

**CORRUPTION:  
A SOCIOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIVE STUDY  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO SELECTED  
SOUTHEAST ASIAN CASES**

**BY**

**FETHI BEN JOMAA AHMED**

**A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR  
OF PHILOSOPHY IN POLITICAL SOCIOLOGY**

Perpustakaan Universiti Malaya



A511025508

**DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY  
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES  
UNIVERSITY OF MALAYA  
KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA**

**FEBRUARY 2003**

## ABSTRACT

This study; *Corruption: A Sociological Interpretative Study with Special Reference to Selected Southeast Asian Cases*, examines the problem of corruption in general and in Southeast Asia in particular at the macro level from an analytical sociological viewpoint. The study consists of eight chapters including the introduction and conclusion. The core of the research; chapters 2 through 7, addresses the problem of corruption from both theoretical and practical approaches. The theoretical dimension (chapter 2 through 4) has focused on the discussion of the issue of definitions, the various sociological perspectives to the study of corruption, forms, types, causes, consequences, and checking of corruption respectively. In the applied dimension (chapter 5 through 7), an endeavor has been made to study the problem of corruption in Southeast Asia in general and analyze selected issues of corruption in a number of Southeast Asian countries. These issues comprise the historical dimension of corruption in Myanmar, reform versus corruption in Cambodia, political corruption in Thailand, the abuse of presidential office in the Philippines, and a multidimensional case of corruption in Indonesia. To examine these issues, the researcher has adopted analytical-descriptive, comparative, inductive and deductive methods with a critical appraisal. The study finds that corruption is a complex phenomenon. It is the outcome of the interaction between social, cultural, economic, and political factors. It cripples all aspects of social life. Corruption makes society disintegrated, politics chaotic, economy sluggish nonproductive and bureaucracy inefficient. It has reached plague proportions in the Southeast Asian societies. The experience of Southeast Asian countries has shown that corruption is familiar in the practice of Southeast Asians. It has become widespread to reach its climax in the post-colonial regimes. However, a remarkable response from all parties to check it has taken root in the region. Finally, the study may hopefully have contributed some non-conventional insights and approaches into the socio-political studies on corruption.

# DEDICATION

*TO THE VANGUARDS OF REFORM WHO STAND FIRM FOR*

*HONESTY*

*&*

*TRANSPARENCY*

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My gratitude and thanks are due to Allah (God) and a number of people whose contribution helped shape and materialize this study.

Thanks to Almighty Allah for bestowing on me uncountable gifts that I am enjoying such as faith, love of knowledge, good health and sufficient energy to undertake this task

My deepest appreciation and thanks are due to Prof. Dr. Hussain Mohamed for the supervision of this thesis, patience, support, and understanding. His systematic and articulate scholarship, stimulating ideas, kindness and concern, and continuous encouragement were impetus for me to carry out this research. I really appreciate the extra time he cheerfully allocated for me in spite of his heavy schedule to provide me with valuable and indispensable suggestions that monitored my progress throughout

My heartiest gratitude is also extended to the Board of Examiners for the time they gladly devoted to examine my research and also for their original comments and valuable suggestions.

My deepest thanks are due to Prof. Dr. Khairulamani Othman Saleh, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and his deputy Associate Prof. Dr. Mohammad Redzuan Othman and all academic and administrative staff of the Faculty and the Department of Anthropology and Sociology.

My appreciation is also extended to all relevant Malaysian and University of Malaya authorities for being so kind to host my family and myself and support my study. The Immigration Department, the management of the University, the IPS, and the Library staff are only a few among the noble hands that helped me stand where I do now.

I wish also to thank the Anti-Corruption Agency Malaysia for the unconditional support they have shown and given to me.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to Mr. Mohamed Adnan Holdan, a native speaker English language lecturer at CELPAD, International Islamic University Malaysia, for undertaking the task of English language editing of the thesis. My sincere thanks are also extended to Mr. Hamadi Dhaou for editing some parts of the thesis.

My earnest gratitude is due to my beloved friends who were important sources of moral and technical support, namely, Jilani Meftah and Hassan Hindaoui. My thanks also go to Mohamed Tahir El-Missawie for lending me some references.

My heartiest thanks are due to my wife for the moral support and also for typing some parts of the research. My heartiest thanks are also extended to my two kids Fatma and Muhammad for their innocent interruptions.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Abstrak</b>	
<b>Abstract</b>	i
<b>Dedication</b>	ii
<b>Acknowledgement</b>	iii
<b>Table of Contents</b>	iv
<b>List of Abbreviations</b>	viii
<b>List of Appendices</b>	ix

### CHAPTER ONE

#### INTRODUCTION

1.1	Statement of the Problem	2
1.2	Objectives of the Study	10
1.3	Methodology of the Study	11
1.4	Theoretical Approach	15
1.5	Literature Review	15
1.6	Organization of the Chapters	24

### CHAPTER TWO

#### CORRUPTION: DEFINITIONS AND PERSPECTIVES

<b>2.1</b>	<b>The Issue of Definitions</b>	<b>28</b>
2.1.1	Introduction	28
2.1.2	The Literal Definitions of Corruption	28
2.1.3	The Legal and Bureaucratic Definitions of Corruption	30
2.1.4	The Economic Definitions of Corruption	32
2.1.5	The Socio-Political Definitions of Corruption	35
<b>2.2</b>	<b>The Sociological Perspectives to the Study of Corruption</b>	<b>45</b>
2.2.1	Introduction	45
2.2.2	Functionalism	45
2.2.3	Conflict Theory	53
2.2.4	Symbolic Interactionism	62
2.2.5	A Tentative Islamic Approach to Corruption	66

### CHAPTER THREE

#### CORRUPTION: FORMS, TYPES AND CAUSES

<b>3.1</b>	<b>Forms of Corruption</b>	<b>84</b>
3.1.1	Bribery and Extortion	84
3.1.2	Nepotism, Favoritism and Cronyism	91
3.1.3	Graft: Embezzlement, Fraud and Blackmail	94

<b>3.2</b>	<b>Types of Corruption</b>	101
3.2.1	Extortive, Manipulative and Nepotistic Corruption	101
3.2.2	Petty, Routine, Aggravated, Black, Gray and White Corruption	103
3.2.3	Primary and Secondary Corruption	104
3.2.4	Big and Little Corruption	105
<b>3.3</b>	<b>Causes of Corruption</b>	108
3.3.1	The Socio-Cultural Causes	109
3.3.2	The Political Causes	119
3.3.3	The Economic Causes	127
3.3.4	The Legalistic Causes	131
3.3.5	The Bureaucratic Causes	133

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CORRUPTION: CONSEQUENCES AND CHECKING

<b>4.1</b>	<b>Consequences of Corruption</b>	139
4.1.1	Introduction	139
4.1.2	Review of the Theoretical Arguments of Functions of Corruption	140
4.1.3	The Grave Consequences of Corruption on Society	149
4.1.4	The Grave Consequences of Corruption on Politics	161
4.1.5	The Grave Consequences of Corruption on the Economy	167
4.1.6	The Grave Consequences of Corruption on Bureaucracy	172
<b>4.2</b>	<b>The Checking of Corruption</b>	175
4.2.1	Introduction	175
4.2.2	Review of Selected Anti-Corruption Strategies and Measures	176
4.2.3	The Role of the Government	187
4.2.4	The Role of the Religious Institution	190
4.2.5	The Role of the Media	195
4.2.6	The Role of Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)	197
4.2.7	The Role of the Public	198
4.2.8	General Guidelines for a Sound Comprehensive Checking of Corruption	201

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE PROBLEM OF CORRUPTION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

<b>5.1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	204
<b>5.2</b>	<b>REGION PROFILE</b>	206
5.2.1	Name, Geography and Population	206
5.2.2	Ethnic and Religious Structures	207
5.2.3	Colonial and Post-colonial Rule	208
5.2.4	The Unity of the Region	208
5.2.5	The Strategic Position of Southeast Asia	209

<b>5.3</b>	<b>CORRUPTION IN PRE-COLONIAL SOCIETIES</b>	210
5.3.1	The Gift, Bribery and Extortion	212
5.3.2	Nepotism, Cronyism and Favoritism	214
5.3.3	Political Corruption	215
<b>5.4</b>	<b>CORRUPTION IN COLONIAL ERA</b>	217
5.4.1	Colonial Powers as Source of Corruption	218
5.4.2	The Disharmony Between Colonial Governments and Southeast Asian Societies	220
5.4.3	Corruption as Consequence of Colonial Rule	224
<b>5.5</b>	<b>POST-COLONIAL CORRUPTION</b>	226
5.5.1	Political Corruption	227
5.5.2	Bureaucratic Corruption	235
5.5.3	Alien's Corruption	240
<b>5.6</b>	<b>THE STRUGGLE AGAINST CORRUPTION</b>	244
5.6.1	The Political Struggle	245
5.6.2	The Legal and Bureaucratic Struggle	249
5.6.3	The Organizational and Public Struggle	253

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **THE CASE OF MYANMAR AND CAMBODIA**

<b>6.1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	263
<b>6.2</b>	<b>HISTORICAL DIMENSION OF CORRUPTION IN MYANMAR</b>	264
6.2.1	The Corrupt Military Junta	266
6.2.2	The Corrupt Bureaucrats	269
6.2.3	The Corrupt Outsiders	274
<b>6.3</b>	<b>REFORM VERSUS CORRUPTION IN CAMBODIA</b>	278
6.3.1	Corruption in Cambodia	279
6.3.2	Reform in Cambodia	288

## **CHAPTER SEVEN**

### **THE CASE OF THAILAND, THE PHILIPPINES, AND INDONESIA**

<b>7.1</b>	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	297
<b>7.2</b>	<b>POLITICAL CORRUPTION IN THAILAND</b>	298
7.2.1	Power for Money	299
7.2.2	Money for Power	308

<b>7.3</b>	<b>ABUSE OF THE PRESIDENTIAL OFFICE IN THE PHILIPPINES</b>	<b>316</b>
7.3.1	Marcos's Abuse of the Presidential Office	317
7.3.2	Estrada's Abuse of the Presidential Office	324
<b>7.4</b>	<b>MULTIDIMENSIONAL CASE OF CORRUPTION IN INDONESIA</b>	<b>329</b>
7.4.1	Bribery and Extortion	329
7.4.2.	Nepotism and Cronyism	333
7.4.3	Graft	336

## **CHAPTER EIGHT**

### **CONCLUSION**

<b>8.1</b>	<b>THE FINDINGS OF THE THEORETICAL PART</b>	<b>340</b>
<b>8.2</b>	<b>THE FINDINGS OF THE APPLIED PART</b>	<b>344</b>
<b>8.3</b>	<b>RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>348</b>
	<b>Appendices</b>	<b>350</b>
	<b>Bibliography</b>	<b>363</b>



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>ACA</b>	: Anti Corruption Agency (Malaysia)
<b>ADB</b>	: Asian Development Bank
<b>APEC</b>	: Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation
<b>ASA</b>	: Association of Southeast Asia
<b>ASEAN</b>	: Association of Southeast Asian Nations
<b>Baht</b>	: Thai Currency
<b>BI</b>	: Business International
<b>ed.</b>	: Editor
<b>edn.</b>	: Edition
<b>eds.</b>	: Editors
<b>EU</b>	: European Union
<b>GDP</b>	: Gross Domestic Product
<b>IMF</b>	: International Monetary Fund
<b>NCCC</b>	: National Counter Corruption Commission (Thailand)
<b>OECD</b>	: Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
<b>Ringgit</b>	: Malaysian Currency
<b>Rupiah</b>	: Indonesian Currency
<b>SACC</b>	: Singapore Anti-Corruption Commission
<b>SEATO</b>	: South-East Asian Treaty Organization
<b>TI</b>	: Transparency International
<b>UNDP</b>	: United Nations Development Program
<b>WB</b>	: World Bank

## LIST OF APPENDICES

- Appendix 1** : Map of Southeast Asia
- Appendix 2** : Time Chart of Colonial Rule in Southeast Asia
- Appendix 3** : Regional Corruption Perception Index 1995-2001
- Appendix 4** : Myanmar's Country Profile
- Appendix 5** : Cambodia's Country Profile
- Appendix 6** : Thailand's Country Profile
- Appendix 7** : The Philippines' Country Profile
- Appendix 8** : Indonesia's Country Profile

**CHAPTER ONE**  
**INTRODUCTION**

# **CHAPTER I**

## **INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM**
- 1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**
- 1.3 METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**
- 1.4 THEORETICAL APPROACH**
- 1.5 LITERATURE REVIEW**
- 1.6 ORGANIZATION OF THE CHAPTERS**