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Research Article

Corruption - A Common Social Phenomenon in the Orient from the Political Culture Perspective

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Abstract

The Orient, encompassing a diverse array of regions and linguistic families across Asia, Oceania, and portions of Africa, manifests a distinctive sense of collective identity. This study, grounded in Marxist-Leninist theoretical frameworks, employs historical and logical analytical approaches to investigate the phenomenon of corruption within these regions, examining its evolution from ancient times to contemporary society. The conventional political culture of the Orient, shaped by geographical determinants, demographic attributes, and notably religious and belief systems, fosters a deep-seated reverence for authority and a delineated social hierarchy. Notable features include the emergence of personality cults, paternalistic governance, nepotism, and relationships characterized by patronage and clientelism. The influence of religion has often been appropriated to reinforce loyalty to the ruling elite. This cultural paradigm substantially contributes to the pervasive incidence of corruption within the Orient. It is evident across a multitude of sectors, involves a wide array of stakeholders, and permeates all levels of governance. The challenges of nepotism, factionalism, and the emphasis on personal connections—such as those rooted in ethnicity, familial ties, and regional affiliations—further exacerbate the issue. A comprehensive understanding of these entrenched cultural dimensions is essential for effectively addressing corruption in these regions.

Keywords

Clientelism, Corruption, Cronies, Patronage, Political Culture

1. Introduction

Corruption constitutes one of the most distressing social phenomena that has persisted for an extensive duration in the Orient. Extensive and vigorous campaigns aimed at combating corruption have been undertaken throughout Oriental societies, extending from China and Japan to Korea, Vietnam, and Singapore. This social issue has also garnered considerable attention in the Occidental media, particularly regarding the corruption endemic in societies such as India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Kuwait, Indonesia, and East Timor. According to the Vietnamese Encyclopedia

[10] p. 137, "corruption is the act of a person in a position or power who uses his or her position or power to harass, accept bribes, or intentionally violate economic regimes, policies, and regulations to serve personal interests, causing damage to state, collective, and individual assets, and interfering with the proper functioning of state agencies and socio-political organizations." Oxford learners dictionary defines corruption as the distortion or undermining of integrity in the execution of governmental tasks through bribery or favors [18]. According to the 2005 Law on Anti-Corruption, p. 21 of the National

Assembly, "corruption is the conduct of a person having a position and power who has abused that position and power for personal gain." [22] From a legal viewpoint, Nye [17] posits that corruption encompasses a spectrum of activities involving the exchange of bribes, misappropriation of assets, exploitation of authority to extort resources or unlawfully acquire property, and the misuse of public office. From a political viewpoint, Tanzi [33] asserts that corruption is characterized by the misuse of power within the public sector for personal advantage or benefit. From an economic perspective, Vannucci [31] contends that corruption can be understood as a rational decision-making process within an environment shaped by the interplay of benefits that can be acquired and the repercussions that may ensue. Furthermore, from an economic perspective, World Bank defines corruption as the exploitation of public office for personal gain [9], p.08, thereby violating established principles of governance. In general, corruption is characterized by the following fundamental traits: (1) it emanates from individuals occupying specific positions of power and influence within organizations, corporations, enterprises, or public institutions; (2) it encompasses a range of self-serving and profit-driven behaviors, wherein benefits may encompass both material and intangible aspects, extending from assets to programs, policies, and strategic plans; (3) it exerts a particularly detrimental effect on marginalized groups within society and undermines the overall trust of the populace in the economic, political, and social field, as well as in state mechanisms. However, upon deeper examination of this social phenomenon, a plethora of divergent and conflicting perspectives emerge. Specifically, the majority of scholars tend to focus solely on the causes, manifestations, and characteristics of corruption at a superficial level, attributing it to declines in personal ethics, lax policies and mechanisms, numerous loopholes, and a failure to effectively control and deter citizens. In contrast, the number of scholars who explore and elucidate the origins, manifestations, and characteristics of corruption in the Orient from the perspective of political culture remains relatively limited.

Social management encompasses the influence, regulation, and command over processes of social transformation and human behavior, ensuring their development adheres to established legal frameworks in order to fulfill the objectives and intentions of the management entity. The culture of social management represents the aggregate of values derived from concepts, standards, principles, and methodologies employed within social management practices to attain collective objectives. This culture is the outcome of the interactions among groups of individuals, social strata, and institutional entities engaged in management activities. The culture of social management is instrumental in establishing systems of social standards and values that direct individuals towards developmental choices. It possesses a systematic attribute (contributing to the regulation of political and social interactions, thereby enhancing the management quality of the entity), a value-centric aspect (guiding human capabilities and attributes towards the realization of selected ideal values), a historical and educational quality (elevating consciousness, fostering training, and promoting the positive attributes of individuals, collectives, and communities), and a humanistic dimension (advocating for the enforcement of democratic principles and opposing all forms of political degeneration). The traditional culture of social management emerged when the socio-economic landscape and productive forces were yet to reach maturity, with societal organization governed by the principle of communal consensus, where the leader, defined by the customary legal system of traditional culture, was an individual well-versed in customs, possessing experience and a sense of accountability. Moreover, the ideological framework that influences the self-perception of individuals is also spiritual in nature, rooted in the populace's faith in supernatural entities. Relationships are predicated upon the veneration of authority and individual personalities; connections characterized by "patronage - clientelism" are pivotal within social endeavors. As society evolved into class divisions and the state structure materialized, the dominant political power mechanisms employed to reconcile conflicting interests transitioned from traditional social management culture to a political culture paradigm. Political culture is manifested through the principles governing political-social relations, established customs and practices, methods of production, organizational forms of state management, and the overarching political regime. Within a stable modern political framework, the traditional culture of social management, recognized for its pronounced conservatism and persistent adaptability, remains influential, significantly affecting the quotidian existence and socio-economic equilibrium of various nations and ethnic groups, such as the Akha people in the Northwest of the Indochina peninsula, the Arbor community in India, and the Khmer, Cham, and Raglai populations in Vietnam. Corruption emerges as a prevalent social phenomenon in the Oriental context, thereby closely intertwining with social management and its cultural aspects. This correlation arises from the propensity of individuals in positions of authority to retain state power and exploit legal loopholes or regulatory gaps that fail to encompass the intricate realities of life, thereby facilitating opportunities for those in power to leverage their positions for personal enrichment, ultimately leading to corrupt practices.

2. Literature Review

The Eric Chia case is presently receiving considerable scrutiny from the Malaysian populace. This individual, originally from Singapore, held the position of Chief Executive Officer at the financially troubled national steel manufacturer, Perwaja Steel. During his tenure, he misappropriated funds amounting to 20 million USD. The collegial dynamic—characterized by compromise, emotional sensitivity, and interpersonal respect—is exemplified by the establishment of

Perwaja in 1986 under the directives of Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, aimed at facilitating the nation's industrialization agenda. Nevertheless, it ultimately culminated in one of the most significant financial scandals in Malaysian history. Eric Chia's ascension to the leadership of Perwaja was attributable to his close affiliation with the Prime Minister. In its inaugural year, Perwaja incurred losses totaling 51 million USD, leading to its bankruptcy by 1988. The situation returned to a semblance of normality following Prime Minister Mahathir's intervention [16].

Lim Geok Hwee, the Chief Executive Officer of NTUC Choice Homes, also misappropriated substantial sums from a company-sponsored real estate development partnership initiative for personal stock investments. In 2003, he was convicted and sentenced to six years of imprisonment for embezzlement. Additionally, the financial, administrative, and military malfeasance of Abdullah Puteh, the Governor of Aceh Province (Indonesia), resulted in a ten-year prison sentence for fraudulent transactions involving helicopter acquisitions [16]. Chia Teck Leng, the Chief Financial Officer of Asia Pacific Breweries (APB), shortly after his appointment in January 1999, devised a plan to solicit loans from foreign banking institutions. As an avid gambler, he found himself in significant debt, owing banks as much as 60,000 USD. He resorted to document forgery to deceive four foreign banks into granting loans, even replicating the signatures of APB executives. With each loan obtained, his gambling behavior became increasingly reckless. The Singapore Ministry of Commerce exposed his activities in 2003, by which time he had squandered approximately 37 million USD in casinos. The court ultimately imposed a sentence of 42 years, marking the most severe penalty for commercial crime in Singapore at that time. In China, the practice of gifting moon cakes alongside apartment or car keys, or gold Buddha statues, as well as airline tickets, is widely acknowledged among the populace [16].

All the aforementioned instances illustrate that: The entities implicated in corruption encompass generals, government officials, civil service personnel, public employees, as well as their relatives, subordinates, and intermediaries within the framework of the societal governance apparatus.

3. Methods

The subject matter employs two fundamental methodologies in alignment with Marxist-Leninist theory, namely the historical method and the logical method. The historical method serves to elucidate significant events and instances of corruption across various nations and regions, adhering to a chronological framework that spans ancient, medieval, modern, and contemporary epochs. Conversely, the logical method is employed to interconnect and synthesize empirical evidence and data pertaining to the Oriental socio-cultural context, natural geographical parameters, and anthropogenic geographical conditions, alongside the historical evolution of

Oriental society at large, thereby illuminating the distinctive features and manifestations of corruption and exploring the dialectical causative relationships that exist between these elements, ultimately facilitating a more nuanced, objective, and detailed understanding of the corruption phenomenon within the Orient.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1. The Symbiosis Between Traditional Social Management and Modern Political Culture: The Roots of Corruption in the Orient

According to Nguyen Duy Doai [5], the culture of social management constitutes an organic system of both material and spiritual values that are generated and accumulated by humanity throughout its interactions with both the natural and social environments, aimed at the organization and regulation of society for the purposes of survival and advancement. This culture symbolizes the repository of knowledge, creative abilities, and consciousness surrounding social relationships and institutions that have been established to satisfy societal needs and developmental imperatives; thus, it remains inherently influenced by the current levels of social advancement, economic development, and the cultural identity of the society in question. Consequently, social management culture emerges as a manifestation of human creative endeavors aimed at fulfilling the historical objectives inherent to a specific socio-economic framework, serving as a vital catalyst for the establishment of stability and the progression of socio-economic development. In parallel, Do Hoang Toan [27], p. 12 posits that social management represents an objective human endeavor that exerts influence over a collective group to organize and sustain the distinctive characteristics of that group, while simultaneously addressing the existential and developmental needs of its members. Do Thi Kim Thanh [25] asserts that social management culture encompasses the aggregate of material and spiritual activities generated by humanity to affect both the natural and social environments, with the goal of structuring, regulating, safeguarding, and ensuring the stability, persistence, and advancement of social order. In summary, social management culture embodies the comprehensive array of values derived from the concepts, standards, principles, and methodologies employed in social management practices, aimed at achieving collective objectives; it reflects the outcomes of the activities undertaken by groups, classes, and social institutions within management contexts, particularly in scenarios where socio-economic development and productive forces remain insufficiently advanced, and societal organization adheres to the principles of community consensus.

The term "symbiosis" denotes the amalgamation of inherently contrasting elements, exemplified by the interactions between local and global contexts, as well as the interplay

between the natural environment and contemporary social surroundings. Thus, the notion of "symbiosis," originally derived from the field of biology and subsequently appropriated by Kisho Kurokawa for his theoretical explorations, underscores the pivotal aspect of integration, blending, and commonality with significant Eastern religions and philosophies. Symbiosis can also be categorized based on the nature of physical attachment among elements; when the elements coalesce to form a cohesive entity, this is referred to as contact symbiosis, whereas symbiosis characterized by a lack of such unification is termed non-attached symbiosis. In biological contexts, symbiosis serves as a fundamental impetus for evolutionary processes; conversely, within human societies, it functions as a critical driving force for developmental progress. In the realm of cultural exchange, alongside the integration of socio-economic and scientific-technical domains, the phenomenon of symbiosis emerges as a distinctive and unavoidable characteristic of global culture. The expression of national resistance to international influences, arising from a defensive stance, predominantly reflects a condition of withdrawal; while this perspective may appear somewhat justifiable for less developed nations, the contemporary model of exchange is fundamentally symbiotic rather than merely one of acceptance or rejection.

As of the present, according to the Asian Development Bank [1], p.02, over 2.2 billion individuals in the Orient remain engaged in agricultural livelihoods, characterized by a lack of stringent planning in small-scale economic activities, which engenders a degree of arbitrariness in actions. This situation results in the voluntary exchange of monetary gifts and unofficial gratuities, essentially amounting to bribery directed towards officials responsible for administrative functions, even in the absence of solicitation, often framed as a "small gift" to express gratitude towards those who assist in resolving bureaucratic matters, ultimately yielding greater and more personal advantages [12], p. 82.

The economy constitutes a fundamental aspect of infrastructure, exerting a pivotal influence, while political culture is recognized as a component of the superstructure. To date, as indicated by the Asian Development Bank [1], p.02, over 2.2 billion individuals in the Orient continue to engage primarily in agricultural livelihoods. The values characteristic of Occidental bourgeois democracy were disseminated by missionaries and colonial authorities, subsequently assimilated and employed by the indigenous bourgeoisie, resulting in significant transformations across various dimensions of political existence, fostering the gradual evolution of democratic national consciousness and the reconfiguration of Occidental democratic ideological values that had firmly established and flourished during the 19th and 20th centuries. Notably, a substantial number of leaders within the Oriental national liberation movement exhibited a connection to the liberal democratic tradition through international travel. The inheritance of Occidental education and the exposure to liberal democratic institutions within the colonies profoundly influenced the perspectives of national liberation movement leaders. This synergistic relationship remains an essential prerequisite for political stability and ongoing development, while society continues to be intimately linked to traditional cultural norms and institutional frameworks governing social management. Consequently, the infrastructure—encompassing natural geographical conditions, natural resources, ethnic diversity, religious plurality, and a modern capitalist economy—particularly the role of religion, which significantly impacts all facets of life, serves as the foundational basis for efforts to cultivate a diverse amalgamation within the continuum of national political culture; thus, it acts as both a practical foundation for the establishment of a symbiosis between traditional and modern political cultures and a critical element in the formation of contemporary democracy. Therefore, it can be concluded that traditional social management culture provides the groundwork for the establishment of modern political culture, while the constitution serves as the legal bedrock for fortifying modern political culture, simultaneously emerging as an influential internal force that profoundly influences sustainable socio-economic development by promoting economic advancement and upholding democratic principles, all while preserving tradition and embracing modernity.

Confucianism and Buddhism cultivate a societal framework that emphasizes hierarchy and order, engendering a respect for familial values that, in turn, fosters the development of patriarchy and nepotism. The tenets of Confucianism prominently articulate the principles of loyalty and filial piety. Furthermore, patriarchy and nepotism are not only prevalent but are also actively promoted and significantly developed within this ideological framework. Confucianism is selectively integrated into societal norms, amplifying characteristics that resonate with national traditions. It positions individuals at the center of developmental paradigms, which consequently leads to the emergence of personality cults, hierarchical structures, and peer-based relationships. Thus, Confucianism engenders in Oriental populations an acceptance of hierarchical arrangements, a reverence for personality cults, and a concentration of power, alongside a profound comprehension of human values within interpersonal relationships, motivating individuals to strive continuously for self-improvement and cultivation.

Buddhism instills in individuals a disposition characterized by tolerance, generosity, and altruism, fostering a consciousness of national identity, a spirit of national unity, and an appreciation for the preservation of traditional cultural values. Nevertheless, Buddhism also engenders a degree of political indifference. It operates as both a religious doctrine and a mechanism exploited by the ruling class to reinforce their authority. Consequently, Buddhism exerts considerable influence over societal development while simultaneously shaping the psychological and ideological landscape of Oriental inhabitants. In countries such as Laos, Thailand, and Cambodia, the populace has established dynamic, tolerant,

harmonious, and benevolent socio-political institutions imbued with Buddhist principles. Buddhism cultivates a mindset of apathy towards societal changes, thereby facilitating a consensus. There exists a cultural tolerance for bribery and nepotism among Bhutanese government officials, attributable to a culture of uncritical respect for authority figures, as well as Buddhist beliefs positing that individuals ultimately experience the consequences of their actions through karma. This cultural dimension significantly influences the frequency of reported corruption cases, underpinned by the acceptance of the notion that "no individual is without fault." Moreover, Buddhism lacks a robust conceptual framework for revenge or punitive measures [2].

Religion likewise engenders a belief in social stratification: the "patron" embodies generosity, perpetually poised to provide material assistance and offer spiritual support to the "client"; conversely, the "client" reciprocates by endorsing and yielding to the "patron," thereby establishing a patron-client dynamic. Hinduism, Islam, and Shamanism further cultivate a mentality that venerates leaders and state authority, which subsequently fosters a cult of personality. Moreover, within quotidian existence, the principle of communal consensus has evolved into a customary practice within the Muslim community. Numerous individuals have retained positions of power since the Lebanese Civil War, characterized by a mere rotation of roles during each electoral cycle. This system is frequently cited as a primary contributor to the pervasive corruption afflicting the nation. Similar to numerous other nations, the practice of leveraging familial and personal party affiliations to secure advantages such as bypassing lengthy queues, gaining access to selection organizations, or securing employment—locally referred to as wasta—has become prevalent and established as a social norm. While a substantial number contend that the utilization of wasta is justifiable on an individual basis, given the inefficacy of organizations without such practices, it is concurrently acknowledged that this social phenomenon exacerbates economic disparities [28]. It is reported that government officials routinely bestow contracts upon acquaintances and relatives, resulting in frequent power outages. A significant portion of the Lebanese working-class populace relies on financial assistance from their respective parties, which inhibits their capacity to voice dissent against the system or seek justice, despite widespread discontent [7, 26].

Consequently, the multifaceted, harmonious, and coexisting religious existence has served as a wellspring of distinct ideologies and traits that inform the socio-political conduct of Oriental societies. The political culture within the Orient has appropriated religion as a formidable instrument for governance through strategic positions within the power apparatus, as it simultaneously satisfies the spiritual needs of the populace and fosters a profound socio-political cohesion among religious communities.

4.2. The Path from Personality Cult to Corruption in the Orient

The salient feature of Oriental political culture is the cult of personality, wherein the name, reputation, and authority of political leaders are recognized and esteemed by the community, often elevated to a status resembling immortality imbued with supernatural attributes; notable exemplars include the Emperor of Japan, the Son of Heaven in China, and national liberation figures in India. The Emperor is perceived as an inviolable entity, possessing absolute authority and an enigmatic presence deeply ingrained in the Japanese consciousness, often regarded as a living saint. While the Emperor's political influence may be limited, his sociocultural role remains unparalleled. In Chinese society, the Son of Heaven was perceived as the embodiment of all political power, expected to be obeyed unconditionally by the populace, with his edicts regarded as essential regulations for societal order. Figures such as Rammohan Roy have been revered as spiritual patriarchs, Ramakrishna as a sacred text, and Gandhi as the father-saint of a unified Indian nation. The amplification of the cult of personality has played a pivotal role in consolidating political and social forces under the banner of unity, thereby fortifying ethnic groups' resolve to defend and advance their nation. However, the cult of personality concurrently engenders authoritarian and dictatorial frameworks, fostering a culture of bureaucracy, hubris, and the suppression of democratic forces that stifle individual creativity, exploit it for personal benefit, and generate corruption.

4.3. The Path from Patriarchalism and Nepotism to Corruption in the Orient

Patriarchalism and nepotism have historically dominated the political landscape of the Orient, influencing not only domestic spheres but also the political and social dynamics of the nation, state operations, and the engagements of political parties and organizations, all of which are significantly shaped by the tenets of patriarchalism and the monopolistic authority of political elites. A salient illustration of this phenomenon can be observed in the prevalence of affluent and influential extended families in India, which exert control over the political bureaucracy in the formulation and execution of policies and directives, leveraging both economic and political resources as well as the traditional clout of the family unit. The paradox of political authority being centralized within a singular family is particularly striking in the context of India, recognized as the world's largest functioning democracy, comprising over 1.2 billion inhabitants. Given that elite cartels are systematically constructed to restrict the opportunities of others to engage within the political framework, it is imperative that India undertakes measures to dismantle such structures in order to establish equitable conditions [28]. From the perspective of political culture in Afghanistan, the local populace perceives what Western observers might cat-

egorize as "favoritism" or "nepotism" as a morally acceptable practice, as individuals assert their duty to provide for their extended family. "One is always obliged to support one's own family. However, complications arise when this support involves the allocation of public resources and positions" [6]. In China, the emergence of the private sector within the post-Mao economic framework has incentivized members of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) to exploit their governmental authority; the significant economic leverage held by the elite has facilitated the placement of sons of certain party officials into the most lucrative positions. Consequently, the CCP has garnered the moniker "princelings," alluding to the corrupt practices of nepotism. Reports suggest that relatives of several prominent political figures, including former Premier Wen Jiabao, current CCP General Secretary Xi Jinping, and former Chongqing Party Secretary Bo Xilai, have amassed substantial personal wealth through business ventures. Li Jinhua, the vice chairman of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and former long-standing auditor general of the National Audit Office, issued a cautionary statement in the People's Daily, asserting that the rapid accumulation of wealth by the progeny and relatives of CCP officials "constitutes a major source of public discontent." One contributing factor to the pervasive corruption in Myanmar is similarly rooted in the tradition of nepotism: "In the absence of a competitive selection process for public service roles, personal connections and bribery frequently supersede professional qualifications. For instance, it is customary to appoint ministers and senior civil servants from military ranks rather than based on professional credentials" [24]. An illustrative case of nepotism at the highest echelons of Tajikistan can be seen in the trajectory of Rakhmon's son, Rustam Emomali, who, by his mid-20s, held multiple influential positions, including membership in the Dushanbe city council, leadership of the Tajikistan Football Federation, ownership of a prominent football club, and directorship of both the Customs Department and the nation's anti-corruption agency [20]. Meanwhile, in terms of political culture, the Philippine political arena is mostly structured and governed by families or family alliances, rather than by voting for political parties. In the padrino system, people gain favors, promotions, or political appointments through family ties (nepotism) or friendships (cronyism), rather than their own merit. In the Philippines, the padrino system has sparked significant controversy and corruption. Nepotism benefits a small number of people while reducing justice in the recruiting and promotion process in government [19].

4.4. The Path from Consensus, Cronies and Patronage - Clientelism to Corruption in the Orient

The "patron-client" dynamic permeates the entirety of societal interactions and serves as a cornerstone for social relations, thereby playing a pivotal role in preserving stability and social order while reinforcing the political and social influence of affluent and powerful families. Despite their considerable power and influence, "patrons" remain reliant on the support and assistance of their "clients," who conversely depend on "patrons" to secure a stable existence. This reciprocal relationship is characterized by mutual benefit and has significantly shaped political relations within Eastern contexts. In Japan, the "patron-client" relationship has been instrumental in sustaining order and stability. This dynamic has engendered a consensus within Japan's political and social practices, thereby solidifying the nation's social framework. The "patron-client" relationship is inherently hierarchical, marked by inequality and mutual benefits, with defined obligations imposed on both parties. "Patrons" are tasked with the protection, sponsorship, and material as well as spiritual support of their "clients." Conversely, "clients" are expected to provide necessary support to their "patrons" when required. In Vietnamese culture, considerable emphasis is placed on genealogy, lineage, connections, and relationships within the same familial group. However, this can have adverse effects, as it fosters an environment conducive to the proliferation of "descendants," whereby tighter familial bonds adversely impact social cohesion. Notably, families with "tycoons" serving as pillars exert control over the personnel decisions within entire agencies, units, or localities. Consequently, the significance of relationships in Vietnamese political culture is particularly focused on material advantages that lie behind reputation, while honor serves as a spiritual benefit.

Parviz Sabeti posits that a primary factor contributing to the success of the regime's opposition is corruption [13]. The entrenched tradition of patronage-clientelism in Afghanistan has precipitated persistent interference in meritocratic appointments to public offices, including presidential staff, members of parliament, military commanders, and any positions bearing political influence, all of which have culminated in widespread corruption. The Asia Foundation identifies the central conduit for escalating corruption in Afghanistan as the predominance of consensus politics, or patronage-clientelism, within the nation. Although patronage-clientelism is a time-honored Afghan tradition, it has now become deeply embedded in societal structures, with its connections to criminal activities becoming an increasingly alarming issue. The prevalence of patronage-clientelism renders it exceedingly challenging for individuals lacking connections to ascend within the Afghan governmental framework. In Bangladesh, inadequate salaries and insufficient training further exacerbate the vulnerability of the police force, which operates under a patron-client political consensus, to bribery. International business entities have characterized the Bangladeshi police force as one of the least trusted globally. The Asian Human Rights Commission has disclosed that citizens of Bangladesh allocate more financial resources to the police than to the government itself. Additionally, in Bhutan, favoritism associated with patron-client relationships continues to persist within the formal parameters of

the nation's political landscape. A notable critique is that members of the royal family are the predominant landowners in the kingdom and possess controlling stakes in various enterprises. This situation is perceived as enabling the monarchy to leverage its wealth to manipulate the political arena [21].

Furthermore, from the standpoint of political culture, a notable manifestation of corruption endemic to contemporary Kyrgyzstan is the employment of relatives of officials across various tiers within high-income sectors, which may be interpreted as a form of recompense for their allegiance to the "patron" and his affiliated entities. These relatives (clients) frequently serve as a façade for the business and property undertakings of officials by transferring ownership titles. Numerous instances of such dubious practices have been reported by the media, particularly involving the spouses of the Matraimov brothers [4]. Investigations conducted in November indicated that Matraimov not only facilitated the illicit operations of the Abdukadyr family enterprise but also engaged in at least one collaborative real estate venture with them: it was disclosed that Matraimov's spouse, Uulkan Turgunova, held co-ownership of a property in Dubai with a member of the Abdukadyr family [3]. From the perspective of political culture, corruption in East Timor is exacerbated by traditional cultural paradigms of patron-client dynamics. This encompasses the anticipations placed upon the affluent and powerful to provide for the underprivileged and vulnerable, thereby fostering an environment in which corrupt practices and illicit financial channels are condoned and disregarded [11].

"Thailand is characterized by a culture steeped in patronage and clientelism. Generations have witnessed corruption and have acclimated to its presence" [29]. Bribery and conflicts of interest are prevalent within both the private and public sectors of Thailand, wherein "monetary transactions permeate the political landscape", arising from the extensive interconnections between the business and political realms. Despite the existence of anti-corruption legislation, the efficacy of the governmental bureaucracy in enforcing these laws remains questionable. In Pakistan, from a political culture perspective, by the year 1976, the state had been commandeered by factions and individuals endeavoring to amass wealth through the redistribution of resources from public enterprises to private entities. State enterprises "transformed into a 'client' to extend political patronage to regime allies, to settle political obligations or for the "patron" to consolidate power" [14], pp. 100–150. Political meddling facilitated the infiltration of corrupt political practices into the economic planning frameworks of the nation. The nationalization initiative considerably tarnished the reputation of the Pakistan People's Party, with cumulative losses estimated at 254 million Rupees, alongside occurrences of excessive employment and suboptimal productivity within the heavy engineering sectors.

The relationship characterized by consensus, along with the connections between patron and client, as well as the cronyism, can all be perceived as outcomes of the relationship-oriented and hierarchical dispositions inherent within Asian culture.

These can be delineated into three distinct types of relationships based upon their inherent nature. In this context, the consensus relationship and the crony relationship exhibit more democratic and egalitarian characteristics, intertwined and reinforced by the mutual interests of the involved parties. Conversely, the patron-client relationship represents an inequitable and asymmetrical dynamic, although it too is underpinned by the alignment of interests among the parties concerned. Given that all three types of relationships emerge from the relational characteristics of the agricultural culture prevalent among Orientals, it can be posited that they may serve as precursors to the proliferation of corruption.

In Vietnam, the significance of interpersonal relationships constitutes a fundamental attribute that dictates the political culture of the nation, as it is deeply rooted in traditional cultural values such as "When one individual attains an official position, the entire family reaps the benefits," and "A son surpasses his father, thereby bestowing blessings upon the family." These notions are emblematic of the Vietnamese populace and have engendered valuable legacies, including the cultivation of talent and the organization of cadres. A prominent example is the emphasis placed by comrade Do Muoi on the nurturing and development of the progeny of high-ranking Party officials. He posited that well-nurtured and educated children of elite cadres could serve as an exceptional reservoir of talent; however, this approach also precipitated unforeseen consequences and transformations, manifesting in phenomena such as the "self-evolution" and "self-transformation" of many officials, who prioritized personal gain and familial interests, exploited gaps in cadre management to position their offspring and relatives in significant roles, formed cliques, and undermined or inhibited the advancement of capable officials. In Iran, according to Michel Foucault, corruption served as the cohesive force that unified the Pahlavi regime, where autocratic governance and modernization were interlinked. Following the surge in oil prices in 1973, instances of corruption proliferated, particularly within the royal family and their associates. A study conducted in 2015 revealed that 77 percent of the populace perceived corruption, nepotism, and cronyism as pervasive at various strata of the East Timorese government, sustained by personal gain, inadequate remuneration of unethical public officials, and ineffective enforcement of anti-corruption statutes [8]. The political landscape of Tajikistan is similarly characterized by patronage, factionalism, and cronyism. Political and economic authority is predominantly centralized within the family of Emomali Rakhmon, who has held the presidency since 1992. The government maintains affiliations with organized crime, and instances of accountability are infrequent. In 2010, leaked U.S. diplomatic communications indicated that members of the Rakhmon family and their close associates were regarded as among the most corrupt entities within the nation.

5. Conclusions

In general, the traditional political culture of the Orient is

shaped by a multitude of factors including geographical circumstances, demographic characteristics, and predominantly, religious beliefs. Since antiquity, individuals in the Orient have harbored a profound belief in a transcendent realm, which has engendered a mentality characterized by the veneration of authority figures, adulation of power, and allegiance to the state. The principal elements that most effectively illustrate the traditional political culture of the Orient encompass the cult of personality, patriarchal structures, nepotism, and the patron-client dynamic. Furthermore, the conventional governmental framework in the Orient has strategically employed religious institutions as a potent mechanism to secure the populace's unwavering fidelity to the governing elite. Concurrently, from a political culture perrspective, corruption is a prevalent sociocultural phenomenon in the Orient, manifesting across various domains including economic, political, and social spheres, affecting a broad spectrum of individuals ranging from high-ranking officials to civil servants, as well as their relatives, subordinates, and intermediaries within the power structure that administers society, permeating most stages and processes related to these diverse actors, often influenced by critical relational factors such as shared ethnicity, familial ties, regional affiliations, and educational backgrounds.

Abbreviations

APB Asia Pacific Breweries
CCP Chinese Communist Party
USD United States Dollar

Acknowledgments

Author Contributions

Nguyen Minh Giang: Conceptualization, Resources, Methodology, Investigation, Writing - original draft, Writing - review & editing

Cao Ngoc Thao Nhi: Formal Analysis, Data curation

Funding

Data Availability Statement

Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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