

INTEGRITY – HUMAN NARRATIVE OF CORRUPTION PREVENTION AND/OR AI-BASED LEGAL PROTECTION

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Introduction

“Integrity is doing the right thing even when no one is watching.”

C. S. Lewis

The present study focuses on the change in perspective that has been characteristic of the literature discussing the phenomenon of recent corruption². It prioritizes the determinant aspects of the change in perspective. It examines the approach, focusing on prevention; and the reality of how the prevention-based integrative approach and methodology might become legitimate beside the trend that aims to confine the phenomenon of corruption by the means of criminal law. Since this approach does not focus on aspects that can be captured by the means of criminal law, it is inevitable that it reimagines the interpretation of corruption itself.

This is the reason why this study interprets the set of conditions of corruption prevention with a value-oriented approach, in the context of management-literature in one respect, and in another respect, it examines the complex interpretability of the phenomenon of corruption as a consequence of it. Drawing on contemporary corruption research, on the whole, value-consciousness, organizational development and risk analysis all discuss the phenomenon of corruption less in an exact way, but more in a ‘system culture’- dependant way.³ For models of this cross-boundary work the authors propose⁴ going beyond anti-corruption theory and using insights from organisational and social-system theory. System experts suggest that in the face of complex problems we need to engage in a collective inquiry among many disciplines, fields and experiences and to initiate a processual and dialogic approach that can create a new understanding and knowledge from the diverse insights and expertise of those who participate. (Pallai, 2016: 12)⁵

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2 “The word “corruption” has a root in the Latin *corrumpere*, to spoil (as a virgin) or destroy. Corruption classically referred to such things as “the turning of the head” of a judge: instead of being blindfolded with a fair scale, the judge turns his/her head and tips the scale toward the one who pays a bribe. John T. Noonan, author of the remarkable tome *Bribes*, says “the core of the concept of a bribe is an inducement improperly influencing the performance of a public function meant to be gratuitously exercised”. (Noonan, 1984: xi). Bribes introduce market-like payments into systems that are meant to allocate goods and positions by merit, votes or lottery (Rose-Ackerman, 1978).” (Klitgaard, 2015: 17-18) See: *ibid.* 18-19 Different perspectives on the meaning of corruption. See also: “Corruption is a crime of calculation” (Klitgaard et al., 2000: 28).

3 In this sense, it is important for the organization to actively work to strengthen its own integrity and constantly analyze the changing environment and how the constant changes pose new challenges for the organization.

4 For example: Heijden, 2005; Senge 2013; Senge at al., 2004; Scharmer, 2016)

5 The spirit of a learning organization is created and sustained every day by the set of values that govern its actions. If the values are based on hierarchical, authoritarian and punitive principles, the spirit of those who work under such conditions will reflect those values. A formal “Declaration of Values” may be needed to help bring out the creative and liberating spirit necessary for creating a learning organization. (Kim & Eillen)



The establishment of the integrity approach⁶ – and on the whole, the preference of prevention in anti-corruption endeavours presupposes the effective operation of leadership cultures, internal control systems and a risk-based mindset. In this respect, the study examines the phenomenon of corruption in the context of integrity management⁷, and at the same time it points out that integrity development is not the same as corruption prevention, since it is a much broader concept and altogether ‘it was intended to implement a proper, effective and efficient operation’ (Pulay, 2021). Among the situations endangering and working against these values, the act of corruption is only one of the many. Meanwhile, we interpret integrity as a context constructible to corruption prevention, which means that people’s intra-group and intra-community behavioural characteristics stand behind corruption. This means that in order to understand corruption, we must take a human ethological approach as a starting point⁸ (Klotz, 2017: 43).

The aim of the paper is to emphasize that the essence of the integrity approach is precisely that integrity is not an absolute and absolute category in itself, but rather a concept that conveys flexible content. Integrity can be understood as the guiding principle of a learning process. Situation/organization specificity is also an essential element of the integrity approach. There is no standard strategy that can be applied everywhere, but it is a guiding principle of organizational culture (society?).⁹

The paper pays particular attention to how integrity can be interpreted as an ordering principle for society’s anticorruption strategy in the age of AI.¹⁰

The Two Perspectives of Anti-Corruption Efforts

The rules-based strategy is a punitive, regulatory approach based on the law, which in practice can only achieve limited results. Unless it is complemented by a social approach that interprets the potential for unprincipled benefits in a negative context, it can only produce short-term results. Those who are tempted will always detect ways around the rule.

Therefore, a balanced integrity-based approach of values alongside rules is necessary for long-term results. The term “integrity” is used here in the original Latin sense of the word “intagere”; “intact”, i.e. morally adequate, inviolable, blameless (Nieuwenburgh, 2002). This concept of integrity includes both personal and organizational integrity, as well as the integrity of the connection between person and organization. In this broad sense, integrity is the basis for the legitimacy and trustworthiness of the public sphere, underpinned by the integrity of institutions and the people employed by them.

In international practice, governments in the fight against corruption follow a historical sequence from a rules-based strategy to integrity. The following stages can be distinguished in this process:

6 Previously, the term ‘ethics’ was generally used (OECD, 2000a), and basically, the term ‘integrity’ has taken its place in more recent publications. (OECD, 2000b, 2009). This probably reflects well the change which is more connected to the contemporary approach of integrity-management, connecting the rules-based and value-based approaches. We will refer to some synonymous terms without going into complicated interpretative discourse, such as ethics, morality, integrity, deontology, accountability, which bear nuanced differences in meaning in different languages.

7 The integrity management framework (or “system”) will not be considered a closed system, but an open system that is embedded in a wider “integrity context”. This means that integrity management instruments should not only be coordinated with each other, they should also be coordinated with other, related actors and factors that might have an impact upon the organizational members’ integrity (Maesschalck & Bertók, 2009).

8 Within natural sciences, human ethology aims to synthesize the scientific knowledge about human beings with the contribution of psychology, anthropology, sociology and biology, more specifically, ethology, genetics and neurosciences (Csányi, 2000).

9 See: Klitgaard, 2015

10 In this sense, the following question is more than important: “In what way is integrity more than compliance?” (Pulay, 2014)



- a) Ignoring corruption, keeping it secret, avoiding publicity. This is usually a consequence of the low level of social control that previously existed in the past, where disclosure of corruption could be a source of social tension, but the lack of social control (integrity) allows the stakeholders to hold together.
- b) Awareness. A specific given incident is uncovered, which raises awareness of corruption in the wider public. Depending on the intensity of the social reactions triggered, institutions are forced to introduce control measures in order to preserve legitimacy. This usually means rule-based measures as a preliminary step.
- c) Developing rule-based protection towards a governmental level. This usually generates specific legislation in the legislature on the one hand, and on the other hand, it sets in motion preventive activity in the investigative side powers and by statutory mandates.
- d) Recognising the shortcomings of a strategy based solely on suppression. Despite an increase in the work of investigative bodies and the judiciary, a substantial reduction in corruption cannot be experienced. Evidentiary procedures are proving problematic, and the penalties in the few concrete verdicts do not act as a deterrent to repeat offending.
- e) An integrity-based approach is coming to the foreground. Governments first introduce the so-called hard measures: identifying those responsible, developing control systems; then soft measures are introduced, which emphasize ethical behavior and appropriate leadership attitudes.
- f) Finding a balanced approach which applies both rules and preventive methods that maintain integrity.

There is another, a management-type model of anti-corruption policies, which is associated with Hartmut Schweitzer (2005) and has been gaining increasing popularity. This concept distinguishes four essential factors:

1. corruption caused by changes in norms that exceed the capacity of society to follow the norm;
2. corruption arising from the unenforceability of previous privileges following the restructuring of society;
3. corruption due to the “looseness” of the new social elite following the consolidation of social structures and norms;
4. corruption resulting from the coexistence of old and new social structures and norms.¹¹

A Human Ethological Approach of Corruption

Corruption has been present in highly organized societies for thousands of years. “Corruption is a social phenomenon which follows the modern history of human societies. Its presence can be found in a thousand-year-old texts, in the headlines of newspapers from the last century and on the continuously updated internet portals as well. Yet, what is this seemingly ineradicable phenomenon which is able to resurface so persistently in ever newer forms and survives every form and system of society?” (Klotz, 2017: 7).

The need for its elimination throughout history can be linked to the strengthening of the institution of the state and parallel with this, to the emergence of highly qualified social classes which had advocacy potential.

Human ethology research derives the evolutionary reason for social organization from the benefits of human grouping, which presupposes the establishment of a set of rules for all members of the group and their adherence to them as a condition for a cohesive group. At the same time, the set of rules that

¹¹ Taking all the above into consideration, analyzing a given society according to the above aspects can contribute to the development of effective measures against corruption. Accordingly, four different anti-corruption strategies can be distinguished: a. rule-based, which focuses on organizational systems; b. rule-based, which focuses on individuals; c. principles-based, which focuses on individuals; d. principles-based, which focuses on organizational systems. (Pallai: Párbeszéd)



makes the group work is not unconditional and not always in everyone's best interests. Thus, within the group, individual initiatives may appear which do not directly or indirectly contradict the group's system of rules, however, those may also appear which contradict the group's system of rules and are therefore enforced by hidden means.

Sociological research shows that in groups where private property does not exist, corruption is not present at all. Conversely, private property implies corruption almost automatically.

The elementary form of corruption – the so-called proto-corruption – is gift giving, which means having a subtle influence on the decision-maker and is common in tribal-family organizational systems. Increasingly complex social structures create more complex internal rules of operation, which can provide greater scope for controlling corruption, but also more opportunities to hide corruption.

The most common form of corruption is bribery. This requires that the relevant decision-maker can be bribed at a relatively lower value than the value of the resource to which the briber has access by the bribe. This condition alone shows that corruption is essentially a two-way phenomenon, that is, reciprocity is assumed in bribery.

The reciprocal nature of bribery makes any such transaction extremely sensitive and risky, especially, if it is detrimental to the interests of a third party or if a third party or public authority has a direct interest or responsibility in detecting the corruption. Thus, in addition to the fact that a corrupt agreement, unlike a public/legal agreement, is not protected by the group's rules, the group's rules may also be aimed at preventing such an event. Together with all this, the implementation of a corrupt event contains uncertainties that at all points in the implementation process carry the possibility of failure for the parties, or even a disproportionately higher penalty than the expected benefit. Because of the high risk factor, corruption deals can usually only be reached in a relationship of trust (Major & Čudan, 2015).

The scope for corruption is reduced by the operational logic of highly organized states, where broader layers are able to control distributive relations through their representative bodies. On the other hand, the results of research in human ethology show that the practice of some form of corruption can be traced back to a large extent to the socialization processes provided by a society. Within this, a key issue is the awareness of the group's system of rules in individuals at an elementary level, starting in the family environment, and also at an institutional level, such as in schools or in the military service. It is therefore determinant as to what extent the socialization – with the moral motive encoded as the group's system of rules – of the growing number of members of the group excludes unprincipled gain from the legal possibilities. This, however, does not depend solely on the group's rule-making capacity or on the efficiency of the institution responsible for enforcing the rules, but also on the hereditary or spontaneous characteristics and drives of individuals. If, however, a coordinated socialization environment is accompanied by the institutional deterrent activity of the group's rule system, the incidence of corruption can be reduced to a level sufficient for the healthy functioning of society. This will presumably never mean a complete absence of corruption, the more so as new forms of corruption will always emerge in changing social conditions, adapted to the prevailing economic environment. At the same time, keeping corruption low in relation to the current level of GDP is essential to maintain the efficiency of social functioning.

The Potential of Information Technology in the Fight Against Corruption

“Corruption continues to be one of the biggest societal challenges of our time. New hope is placed in Artificial Intelligence (AI) to serve as an unbiased anti-corruption agent.”

Köbis & Starke & Rahwan



The use of Artificial Intelligence opens up new possibilities (Köbis/b) for detecting and preventing corruption in at least three areas:

1. AI can reveal systemic contexts that, on the one hand, are not part of a system by design, on the other hand, in the absence of human preconditioning, are not subject to search and would remain latent in the long term. Consequently, the control of AI can radically reduce the potential for corruption.
2. AI can take over previously human functions that have given room for corrupt activity. In contrast, properly operated machine intelligence eliminates the potential for corruption.
3. With the use of AI, the scope of human corruption control is narrowed to those who programme and use the AI. This is a much narrower scope than the control of the full range of activities in operation. Conversely, this circle can only be controlled by persons with at least the same training and experience. A further problem may be the need to check the auditors.

In the sense of the above, the use of AI is an effective tool for improving the integrity of society. In fact, if the competence of AI to control and detect data is made public, as well as the functional consequences of the use of AI, the increase in the risk of corruption can support the social consensus against the acceptance of corruption (De Benedetto, 2021). It is possible and necessary to develop a – very well-founded – presumption in connection with the application of AI that the processes of social operations are transparent to AI and that, if unintended correlations appear in these processes, AI will reveal and make them visible.

Influencing social consciousness in this way is not aggressive, but it does make clear a significant increase in the risk factor compared to previous possibilities. Therefore, in addition to raising awareness of aspects of the overall societal interest, it is worthwhile to include the implications of the potential for operating AI in outreach programmes to enhance social integrity.

However, it can be seen that, while the scope for corruption for broad sections of society is indeed significantly reduced by the use of AI, a very narrow group of people, namely the planners, implementers and operators of AI, still have a scope for corruption, and this scope is even significantly increased.¹² It is therefore of the utmost importance to look at the possibilities of control for this narrow group. This is all the more important because, if a corruption mechanism operating at this level were to become known in the longer term, it could lead to a breakdown of trust in the whole social structure in a context where AI is responsible for a significant part of the organization of social functioning.¹³

“Such AI-based anti-corruption tools are primarily fuelled by recent breakthrough advances in machine learning. Such technologies already match, or even exceed, human abilities across a growing range of (narrow) tasks, spurring hope that AI can contribute to more effective anti-corruption efforts. Overall, interest in AI is on the rise (again).” (Köbis &Starke& Rahwan)

It can therefore be seen that social trust in AI plays a crucial role in the vision of an effective use of AI. A breakdown in such social trust can lead to disasters, revolutions and the breakdown of power structures.

“Current directions in corruption research outline the importance of specifying the respective type of corruption one seeks to combat before embarking on an anti-corruption crusade.” (Köbis & Starke & Rahwan)

¹² See: Tinnirello, 2022

¹³ “In the past decade, technological breakthroughs have occurred in the field of machine learning – a subdomain of AI that trains algorithms to engage in tasks autonomously.” (Kobis et al., 2022)



Educational Program

The development of community control over the creation of AI is therefore not a task for the future, but for the present. If the development of a control methodology does not precede the design phase of the AI, there will be no guarantee that the AI will be free of corruption.

In order to ensure that the AI is free of corruption, it is advisable, as a first approximation, to ensure transparency of the AI stakeholders in the positive feedback of the AI. At the same time, it can be seen that the emergence of a new technology that decisively transforms the processes of social functioning opens up new, hitherto unknown possibilities of corruption, which are not only characterized by the fact that they have the potential to radically narrow the scope for corruption, but also by the fact that they open up new spaces that, although for a narrower social circle, represent a more significant opportunity in terms of intensity. Facing up this will be one of the greatest challenges for the conscious organization of society in the future.

The genesis of anti-corruption efforts shows that they are increasingly focused on the process by which values and norms are shaped in society and in organizations. In this approach, training professionals who understand the need for¹⁴, the essence and the process of developing values of integrity and who themselves become promoters and drivers of integrity mentality in different segments of society, becomes an indispensable element of integrity-oriented problem-solving (Pallai & Gregor, 2015). The justification for this type of training lies above all in the fact that there is much more general experience in the field of policymaking than in the use of value-shaping tools. Generally speaking, people working in public administrations are familiar with the practice of policy-making, and if there is any value-creating work, it is in no way conscious. And in a systemic context, it is barely comprehensible.

The aim of the integrity advisory training programme is therefore to train public administration professionals who can identify and analyze corruption and integrity risks in the organization, and can initiate organizational development tasks involving the prevention of corruption and the establishment and operation of an integrity management system.¹⁵

Conclusion

“Grasping the risks of corrupt AI requires a closer inspection
of the socio-technical implementation of AI.”
Transparency International, 2022

“The impact of AI on societies around the globe continues to grow, while the rising capabilities
of AI shift existing power structures. In a digital age, power resides with those who have the
code and the algorithms – currently mostly large tech companies and governments. Corrupt
AI occurs when power holders abuse this power for their private gain.”
Transparency International, 2022

In this study, the authors started from the premise that corruption is a huge social challenge all over the world today. After a long struggle, in recent times there may have been noticeable progress, but an actual breakthrough in a new approach is expected.

¹⁴ See: Pallai: Integritás

¹⁵ See: (Klotz, 2019)



The basis for this is twofold: partly placing the emphasis on prevention, an anti-corruption narrative with an integrity approach is necessary, and partly the application of artificial intelligence with appropriate competencies can help the break-through. Education is a prominent element of both conditions. In the study, we dealt with the integrity specialist training, which prepares specialists - corruption experts - in a new scientific approach.

For examining case studies, the authors recommend the Budapest National University of Public Service continuing education course in Integrity Counselling analysis of its launch.¹⁶

Minimizing corruption requires a social awareness of its long-term consequences, both direct and indirect. If a clear awareness of this is an integral part of a person's integrity, it becomes impossible to practice corruption and illegality. Avoiding corruption therefore provides a higher level of motivation than utilizing it.

Transparency in the organization of society and the running of the economy is an effective barrier to the motivation for corruption. A further possibility is the use of machine intelligence in the organization and regulation of institutional functions, which excludes the influence of personalities. Further, using machine intelligence, transparency and social control of the creator and operator of the machine intelligence provides an appropriate guarantee (Major, 2022). "Making AI systems more resilient against corruption risks requires novel safeguards. Here, we call on policy-makers, programmers, private companies and civil society organizations to address three main aspects: (1) Develop innovative regulatory frameworks that support the ethical design and implementation of AI, as well as mandating model audits. (2) Facilitate such audits by ensuring transparent code and data, as well as the interoperability of different programming languages. (3) Sensitise new powerful actors like data scientists and programmers to AI ethics and anti-corruption through training and codes of conduct." (Transparency International, 2022:15)

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