruption is the misuse of public office for private gain. It occurs when an official accepts, solicits or extorts a bribe to facilitate a public contract or tender. Corruption can also occur by using public office without resorting to bribery by appointing relatives or stealing state funds directly¹.

Some studies have indicated that corruption tends to increase in the era of rapid growth and modernisation due to changing values, new sources of income and power, and government expansion, as happened in Asian countries that witnessed amazing economic development. Social transformation carries with it a system of values that differ from one reality to another. In totalitarian systems, the values of nepotism, negligence and indifference are widespread, and free economies are based on a different system of values and traditions, including an excessive sense materialism over principles and values².

Mahmoud Fathi¹² believes that among the most important factors and considerations that lead to the emergence of corruption and administrative deviation are³:

- Designing bureaucratic structures in a way that are not based on sound organisational principles.
- The underdevelopment of administrative leadership and its weak influence on subordinate groups.
- Poor social and national upbringing and the underdevelopment of the overall social climate.
- Insufficient material and moral incentive systems currently in place.
- The perception among employees in bureaucratic agencies that these agencies are tools of control and dominance rather than serving the community.
- The low income of government positions, and although it is important to explain

the causes of corruption, it remains a partial reason when considering the underlying causes. Among the most significant of these is administrative bureaucracy, which is strengthened in the absence of a state of institutions, the weakness of the justice system, and the perpetuation of the secrecy surrounding daily transactions of authority.

Corruption is classified into several types based on the criteria used for classification, including political corruption, social corruption, administrative corruption, and economic corruption⁴.

1.2- Definition of Economic Corruption:

Corruption, in its economic dimension, is defined as "the use of public office for private gain." The ultimate outcome of corruption crimes is achieving material benefits or wasting public money, which represent represents the economic dimension of these crimes. This brings about serious outcomes on economic life in the state and society. The crimes of corruption give rise to the waste of public money, squandering national resources, and spending them against public interests. Therefore, corruption is considered an economic crime because its relation to public money, national wealth and the economic interest of the state and society. Public money represents, at present and in the future, the main pillar of the economies of countries⁵. On the basis of the above, the researcher may have a question about the forms or layers of corruption in the eyes of specialists? In fact, there are many economic studies that categorise and divide corruption into types, which we summarise as follows⁶:

1.2.1- Incidental Corruption:

It may sometimes occur as an incidental situation for certain political individuals or public officials, or it may be temporary and not systematic. It refers to the conduct exhibited by public service employees in the form of bribery or illegal actions that are exceptional and limited in nature. The general rule is that an employee should perform their duties with honesty and integrity. Therefore, corruption in this context becomes an incidental or individual case⁷.

1.2.2- Institutional Corruption:

This kind of corruption may happen in a particular institution or in certain economic sectors. This is apparent in corrupt officials in various ministries and sectors. Corruption is typically more common in sectors where it is easier to generate illicit gains, characterized by weaknesses in the system, as well as inadequate oversight and regulation. It refers to the conduct arising from the channels that lead to violations, which become an integral part of the political, economic, administrative, and legal framework of the state. Consequently,

corruption in this context becomes the norm, while other behaviors are considered exceptions⁸.

1.2.3- Regular Corruption:

This type of corruption may become a phenomenon that affects all layers of society and its various transactions, and this is what Johnston refers to as systematic or extended corruption. It affects institutions and the behaviour of individuals at all levels of the political, economic and social system, and has distinctive features⁹. Among the most important of these features are the following:

- It is embodied in certain cultural and social environments.
- It tends to be monopolistic.
- It is organised and difficult to avoid.

2- Economic Corruption Destroys the Social and Institutional Fabric of the State:

This is the indirect objective and far-reaching impact of economic corruption, resulting from the imbalance of social justice and the unjustified difference in income distribution, which is increasingly matched by an increase in the severity of poverty. In addition, raising the cost of essential services such as health and education, which negatively affects social welfare and sustainable human development, thus facing the beginning of the disintegration of the social fabric built over years based on the values of solidarity and solidarity between citizens as a result of the widening of unjustified social and material disparities.

Another facet and distant goal of financial and economic corruption is the damage to the investment opportunities sought in the various strategies established in various laws, which will not find a real impact on the ground despite all attempts, as long as the spectre of economic corruption prevails in most local and central administrations, a fact that is the result of the interplay of several factors and points, which we summarise in the following:

- It causes a violation of the principle of social justice among members of society and unequal opportunities.
- It also results in class disparity and social conflicts.
- Corruption squanders government aid in the form of "social support" for the poor and vulnerable.

In this context, we must not overlook the destructive impact of financial, economic and financial corruption on the network or map of industrial and economic institutions within the country, as the state's private real estate properties constitute an important part of the state's economic wealth, through their effective contribution to supporting the growth of the economy and encouraging investment in various fields, if they are managed rationally to achieve the desired goal.

The institutional map of the country's industrial and economic institutions underwent a drastic change at an earlier stage, which

contributed significantly to the dissolution and sale of various public institutions of an economic nature. Consequently, it had a very damaging effect on economic growth rates and a major obstacle to the implementation of many strategies and recovery plans in the industrial sector adopted by the state on several occasions. This is because of the damage inflicted by corruption in previous stages on the infrastructure of state institutions active in the field.

Corruption has been the cause of delaying and pushing investments abroad. It has also led to the use of the proceeds of corruption in foreign projects, which reduces the volume of financial liquidity planned for investment projects in the country. This, in turn, exposes the economy to a sharp decline in growth indicators, which in turn leads to a rise in unemployment rates and poverty indicators¹⁰.

Without further elaboration, we try to summarise these effects on the economic aspect and sustainable development in the following points:

2.1- The Impact of Economic Corruption on the Rate of Investment and Economic Growth:

According to economic theory, economic corruption is considered as a significant barrier to economic growth, which negatively affects growth for both local and foreign entrepreneurs. Corruption threatens the stability of the investment environment, increases the cost of projects, threatens technology transfer, and weakens the positive impact of investment incentives.

Economic corruption causes a reduction in investment rates and thus reduces the volume of aggregate demand and, through it, the rate of economic growth, as corruption and the accompanying payment of bribes represent for many businessmen a kind of additional taxes. This discourages them from increasing their investments in countries where corruption is present¹¹.

2.2- The Impact of Economic Corruption on Government Revenues and Expenditures:

Corruption squanders government revenues through:

- Bribing state officials to ignore part of the production or imports in their assessment of the taxes due on these economic activities. As a result, this leads to a significant loss of tax revenues, which is one of the most important sources of revenue for the state, which has negative effects on the rates of economic development.
- The evasion of customs duties imposed on smuggled import items results in a significant loss of state revenue, as a large percentage of these taxes and duties are lost.
- Bribery related to government procurement causes a significant loss of state resources and revenues and causes a

public budget deficit. Hence, forcing the state to borrow from abroad or burden citizens with the burdens of corruption by imposing new forms of fees and taxes that burden the middle and poor classes.

Corruption affects government expenditures, and this is shown by causing distortions in the faces of government expenditures, as theoretical and field studies have confirmed that governments in which corruption is widespread are more inclined to direct their expenditures to projects in which it is easy to obtain and hide bribes, due to the difficulty of determining their price in the market or the fact that they are produced or purchased by limited institutions such as military spending, spending on bridges, aircraft, advanced medical devices and infrastructure purchases¹².

2.3- The impact of economic corruption on inflation

Economic corruption causes an increase in the general level of prices and inflation:

- Increasing the rate of inflation as a result of the high costs of doing business to compensate for the bribes paid to corrupt people and as a result of their high rates of spending on consumer goods, real estate, durable goods and others rather than their productive cost. Consequently, these factors lead to great pressure on the budget of low-income people and increases the severity of poverty. In addition, the smuggling of goods and goods to neighbouring regions usually causes scarcity in the local market, high prices and the occurrence of inflation.
- The depreciation of the national currency against international currencies results in an increased burden of imports denominated in the national currency. As a consequence, this leads to a rise in domestic prices and in the inflation rate¹³.

2.4- The Impact of Economic Corruption on the Stock Market:

The stock market operates on transparency in providing information related to companies that offer securities in the financial markets, whether related to financial ratios or balance sheets that reflect the real situation of the company's activity and its creditworthiness. However, the spread of corruption results in the adoption of unrealistic and often misleading accounting procedures. In many cases, profit and loss accounts are prepared to reflect a low tax base for the purpose of tax treatment and in parallel other accounts are prepared showing high rates of profitability that are published in the capital markets in order to promote the subscription of securities. This results in misleading investors in securities.

Another manifestation of corruption in the financial market is the establishment of fictitious companies with forged papers that collect large sums of money from savers and may succeed in offering fictitious securities in fraudulent ways¹⁴.

2.5- The Impact of Economic Corruption on the Social Dimension of Sustainable Development:

Economic corruption affects the social dimension of sustainable development through¹⁵:

- Inequitable distribution of income, increasing the severity of poverty, as well as raising the cost of essential services such as health and education, which negatively affects social welfare and sustainable human development.
- Corruption leads to a decline in investment and thus economic growth.
- Causes a breach of the principle of social justice among members of society and unequal opportunities.
- Social class disparity and conflicts.
- Corruption squanders humanitarian aid and support for the poor.
- Increasing the cost of education, which reduces the volume and quality of access to this service, which has a negative impact on the poorest groups.
- Corruption causes the theft and misappropriation of the education budget allocated for the construction of educational facilities and the training of scientific cadres and administrators.
- Corruption in recruitment and promotion based on bribery, favouritism, nepotism and fraud causes the appointment of unqualified teachers.
- Corruption in the education sector is considered one of the most serious types of corruption, as it is known as the crime of stealing the future because it not only affects the volume and quality of educational services, but also affects justice in education and society's confidence in the education system as a whole.

2.6- The Impact of Economic Corruption on the Environmental Dimension of Sustainable Development:

Corruption affects natural resources, especially forests, water and oil, through bribes and commissions paid in order to obtain licences to exploit these resources. This causes their depletion and waste and negatively affects the balance and biodiversity. Besides, the issue of corruption in the forestry sector has received widespread attention at the international level in recent years due to the importance of forests in economic and environmental terms, as awareness has grown widely of the enormous costs associated with corruption and illegal activities in forests, and it has become clear that efforts to improve forest management will be of limited value¹⁶.

The water resource is considered a vital and essential resource for human and economic development and sustainable environment, especially in light of the climate changes witnessed by the world. This led to an increase in demand for this resource, which became the cause of political conflicts between many countries. However, this important natural resource for sustainable development often collides with many corrupt practices that hinder its optimal and rational use.

In the oil sector, which is central to the global economy, an open field for corruption and the practice of organised crime, despite the controls and agreements under which the producing countries operate. Hidden influences

manipulate this strategic commodity and earn many times the revenues of the oil-producing countries. Furthermore, corruption in the field of oil is characterised by cross-border crimes and opportunities to exploit the high seas and advanced communication devices, fabricating crises and fictitious speculations that double the profits of the corrupt. Undoubtedly, the policies of major countries play a role in corruption in this field¹⁷.

2.7- The Impact of Corruption on the Political Dimension of Sustainable Development:

Economic corruption is a serious threat to sustainable development, especially on the political dimension. It undervalues good democracy and the rule of law, thus affecting human rights and undermines public trust in government. Corruption in elections and legislative bodies recases accountability and distorts representation for political decision-making. It also jeopardises the rule of law, weakens civil rights and obstructs legitimate channels to reach political positions, as it leads to buying and selling of official positions. This ultimately weakens the legitimacy of government. Therefore, the democratic values of society and tolerance will be undermined, and leads to a lack of equitable distribution of income and public services¹⁸.

- Conclusion

In conclusion, this presentation titled "Diagnosing the Phenomenon of Corruption and Its Impact on Undermining Sustainable Development Goals: A Study of Dimensions and Effects" through which we tried to diagnose the concept of the phenomenon of corruption in its economic dimension, in view of the extent of the impact of the latter in undermining the objectives of the planned sustainable development programmes, especially in the major strategic sectors (energy security, health security, food security...). In conclusion, a number of conclusions and recommendations were reached, summarised as follows:

Findings:

- Economic corruption's effects on sustainable development are serious in all its dimensions, particularly in the absence of the factors of good governance.
- Economic corruption contribute to a lack of effectiveness in the use of economic resources, poor distributional justice, irrational utilisation of incomes, and the high cost of necessary social services, which affects the well-being of society and sustainable human development.
- The reason for the deterioration of economic, social, political and environmental conditions is due to the phenomenon of corruption, as it causes the waste of public money and negatively affects economic efficiency and effectiveness. In addition, this leads to the impoverishment and starvation of large groups of people and the lack of equitable

distribution of income and wealth undermines democracy, fundamental freedoms and the right to participate and express opinion. Corruption also affects the environment by not optimising and rational use of natural resources, especially non-renewable. All this reduces social efficiency and impedes development opportunities and thus mortgages the future of future generations, hence it is clear that in order to achieve comprehensive sustainable development, a strategy must be developed to eliminate corruption in societies.

- The efforts to combat corruption in order to achieve sustainable development can only be achieved by taking very strict (preventive - deterrent) measures in the field of combating corruption, while working to activate accountability and accountability mechanisms in all state agencies and the private sector, in addition to the need to work on raising citizens' awareness of the dangers of corruption on sustainable development plans. All this requires providing an Arab environment that absorbs the dangers of corruption, and the need to ensure integrity, justice and equal opportunities among the various components of society with the need to respect and prevail over moral and religious values. Combating corruption and achieving sustainable development in the Arab region requires a comprehensive strategy and approach, through which corrupt parties are investigated and prosecuted, a national anti-corruption strategy is developed, and opportunities for corruption in government operations are minimised.

Recommendations:

- Reviewing the educational curricula is a significant step for a healthy socialisation of the individual, by including materials to introduce the phenomenon of corruption and the behaviours used to reduce it.
- Continuous awareness-raising is imperative, especially in light of the university's policy of openness to its economic and academic environment by involving the various public administrations (centrally and locally) in the planned forums and workshops to introduce the latest legal developments on the subject of combating and curbing corruption.
- Periodic evaluation of the legislative framework to combat corruption periodically by experts and specialists in the field to fill gaps and correct deficiencies, led by institutions and university centres.
- Fighting all types of corruption requires activating and effectively liberalising the role of regulatory institutions to ensure that their authority is not abused. This is one of the tools for the success of the Malaysian experience in the field of combating administrative corruption.
- Adopting the principle of partnership in the fight against corruption has become very necessary, especially by

establishing the idea of proximity between the relevant regulatory institutions and the citizen. This is because the process of combating corruption of all kinds and preventing it demands the participation of all actors in society. In addition to a joint responsibility between the official sectors of the state represented by the government, parliament and the judiciary, in addition to the authorities charged with combating corruption with the participation of civil society organisations and citizens.

- Every citizen should have the right to participate in decision-making, policy-making and governance. Decentralisation of government will bring the smallest local communities closer to the government. Furthermore, transparency and accountability will stand in the way of corruption, and the presence of independent media and independent watchdogs, both governmental and non-governmental bodies, will help in this regard.
- Apply effective and strong anti-corruption and prevention measures that enhance public awareness, hold perpetrators accountable, take deterrent measures, and minimise opportunities for corruption. This can be achieved by creating a sophisticated and effective administrative and legal framework for the public and private sectors.
- Work to increase the effectiveness of agencies tasked with combating and preventing corruption, enhance citizens' confidence in state institutions, and contain corruption. Consequently, it does not constitute an obstacle to achieving sustainable development in the countries of the Arab region.

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