



Chapter 214

The phenomenological nature of corruption - A complex, perennial and destabilizing event of social and political relations

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ABSTRACT

This article proposes to explore the phenomenon of corruption, from its historical and conceptual perspective, to highlight its deleterious and perennial effects on the economy, politics, institutions, and society. The problematization presupposes evaluating the different philosophical, sociological, and legal approaches to the term corruption, demonstrating that,

despite its difficult definition, in essence, it presupposes the degeneration of values, distorting nature and human development. In all its aspects, corruption is a pejorative and harmful phenomenon, derogatory of objects and beings, and corrosive of the values inherent to the common good. In this context, it is proposed to verify that, being a phenomenon, corruption permanently expands its effects, destabilizing and weakening institutions, at the same time that it foments levels of instability in society that impede human development, generating hostility, polarization, and fragility in social, economic, legal and political relations.

Keywords: Corruption, Concept, Effects, Democracy.

1 INTRODUCTION

Corruption is an event that has been revealed since the dawn of humanity, being a concern of classical philosophy, anthropology, sociology, the legal field, and other areas of knowledge.

His conceptual approach has proven extremely useful in unveiling its effects and degenerative potential in human relationships. Therefore, already in classical philosophy, there are concerns with the term corruption, offering elements that propose to glimpse it from the nature of beings, which has its existence progressively degenerated until perishment. The approach is not different in the religious, moral, juridical, or political aspects, because under any approach, corrupting means degenerating, deteriorating, and altering nature, producing derogatory effects that harm the development and well-being of the environment in which it occurs. In this context, corruption can be observed as a complex phenomenon, multifaceted and pulverized in the most varied human relations, extending its tentacles and revealing itself in all human relations, with the potential to destabilize the political, legal, and economic environment, especially when it is revealed within the public administration.

From events that occurred in the course of history, several political regimes were annihilated by corruptive promiscuity, with reflections on economic stability and social relations.

Brazil is prodigal in evidence of corruption rooted in the most varied environments and can serve as a paradigm to observe, with solar clarity, that once the corruptive system is implemented, several concrete effects are felt immediately and are projected to reach many generations.

From the elements that it is intended to analyze in this text, the article proposes to awaken to the historical alert that the phenomenon of corruption has offered, from its concepts and effects, in the sense that the fight against corruptive practices must be incessant and absolute, to the extent that once installed, the model by which the actors of corruptive practices are organized will be even stronger and perfected in their techniques and movements, with the potential to protract its consequences for the future, making life in society, political, legal and economic stability increasingly unpredictable, volatile and polarized.

The article uses as methodology the bibliographic exploration proper to the debate evidenced, offering critical and programmatic conclusions for the confrontation of corruption. The deductive method is used, through bibliographic research and factual approach, building solid elements obtained from the conceptual and phenomenological analysis of corruption, to offer perspectives with a view to the problem faced, that is, the deleterious effects of corruption, which are protracted in time and make unstable social relations, public and private.

2 PLURAL CONCEPTUAL ELEMENTS OF THE PHENOMENON OF CORRUPTION

Corruption has demonstrated multisectoral faces, revealing itself historically in the public environment, in the relations between individuals, and the interaction between private individuals and the Public Administration, at various levels of incidence.

Nowadays, the incidence of corruptive practices has assumed proportions that, according to the words of Lopes (2011, p. 39), allow the identification of it "[...] as a voracious concept, because the amplified dimension of the "phenomenon" corruption resizes the understanding of the "concept" of "corruption".

Thus, immersion in the search for formative concepts presupposes the warning proposed by Warat (1984), in the sense that purely linguistic or discursive analysis is insufficient since it is removed from the political effects of the very meaning produced from the dominant knowledge, a phenomenon that is unique and inseparable from legal science. The formation of a concept or discourse, in addition to its formal content of meaning, is also conditioned by monopolies of knowledge, which in the legal environment are accentuated, and which pre-constitute the general social production inherent in any concept. In the view of Warat (1984), both the narrow limit of a symbolic-formal approach to any concept or discourse, as well as the mastery of a professionalized language on the subject is not healthy, given that they immunize the content and sterilize its meanings, plastering them in a rhetorical dogmatics that deserves to be faced by critical judgments, taking refuge from theoretical common sense. According to Warat (1994, p.57), the jurists of theoretical common sense monopolize "a tangle of intellectual customs that are accepted as truths

of principles to hide the political component of the investigation of truths". Because of this, they "canonize certain images and beliefs to preserve the secret that hides the truths."

Therefore, the heterogeneity of the theme fosters an intense set of sensitivities for the production of a satisfactory concept. Any option will not be infested with criticism, which, in itself, should not lead the scientist to hopelessness, but rather reinforce the belief in the need to face the challenge.

Initially, it is observed that already in Greek philosophy, the meaning of the term "corruption" was denotative of alteration of matter, modification of its original state. The first naturalistic view of "corruption" was employed by Plato in recording the explanation that Socrates gave to Glaucus about the possibility of modifying a state. At that moment, already with a political vein, Socrates teaches "[...] that everything that is born is subject to corruption [...]". Therefore, a Republic would also be subject to transform itself into other forms of government, since it will not last forever. His conviction for the cyclical closure of a state stemmed from the very nature of beings, as would later be advocated by Aristotle. Socrates started from the idea that the natural cycle of beings is progressive and regressive, until degeneration. Therefore, states and their political systems would not be perennial either. This phenomenon was identified as "corruption" (PLATÃO, 2001, p. 306).

Aristotle (2007) conceived the phenomenon of "corruption" from a naturalistic meaning because he was concerned with noting the natural degradation of living beings. In the Aristotelian sense, nature propitiates the natural evolution of beings, from birth, through growth and development, culminating in deterioration until suffering with death. It is inexorable to pass through this evolutionary and involutive process. The permissible oscillations result from certain events that can alter the chronological routine of these phases, which for Aristotle (2001) could be represented by certain pathologies or even abnormal demands of the body in atypical activities. There is, therefore, in this Aristotelian conception of the corruptive phenomenon, a naturalistic and degenerative connotation of beings, which deteriorate to their natural time or with greater brevity by external interferences.

The meaning employed for the term "corruption" from the view of Greek philosophy clássica does not differ from the etymological origin listed by modern doctrine. There is literary consensus that the expression comes from Latin. For Seña (2014, p. 22), it derives from *corrupter*, and its use throughout history has occurred in two senses. "In a *general* sense, representative of destruction, devastation or adulteration of an organic material, such as a piece of wood. In a *particular* sense, designative of a specific human activity, such as bribery, extortion, of pejorative connotation [...]". The conclusion of Pimentel Filho (2015, p. 6) is not different when he asserts that, in both Latin and Anglo-Saxon languages, the term corruption is derived from Latin *corruption/corruption*. It clarifies that the first conception, instead of representing the abuse of someone who exercises state power to garner private profit, had the meaning of "putrefaction, deterioration of matter, or physical decay." He points out that even when the philosophers of classical Greece referred to the political systems of the time, they first identified their succumbing as a kind of natural corruption, of wear and tear inherent in matter.

In this sense, the Greek philosopher, just as he had already done so to justify the corruption of living beings when analyzing the forms of government of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, proclaimed that when they suffered from the evil of degeneration, they would give rise to the emergence of tyranny, oligarchy, and anarchy, respectively. This degenerative process would be circular, the result of the corruption of their rulers, who would alter the natural course of the regimes by privileging the individual interest to the detriment of the common good. The circularity of political regimes, for Aristotle (2007), would result from the fact that it is natural for monarchies to degenerate, which would be supplanted by tyrannies. These, the result of popular dissatisfaction, could give way to the aristocracy, succeeding the regimes until anarchy. At this time, again, there would be the popular insurgency, giving rise to the new emergence of the monarchy.

For Martins (2008, p. 12-13), the term corruption derives from the Latin *corruption/onis*, from which its first meaning comes. The Latins of the first and second centuries adopted the term *corruption* linking its meaning from the combination of other terms, that is, *rumpo*, derived from the verb to rupture. Therefore, it is identified with the meaning "[...] to break totally, to break the whole, to break completely [...]". Thus, *rumpo* or *corruption* is meant the rupture of structures, the destruction of the foundations of something, that is, destroying something. This rupture, however, was not an instantaneous, sudden event, but a gradual one.

The resumption of the semantic meaning of the term in unison leads us to the notion of depravity, deterioration, and degenerative destruction of what was healthy. This understanding also brings us back to the meaning found in the Dictionnaire Alfabétique & Analogique de La Langue Française Le Petit Robert (ROBERT, 1976), where the term *corruption* is defined as *décomposition, pourriture, putrefaction*, or also *altération du jugement, du goût, du langage*. In The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus (ABATE, 1996), the term corruption also means *moral deterioration, esp. widespread. Use of corrupt practices, esp. bribery or fraud. An irregular alteration (of a text, language, etc.) from its original state. Is an irregularly altered form of a word. Decomposition.*

A more generalist and comprehensive view, not just semantics for the concept of corruption is offered by Borrego *et al.* (2016, p. 565), which define it as a social phenomenon, through which someone acts rationally against ethics and almost always against the law, with the desideratum of favoring particular interests, whether "selfish or partially solidary". They emphasize that it is a "multifaceted problem", with several causes and effects, with strong harmful socioeconomic consequences. Even so, they do not depart from their natural sense, when they affirm that corruption refers to the alteration, decomposition, or putrefaction of a thing, and is associated mainly with the political processes of government, company, and society, when these are transformed for personal pleasure, leaving aside the concern for service aimed at the interest of the community. In the aspect of the character of the human being, they maintain that it can be understood as the lack of virtue of man. In this particular, they are associated with the Aristotelian idea that man is a rational being and his virtue lies in the search for truth and reason, which must become guiding

principles of his conduct throughout the world so that when a man acts against such principles it is said that he is being corrupt.

Two ways of interpreting corruption are proposed by Martins (2008 p. 23-24). The first, from a moralistic reading, leads us to conceive of it as the decadence of the virtues of the individual, a practice that provides harmful effects on society. The second, observing corruption as a phenomenon resulting from the rules proper to the political world, having no relation to the morality of the individual. It maintains that, from the existence of proper rules for the political world, different from the values and moral virtues of the individual, the reasons for the political corruption of a city are located, since they are linked to the weaknesses of its laws and its political institutions, as well as to the lack of concern and action of the citizen about public things. Therefore, the author understands that this political view of corruption has proved to be more adequate to explain the phenomena of corruption, to the detriment of the moralistic approach, since it allows to better reveal its causes.

For Biason (2012, p. 9-10), corruption cannot be defined from an isolated science, but rather from a multidisciplinary context, such as economics, public administration, philosophy, political science, law, anthropology, and sociology. Ignoring the naturalistic/Aristotelian aspect, it starts from the assumption that, at first, corruption was linked to moral problems. The violation of moral norms was denotative of a corruptive act, which entailed, consequently, a personalized understanding and judgment. Social and political responsibility for acts of corruption were linked to the action of the bad person, of a vulnerable character. This all raised a problem, that is, the commission of corruptive acts by public officials would remain associated with morals, and not with a deviation of behavior or disruption of the function conferred on it. In a second moment, from a functionalist perspective, corruption came to be associated with the social system, concerning the social phenomenon. This is because, renouncing the moral-individualistic conception, the phenomenon of corruptive practices as a product of social and cultural pressures came to be understood. In the cultural aspect, it presupposes that in developing countries "there is a gap between informal social norms and laws, that is, there is a divergence between attitudes, objectives, and methods of government." He points out that the problem of functionalists is to consider, sometimes, the results of corruption as a positive aspect, because it can serve as a "stimulus to the political and economic evolution of developing countries or in transition to democracy." It also questions this conception because it is linked to the customs and traditions of a country, disregarding, for example, "the institutional and administrative organization of the State." A third stage locates corruption by the legalistic vein, that is, the establishment of what corruption is is relegated to legislation and normativity. He sees, however, problems in this conception. A first problem is that the legal system varies from country to country, which could be overcome through international conventions and treaties. A second problem is the linking of corruption to the legal concept, relegating social, political, and economic values. The third negative aspect of this legalistic approach is to plaster the concept of corruption on the law, which may not be consistent with the social conception of political agents and the media itself, remaining dependent on the will of the legislator.

What has been observed, since the 1960s, is the primacy of the legalistic conception, centered on the concern to conceptualize corruption through the private use of public resources by its officials, violating their legal-functional duties. In this period, it was found that attention was focused on the exercise of public positions and functions, reinforcing the difference between private and public activities (BIASON, 2012).

In this sense, Nye (1967, p.419) points out that

[...] Corruption is behavior that deviates from the formal duties of a public office because of pecuniary advantages or gains or the status offered to its holder, family, or friends. It also conceives of corruption as conduct that may violate norms that prevent the exercise of certain types of influence of interest to individuals, such as bribery; nepotism; embezzlement.

Although the author does not consent to corrupt practices originating from the public sector, he sees positive aspects in them. In the economic sphere, it advocates its advantages by increasing capital formation when governments are unable to foster the economy. It also addresses the possibility of reducing the state bureaucracy and stimulating entrepreneurship, which would be encouraged by the greed aroused by corruptive veins, as well as the formulation of incentives from the public sector to the private sector, motivated by the possibility of distributing income from corruption. It identifies positive aspects of corruption in the political intricacies of society since corruptive practices enable the maintenance of political legitimacy through the integration provided between the elites and the layers that do not participate in it. This is the functionalist view of corruption (NYE, 1967).

A publicist view of the phenomenon of corruption, according to Willians (1999, p. 411-412) positive for explicitly locating it in the public environment, distinguishing it from eventual private practices. It also gives the problem a formal meaning, which brings conceptual security and stability to the analysis of its effects and consequences. However, the search for a comprehensive definition to contemplate all the areas and the different levels at which corruption is revealed is tireless by analysts and scholars, but undermined by one aspect, that is, "corruption is not an airtight phenomenon." The definition of this concept needs to situate it in the environment in which it is revealed, as well as the objectives of prospecting, under penalty of falling into a catch-all concept, which is attached to various hypotheses of political and even administrative ills, but may not reflect other environments.

It should be noted that the whole perspective presented is reviled from the exclusively penal environment, which could also contribute to a more objective definition of the concept of corruption. It happens that also the subsumption of the meaning of corruptive practices to the penal environment is reductionist, despite offering pragmatic and usual criteria for the achievement of the desired concept. Countries in general routinely contemplate in their penal normative diplomas criminal types that equate corruptive practices under precise nominal labels. In Brazil, the term corruption is found in the Penal Code in several criminal types, not always related to practices that attack the treasury. Note that Article 218 mentions the crime of corruption of minors; Article 271 the offense of corruption or pollution of drinking water; Article 272 the criminal offense of falsification, corruption, adulteration, or alteration of food

substances or products; Article 273 the type of "falsification, corruption, adulteration or alteration of a product intended for therapeutic or medicinal purposes"; Article 317 of the substantive law contains the "crime of passive corruption, liable to be committed by public officials in the exercise of their functions, to the detriment of the public administration", while article 333 provides for the "crime of active corruption, establishing conduct perpetrated by private individuals against the public administration". It happens, however, that the juridical-criminal perspective of finding the definition of corruptive practices, in the final analysis, relegates to the Courts such an incumbency, because it is in them that the solidification of any understanding on the subject will be found, in the end.

Leal also warns (2013, p. 28), the theme of corruption cannot be seen in the strict sense, linked only to the formal aspect of its normativity, whether penalistic or even other branches of legal science. The need for multidisciplinary understanding, detached from the exclusively criminalistic aspect is proclaimed by Lopes (2011, p. 12), who asserts that it is relevant to observe the transposition of corruptive practices into a broader legal-political perspective, which evidences "a common denominator characterized by the lack of transparency, the manipulation of rules, the omission of procedures, the absence of impartiality of the actors in the decision-making processes".

The difficulty in conceptualizing the phenomenon of corruption using narrow contours can also be perceived when *Transparency International*, a non-governmental body that is dedicated exclusively to the subject, limits itself to treating it as the *abuse of entrusted power for private gain*. *It can be classified as grand, petty, and political, depending on the amount of money lost and the sector where it occurs.*¹ This definition starts from the concern with the abuse of entrusted power, which is again gaining private advantages. In this perspective, attention is not only paid to the exercise of activities in the public sector, since the exercise of power can also take place in the private sector. In both environments, there may be deviations to the merely private interest, of the one who carries out the activity, public or private. In this concept, a dosage defined as the abuse of power "great or petty" is embedded, which makes us infer that corruption can assume proportions of any magnitude, and yet it will not deviate from the concept. As for the environment, the definition also covers the political sphere, but not exclusively, since it depends on the sector in which it occurs. In essence, therefore, it is observed that *Transparency International* employs significance for corruption that does not exclude small deviations, and points its perception to the public and private, political or apolitical sectors. In any of the environments and whatever their amount, the concept will have as its core the diversion of power for private benefit. In other words, the abuse of power can be represented by the violation of a certain commitment, moral, ethical, or even normative, since deviation means the alteration of the natural course, misrepresentation of the organically established order, either by the nature of the activity or by the validity of normalization over the exercise of the conferred

¹ Corruption is the abuse of power entrusted for private gain. It can be classified as large, petty, and political, depending on the amounts of money lost and the sector where it occurs."

power. And this rupture of the pre-established cycle is destined for the benefit of the one who practiced it, to the detriment of those for whom the human activity or practice was intended.

The entire theoretical structure presented, without the pretense of being exhaustive, conditions us to recognize as an essential element in the formation of the concept of corruption its historical etymological origin, either under the focus of a natural degeneration or from the Latin expressions *corruption/onis*, from which it is extracted to be something pejorative, undesirable, pathological or degenerative, it breaks or deteriorates structures which, by nature or convention, should be preserved. It also necessarily composes the understanding that corruption is the result of abusive, distorted, and deviant human practice.

3 CORRUPTION AS A PRESENT ELEMENT IN THE FORMATION OF POLITICAL AND SOCIAL RELATIONS

The theme of corruption has always permeated the most diverse environments of the political and social history of humanity.

Currently, even after the historical period of the pandemic due to Covid-19, it is verified that the theme of corruptive practices has been deserving attention on a global scale, and can be pointed out as one of the most relevant factors among people and governments. Greco Filho and Rassi (2015, p 11), on the subject, assert that corruption is "a perennial problem of humanity."

Canotilho (2011, p. 9) demonstrates his concern with the theme stating that it is of "particular relevance the way corruption is intertwined with the erosion of the juridical and democratic of the State", asserting that it is always "associated with the abuse of public function for private benefit, being an obstacle to the rooting of the democratic rule of law". Its extent is unpredictable and unlimited because it involves complicity, "it is covered with the in the transparency of public and private activities". It has the power to hide relevant information, "[...] it plays with the emptiness of responsibilities, it lives from the concubine between the economic and the political. It has long crossed borders and takes advantage of the electronic world

The difficulty in controlling corruption in democratic countries, as Pani (2009, p.5) stresses, remains a great challenge. It stresses that public control and accountability should induce public officials in a democracy, to be honest, but historical experience shows that democracy alone does not guarantee that corruption will not become entrenched. It points to well-known examples of democracies that suffered long periods of high corruption, such as Italy, Japan, India, and the United States between the Civil War and the Great Depression. It warns that the importance of the problem cannot be underestimated, since corruption is a social waste, detrimental to growth, provides the diversion of resources to unproductive efforts to seek income, distorts incentives, increases inequality and poverty, and avoids the effective management of public spending. A country that cannot control corruption suffers substantial losses of social welfare, reflected in the weakening of human dignity. Aware of these problems, "Multilateral organizations such as the IMF or the World Bank are intensifying their efforts to promote governance and fight corruption."

Effectively, the specter of corruption is not localized, it is not liable to be reduced to certain territories or peoples, and its tentacles infiltrate the intricacies of all the environments of humanity. In the Brazilian scenario, the analyses that have been seen are diverse. However, the awakening to the content and scope of the phenomenon of corruptive practices proved to be very accentuated in the opening of the twenty-first century, from two scandals of national and international proportions, which received colloquial denominations of Mensalão Scandal and Operation Car Wash. From these episodes, a new reality was installed in legal, academic, social, political, and economic terms, notably, becoming reasons for social effervescence. Its reflections, of course, are not yet felt to exhaustion, but they authorize to say that a new historical phase has been inaugurated around the approach to the phenomenon of corruption in Brazil. It is also possible to ascertain that the sequelae in the social, political, and institutional fields are unpredictable, requiring that the lights remain on to focus on the past, present, and future of the country.

Furtado (2015, p. 19), when analyzing the aspects that contribute to the maintenance of corruption levels, makes an inference about the legislative structure and the role of the Judiciary. For the author, two factors foster Brazilian corruption. Initially, deficiencies in the administrative legal system. In this sense, it maintains that to overcome them it would be enough political will to identify these vulnerabilities in force in Brazilian legislation, especially in the field of Administrative Law, and to correct the flaws in the structures of the various organs and entities of the Brazilian public administration. The second aspect lies in the certainty of impunity since cases of punishment of those who are concerned with public funds are rare. Referring to the need to correct the blemishes in the structures of state organs and entities, it is essential to address the issue of controls used by the main control bodies of the Public Administration, notably the Court of Auditors and the Judiciary. On this Power, he asserts that there is a widespread feeling that he is incapable of adequately combating corruption. This feeling stems, among other aspects, from the lack of transparency in the performance of the Judiciary in the fight against corruption, which discourages the other operators of the system.

As already said, a retrocessive historical prospection of the phenomenon of corruption in societies and politics brings us back to Greek philosophy, in which we can focus on the naturalistic thought of corruption from Aristotle (2001). For the Greek philosopher, about the generation and corruption of the entities that are generated and destroyed by nature, we must distinguish, in all of them in the same way, their causes and definitions. This naturalistic view of corruption had already been employed by Plato (2001) when he reported the dialogue between Socrates and Glauco about the possibility of alteration or change occurring in a State. Socrates is said to have stated:

Sort of, like this. It is certainly difficult to change the constitution of a republic like yours. But since everything that is born is subject to corruption, this system of government, no matter how excellent, will not last forever, but will fade, and this is as you see it. Not only for the plants that spring from the bosom of the earth, but also for the animals that live on its surface, there is a time of fertility and a time of sterility, both for souls and bodies, and this time is indicated by the intersections of the orbits of different circles: brief ones, long ones, long others, according to whether the life of these species is long or short. (Plato, 2001, p. 306).

With a view to the constitution of systems of government, the ethical formation of citizens was one of the concerns of classical philosophy, because the good man and those destined to exercise a position of command should be healthy of spirit and body, not degenerate (PLATÃO, 2001).

Also regarding the health of governments and rulers, it is possible to verify a concern that goes back centuries, allowing us to observe that current events have always been glimpsed and have been at the root of people. Aristotle (2001), also in this aspect, already demonstrated this necessary attention to the degenerative process of bodies, which by analogy could also affect the States. He recommended the need for careful observance in well-constituted States so that nothing would be done contrary to laws and customs, and above all to pay attention, from the beginning to abuses, however small. He said that "corruption is introduced imperceptibly." As small, repeated expenses consume a family's wealth, evil is only felt when it is already consummated. It states that the "[...] The main point, therefore, is to stop evil from the beginning [...]"

Starting from this naturalistic view, Martins (2008, p.14) claims that "[...] a city or a political regime, a ruler or an institution" is also "born, grows, develops [...]", is liable to a process of degeneration and decadence, and may ultimately die or disappear. Thus, in the political context, the initial signs of corruption are felt when political entities begin to "[...] to lose its initial strength and vigor, showing symptoms of fragility, of degeneration, of deviations from the first principles [...]". It highlights the existence of an explanation based on the decadence of the Roman Empire, due to the existence of ", bacchanals, mass abortions, pederasty, homosexuality, bigamy, adultery, promiscuity, fratricide, parricide, and infanticide", among other social ills, which would have led to incorporate into the philosophical conception history a moral content to corruption. The author advocates that the incorporation of moral elements into the historical philosophical conception at its core lies in the view that Christians had of pagan Roman society, which had not yet adhered to Christianity. Church representatives interpreted the behaviors of non-Christian citizens as heretics, contrary to Christian doctrine, identifying them as sinners and denotative of human decadence, of "corruption of the human condition." The Christian conception judged "[...] how corrupt is a world that does not behave according to its precepts [...]" (MARTINS, 2008, p. 17-18).

With the succumbing of the Roman Empire in the fourth century and the division of its enormous territory into small kingdoms, almost entirely Christianity came to depend on political criteria for Christian morality. The moral values of the rulers were guided by the ideals of life of a good Christian, "the ideals of holiness." The possibilities of happiness of the people were considered proportional to the holiness of their ruler.

Inherent corollary to this worldview, Martins (2008, p. 20) claims that it is evident that the birth of a moralistic perception of corruption is umbilically linked to the inversion of relations between the spheres of morality and politics. It advocates that the moral corruption of an individual, his particular vices, be of great importance to the social whole, especially if that individual is a ruler or an occupant of public office.

Thus, it was based on the lack of moral rectitude of its members, especially its rulers, an eminently moral corruption, that the fall of the Roman, Persian, Babylonian, and Egyptian Empires was judged.

As a result of this theoretical requirement of a religious and ideological nature, the criteria for qualifying the political world are reversed. The moral and ethical predicates of an individual citizen assume primary value in assessing the corruption of a place. Even when a public official is in vogue, as a result of this moralistic turn, corruption is judged by individuality. At the limit, there is no political corruption. What we see is the corruption of individuals who are politicians. Pimentel Filho (2015, p. 8-9) reinforces the idea in the sense that Christianity has moved away from this thought. He points out that the great rupture occurred in the Middle Ages, with Christianity, which provoked in citizens the valorization of the spiritual life to the detriment of civility. More attention has come to the questions of the soul than to the civic virtues. The virtue of the individual came to be associated with his devotion to the religious cause, in the same proportion as his departure from earthly and material causes. The man could only turn away from sin through the church, invoking the Christian faith. Hence it is more useful and interesting to engage in the religious cause at the expense of the public, civic cause. The solution to this problem would be simplistic, because it would be enough to focus investments on individual morality, valuing it, since it is assumed that it is not feasible for morally correct people to allow the occurrence of misconduct.

It happens that in Europe, from the Renaissance, in the eleventh and twelfth centuries, there was the existence of a reality different from that experienced in the medieval period. More markedly in northern Italy, there was no predominance of fiefs, castles, and medieval social and political structures. In that historical period, several cities were constituted with total political, economic, and cultural autonomy with the two great poles of power: the Holy Roman Empire and the Church of Rome. The cities that emerged in this region have long enjoyed autonomy, constituting free and independent republics, which occurred in Pisa, Milan, Siena, Venice, Florence, Lucca, and other cities, all in the form of republics with absolute freedom to establish their directions. It was in this period and in these cities that the so-called Italian Renaissance was established, which became in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the European cultural center. It was during this period that Niccolò Machiavelli lived, who exercised the function of the secretary of the Florentine Chancellery and allowed him to travel and visit several countries, as well as to be a negotiator with kings, princes, military, and even popes. Such functions also allowed him to know the political world. In the words of Martins (2008, p. 23), Machiavelli built his theory advocating the separation between the things proper to politics and the spheres of ethics and individual morality. Machiavelli conceived that the political world is endowed with its own rules and criteria, and should be evaluated according to them, and not on the criteria of particular morality. With this, one has a conception of political corruption different from moral corruption.

The pragmatic, mundane, and concretist thought of the exercise of political life is very well portrayed, in this same historical context, by Machiavelli who demonstrates that politics is a phenomenon that is not necessarily confused with ethical or religious values. To the detriment of ethical and religious

values, pragmatic results of conquest and maintenance of political power assume relevance. Such a Machiavellian presentiment symbolizes human nature prone to the pursuit of power, its conservation, and eternalization. Machiavelli admits that, in this yearning for power, the individual is legitimated to make use of means that depart from ethics, given that his nature is aimed at conquest, at overcoming regardless of the means used. By this reflection, Machiavelli is opposed to the political practice shaped by private life, claiming that the ruler, to be successful in his pragmatic goals, can and must act by employing the means necessary to do so, which authorizes him to abandon the orientation of his private life. The Florentine political philosopher well translates this thought by asserting that "[...] a man who wants to make in all things a profession of goodness must ruin himself among so many who are not good. Therefore, he proclaims that a prince, if he wishes to maintain himself, must learn to be not to be good and to avail himself or not of it according to necessity [...]" (Machiavelli, 2004, p. 73-74). The extreme of utilitarian-pragmatic thought is revealed when he states that the prince, who can today represent the figure of the ruler, "must not mind incurring the infamy of vices without which it would be difficult for him to retain power." This is because the practice of all the good predicates of a man, which he identified by *virtù*, would lead him to ruin. On the other hand, the exercise of what he has identified as vices (man's pejorative predicates), can lead him to "achieve security and well-being."

A sensitive turn around the perception of corruption took place through Montesquieu's thought. The French philosopher began to use as a source no longer the republican virtue appreciated in Aristotelian thought, because he turned his batteries to the valorization of three models of government, the monarchical, the tyrannical, and the democratic, always having as a background the primacy of laws. When referring to virtue, Montesquieu (1997, p. 31) points out that "[...] the good man to whom he refers is not the Christian good man, but the man of political good, who possesses political virtue [...]". He further emphasizes his concern with respect for the legality, asserting that the man to whom he refers is one who "[...] he loves the laws of his country and acts for the love of the laws of his country [...]". Unlike Aristotelian thought which saw corruption as a degenerative phenomenon of the human being as matter, forming a natural process of succumbing to all beings, Montesquieu saw in the existence of laws a necessary relationship that derives from the nature of things. He held that all beings have their laws. His conclusion stems from the denial that a "blind fatality" would have produced all the effects we see in the world. It states that "[...] there is no greater absurdity than a blind fatality having produced intelligent beings [...]". He acknowledges, however, that there are the laws created by men and the laws pre-existing to him, or even that permeate nature. Human beings, considered by Montesquieu intelligent, state that it is a long way from being well governed as the physical world. Although there are formal laws to regulate human life, man does not follow them constantly as the physical world follows his own. It finds that human beings have limited intelligence by their nature, and are therefore susceptible to error. Moreover, it is also part of the instinct of subjects to act for themselves. "They do not, therefore, constantly follow their primitive laws and, even those that they create, do not always follow them" (MONTESQUIEU, 1997, p. 8).

From the recognition of the sense that men feel a natural desire to live in society, Montesquieu also notes that the feeling of equality that existed among them disappears as soon as they begin to live in society, beginning the state of war, because the citizens, in each society, begin to feel their strength arising from equality, which leads to conflict. Hence, too, the need for the emergence of laws regulating men. He calls them the Law of the People. In turn, the laws that govern the relations between those who govern and those who are governed are identified by Political Law (MONTESQUIEU, 1997, p. 8).

Even under the cloak of legality, Montesquieu identifies corruption in the forms of government of democracy, the aristocracy, the monarchy, the despotic government, and the people themselves having as a guiding thread the corrosion of the system by the greed for power. In a democracy, the democratic spirit is corrupted when the spirit of equality is lost, or when the spirit of equality is sought to be taken to the extreme, which occurs when citizens claim to be equal to those they have chosen to lead them, that is, the senate and the magistrates. In dealing with the particular cause of the corruption of the people, he points out that the successes obtained by certain societies make them proud. This pride of the people ends up eroding their humility, leading citizens to envy. This process of excessive pride makes them enemies of those who govern and, consequently, of the Constitution. He exemplifies that "[...] the victory of Salamis over the Persians corrupted the republic of Athens [...]". The aristocracy, in turn, corrupts itself when the power of the nobles makes them arbitrary. He points out that the extreme of arbitrariness occurs when "nobles become hereditary and can hardly have moderation." Monarchy is corrupted when princes believe that their power to transform the order of things is superior to their duty to follow it when they suppress the natural functions of some to confer them arbitrarily upon others. In short, it is corrupted when princes become unaware of their limits, becoming despots. Destined to the despotic government, it is corrupted by nature, since it has already originated by the deterioration of power and lack of respect for the principles that make up the other forms of government (MONTESQUIEU, 1997, p. 153-159).

There is, therefore, in Montesquieu a perceptible way to identify the corruption of peoples and governments to the lack of correspondence to the principles of aggregation that the laws impose on them. The collapse of the systems of government and people is linked to the lack of obedience to the checks and balances that the normalization instituted to preserve well-being advocated.

Without there being a preordained relationship, if Machiavelli already advocated the need to use the ends to justify the means of maintaining power, without limiting them to respect for morality, ethics, or even the values of goodness that should guide the private life of men, and Montesquieu already identified the corruption of peoples and governments by the weaknesses that lead them to violate the principles and laws that govern them, the pejorative sense of human nature is portrayed by Simmel (2013, p.9), when he asserts that conflicting nature is inherent to the human being, aimed at fraud, instability, the polarization of relations and antagonism between opposites. It is a phenomenon that stems from the very heterogeneity and complexity of human nature and its social relations. He maintains that hostility consists of an autonomous drive that naturally develops among men. There is in man a formal drive of hostility, symmetrical to the

need for sympathy. Therefore, there is a dualism inherent to the human being and social relations that translates into association and dissociation, continuity and discontinuity, and form and matter (SIMMEL, 2013, p.11-12). There is, both for Machiavelli, who sees in this a need for power and for Simmel, who sees in the phenomenon a polarized nature in the human being, an anthropological connotation aimed at the competition, at the expansion of man in his ideals of conquest. We are not giving absolute credit to these perspectives, but they make us reflect on the current picture of systemic corruption revealed in Brazil, and why not in several other geographical spaces?

It is seen, therefore, that the incidence of corruptive practices is not a specific characteristic of certain peoples, regions, or societies. It is a phenomenon disseminated and even introjected in society and politics since the beginning of civilization, being the focus of philosophical, political, and legal concern and that has been accentuated more recently, especially despite the prevalence of the democratic regime in almost all Western countries and, above all, in the full force of Democratic States of Law.

Therefore, it seems to us of paramount importance to pay attention to the warning of Bobbio (1997, p.9) in the sense that democracy is "[...] always fragile, always vulnerable, corruptible and often corrupt [...]", since it is inevitable to reflect on the deleterious effects of corruption on democracy, especially in Brazil, because both corruption and democracy are phenomena that have been revealed after the overthrow of the military regime, just over thirty years ago, very (in)tense in our country. With the disappearance of the military exception regime installed in 1964, from the first democratically elected President in 1989, our country has been prodigal in corruption scandals that demonstrate the need to be (re)thought the way of governing, its practices, and relations with the private sector, in the final analysis, the reflections provided by corruption in the democratic regime that claims to be installed. And, very subliminal, the reflections of corruption from its judicial and political developments.

Indeed, the existence of democratic regimes, which represented the appanage of the political and constitutional movements of the twentieth century as a perspective of good governments and development, is still a cause for concern and reflection. In this line, Lapuente (2016, p. 15-16) proposes to inquire about what distinguishes the countries that work better from those that do not, stating that for many years the thought prevailed in the sense that the key was the type of political regime. If a country guaranteed civil liberties and its leaders were democratically elected, its public institutions would eventually be *inclusive and unfettered*. However, he states that since the end of the twentieth century, there has been a growing number of academic investigations and reports from international institutions that have reduced the virtuous effects of democracy. Sentencia: *tener instituciones democráticas es necesario para el buen gobierno, pero no suficiente*. This is because

Lo que distingue a los países cuyas instituciones benefician a todos no es la responsabilidad democrática de sus líderes, sino que éstos no se corrompan. Ahora sabe que la corrupción actúa como un cáncer que impide el buen funcionamiento de las instituciones. In the "engrasa las ruedas" of a society – as if it were decía en muchos ámbitos hace no tanto tiempo – sino todo lo contrario: son increasingly más las evidences that corruption oxidizes the public institutions of multiple forms... Manteniendo fijos el resto de los factores, la corrupción se vincula con menor crecimiento económico, menor renta per cápita, mayor desigualdad económica, mayor desempleo, peor estado de bienestar, peor percepción subjetiva de salud, peor Índice de Desarrollo Humano (HDI), menor sostenibilidad ambiental, menor satisfacción con la vida, menor esperanza de vida y menor felicidad subjetiva. Las sociedades con más corrupción tienden, sencillamente, a ser lugares peores en casi cualquier dimensión que se nos ocurra. (LAPUENTE, 2016, p.15).

The correlation between good government and the control of corruption in democratic regimes is also manifested by Huntington when he expresses his concern about the need to modernize political institutions and the existence of weak governments. It asserts that the weak government corresponds to "the corrupt judge, the cowardly soldier, and the ignorant teacher", while modernization, which is confused with full efficiency, can be translated by the combination of several factors such as "urbanization, industrialization, secularization, democratization, education and participation in the media, which can only be obtained through "social mobilization and economic development." However, he claims that efforts to achieve modernization generate instability, going so far as to point out that "modernization is a crisis." And corruption, which occurs in these moments of crisis, "[...] gives the measure of the absence of institutionalization [...]". Thus, Huntington (1975, p. 5) recognizes that there is corruption "[...] a little for all the periods of the history of the peoples [...]". In his analysis of the existence of effective political systems and weak political systems, he asserts that the most important political distinction between countries refers not to their form of government, but to their degree of government, asserting that, just as the acceleration of the economic gap between developed and underdeveloped countries has been verified, a similar and equally urgent problem exists in politics. "In politics, as in economics, the gulf between developed political systems and underdeveloped political systems, between civic politics and corrupt politics, has widened." It states that there is a correlation between the economic and political gaps, but that they are not identical, since it is possible to have countries with underdeveloped economies with highly developed political systems. In contrast, some countries have reached a high level of economic well-being that may have a disorganized and chaotic policy persisting. In this diagnosis, it makes a prognosis in the sense that "[...] in the twentieth century the locus of political underdevelopment, as well as economic underdevelopment, tends to be the modernizing countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America." (HUNTINGTON, 1975, p. 14).

Referring to the phenomenon of corruption, despite its accentuated ideological liberalism, Huntington (1975) offers us an interesting sociological and political observation, by identifying the levels of intensity of corruptive practices with modernization. In this sense, despite recognizing that it is a common problem in all societies, it identifies that it is more common in some of them, in the measure and proportion of their evolution. It also advocates that corruption may predominate in certain cultures to the detriment of others, "[...] but in the vast majority of cultures it seems to be more prevalent during the most intense phases

of modernization [...]". His conclusions refer to the history of the development of the United States and England when he asserts:

The political life of eighteenth-century America and twentieth-century America was, it seems, less corrupt than the political life of nineteenth-century America. Have they coincided with the impact of the industrial revolution, the development of new sources of wealth and power, and the emergence of new classes making new demands on government? In both periods, political institutions suffered tensions and experienced a certain degree of decay. Corruption, of course, is a measure of the absence of efficient political institutionalization. Public authorities lack autonomy and coherence and subordinate their institutional roles to exogenous demands (HUNTINGTON, 1975, p. 72-73).

The author's inference that there is a link between corruption and modernization stems from three relationships. First, it claims that all modernization implies a change in the basic values of society, which must be gradually accepted by the groups that make up it. There is a need to assimilate new universalist and performance-based normative standards, the emergence of loyalties and identifications of individuals and groups with the nation-state, and the dissemination of the assumption that everyone has equal rights and obligations to the state. This allows certain previously accepted behaviors to become "[...] unacceptable and corrupt when viewed from a modern angle [...]". Thus, in a society in the process of modernization, corruption is, in part, "[...] not so much the result of the deviation of behavior from accepted norms as of the deviation of norms from established standards of behavior [...]". New measures and criteria of what is right or wrong emerge, "[...] leading to the condemnation of at least some traditional patterns of behavior seen as corrupt [...]". In a society in the process of modernization, there are still the remnants that the public authority has the responsibility and even the obligation to provide rewards and jobs to the members of its family or of the social strata and dominant groups, with no distinction between private resources and public resources, or even between the obligation to the State and the obligation to the family. However, to avoid corruption, a minimum recognition of the difference between public role and private interest is required. Therefore, "[...] when the culture of a society does not distinguish between the role of the king as a private person and the role of the king as king, it is impossible to accuse the king of corruption in the employment of public money [...]". In this way, the introduction of new patterns arising from modernity can stimulate the feeling of the need to protect family interests or dominant groups, which are still governed under traditional standards, against the threat posed by modernizing reforms. "Corruption is thus a product of the distinction between the public welfare and the private interest that arises with modernization" (HUNTINGTON, 1975, p. 74).

A second factor that proves the link between modernization and corruption is the fact that new sources of wealth and power emerge, which relate to politics no longer by the dominant traditional patterns of society and whose modern norms are not yet well received by the dominant groups of society. Corruption "is a direct product of the rise of new groups, with new resources, and the efforts of these groups to become an effective presence in the political sphere." Huntington cites the example of Africa, asserting that there was a link there between those who hold political power and those who control wealth, allowing both

classes, previously separated in the early stages of nationalist governments, to assimilate into each other.

Refers:

The new millionaires bought seats in the Senate or the House of Representatives and thus become participants in the political system rather than alienated opponents, as would have happened if they were denied this opportunity to corrupt the system. Similarly, newly emancipated masses or newly arrived immigrants use their new voting power to win jobs and favors from the local political machine. There is, therefore, the corruption of the poor and the corruption of the rich. Some exchange money for political power, and others exchange political power for money. But in both cases, something public is sold (a vote, an office, or a decision) for private gain (HUNTINGTON, 1975, p. 74).

Third, without a hierarchy between factors, Huntington justifies why modernization encourages corruption from the mutations it produces in the *outputs* part of the political system. This phenomenon stems from the expansion of governmental authority and the multiplication of activities submitted to the government's scrutiny (HUNTINGTON, 1975, p. 75).

The Brazilian case seems to bring together all three of these aspects raised by Huntington about the correlation between increased modernization and corruptive practices. It should be noted that already from the middle of the last century, with the beginning of industrialization, the displacement of the capital to Brasilia, the nationalist-developmental phase that continued even during the military regime, and after, with the democratic opening that began in the 1990s, a series of economic conglomerates are emerging in Brazil, in various branches of activities (financial, industrial, infrastructure, etc.), always linked to political power or to a small block of families that, historically, has been present in the political, social and economic environment. With the outbreak of recent corruption scandals, from the Mensalão, through the confessions made in the statements collected by Operation Lava Jato and others, with the return of billions of reais diverted to the treasury, the imbrication between these groups that remained at the head of the national command and corruptive practices began to be revealed. What is perceived is a shadowing between the phenomena of the modernization of the country and the intensity of corruptive processes involving social strata that have always been infiltrated in the political-economic-social command of the country. These actors went to the margins of the legislation itself, which was gradually being increased with a view to good governmental practices, even intensifying the processes of sucking public resources through corruption. It is perceived that corruption has not cooled or increased proportionally to the crises and economic advances of the country. On the contrary, it remained alive in symptomatic indifference to the possible progress that the modernization of the country has caused, especially in the legal sphere. Despite the modernization that occurred in the country, high rates of confusion persisted between the public and the private, as well as between the public and the interests of groups that settled precisely from this period.

Indeed, many business opportunities and wealth erupted with the Brazilian democratic and modernizing process, being sliced by a small portion of people, all taking turns in their relationship with politics. The spaces of economic growth and political domination remained intertwined, wrapped in a cloak of corruption that perpetuated power along the lines of the processes of formation of the State and Brazilian

society. Despite the alternation of political ideologies, there was no dismissal or weakening of these layers holding political and economic power, given the existence of a kind of surreptitious cronyism in the relations that enabled the growth and suction, at greater or lesser levels, of the resources of the treasury. Despite the apparent rupture of ideological structures in politics at certain historical moments, there was no succumbing of the political and economic elites, who knew how to remain immersed in the strands of wealth extracted from corruption. More recently, already in the twenty-first century, alternation represented nothing more than the relay in corruptive practices, forming coalitions that would not be sustained by the original or disinterested ideological way.

Another perception of Huntington's stemming from modernization is that the causes of corruption are similar to those of violence. In this sense, it maintains that both are encouraged by modernization and are symptomatic of the weakness of political institutions. They are means by which individuals and groups relate to the political system and participate in it, violating the customs of the system. Therefore, a society that has a high capacity for corruption also has a high potential for violence. Corruption and violence "are illegitimate means of making demands on the system, but corruption is also an illegitimate means of satisfying such demands" (HUNTINGTON, 1975, p. 78).

Also in this aspect, the Brazilian reality can be identified. Finding Brazilian society immersed in a process of systemic corruption, which has been affecting sectors of politics and the economy that, until then, traditionally controlled and held power over society and the state, rates of violence erupted on a geometric scale, constituting corruption and violence two of the greatest national ills. In the statistics of violence, Brazil surpassed all historical levels in 2016, registering the highest number of homicides in its history, that is, a total of 61,619 people died as a result of violence. There was an increase of 3.8% compared to 2015, consummating seven deaths every hour in the country. It is appalling that violence has increased across the country. These alarming rates can be compared to figures that even countries at war have not yet reached. In the period between the years 2011 to 2015, Brazil recorded a higher number of murders of people compared to the Syrian war during the same period. In Brazil, 278,839 people were killed, while in the Syrian War, in the same period, 256,124 people were murdered. It is worrying to note that in this universe the death of young people between 19 and 25 years of age is more pronounced. Such is the problem in this environment that the Atlas of Violence 2017, published by the Brazilian Forum of Public Security and the Institute of Applied Economic Research (IPEA, 2017), dedicates its chapter 4 to what it identifies as "Lost Youth" because it found that "since 1980 a gradual process of lethal victimization of youth has been underway in the country, and that the dead are increasingly younger young people". With the outbreak of the global pandemic at the end of 2019, the data in this area remained compromised, given the total change in social behaviors, notably the isolation, and restrictions imposed.²

² Data from the Yearbook of the Brazilian Forum on Public Security. www.forumseguranca.org.br/ Retrieved 2017-11-03.

In this panorama, the research of the Latinobarómetro Corporation (2017) very well illustrated the two major concerns of the Brazilian population at that time. In its 22 years of analysis in 18 Latin American countries, it was the first time that corruption appeared at the apex of a country's pyramid of concerns.

The coordinator of the research, Marta Lagos, stated that "[...] Never in the history of our research had corruption been first on a country's list of concerns. And not only that, a third of Brazilians have expressed this concern, there are a lot of people." In this same demonstration, he asserted "[...] that the political system will not be able to move forward until this issue is resolved. It is a big mistake to think that the problem refers to specific people, who have committed acts of corruption. This problem has penetrated the political system and paralyzed it" (INSTITUTO MILLENIUM, 2017).

It happens that violence and corruption are intertwined, especially in countries where the lack of resources is a constant for the implementation of social rights and historically outdated conditions of the dignity of the human person. Huntington (1975, p. 80) argues that corruption and violence find fertile ground when the scarcity of "[...] opportunities for mobility outside politics combine with the existence of fragile and inflexible political institutions, channeling energies into deviant political behavior."

The diagnosis of this political and social context was made by the Barometer of the Americas, in its 2016 report, demonstrating the social hopelessness with political institutions, verifying the lowest credibility index ever demonstrated. This Vanderbilt University publication found that Brazilians' degree of trust in political institutions was only above Jamaica, and just below Venezuela and Haiti. In addition to appearing second-to-last in the comparison between countries in 2014/2015, he pointed out that the proliferation of corruption scandals involving politicians of various parties and the perception that the political class has done nothing to address the structural factors of these scandals have made a large part of the population dissatisfied with the country's political institutions (RUSSO, 2016, p. 2). These findings are fundamental, as they portray a very close historical moment, followed by several political and legal issues that have a total connection.

This social perception of the phenomenon of political exercise in Brazil is undoubtedly due to Huntington's emphasis on countries in the process of modernization in which "[...] politics is big business, becoming a livelihood for many, it being the main path to power, and power the main way to wealth [...]". The accumulation of power and wealth, in such circumstances, is the shortest path to success, and the employment of political offices as a means to conquer wealth means "[...] the subordination of political and economic values and institutions [...]". He maintains that in all societies "[...] the scale of corruption (i.e., the average value of private goods and public services involved in a corrupt exchange) increases as one rises in the bureaucratic hierarchy or the political scale [...]". However, the incidence of corruption can vary at certain levels of the political or bureaucratic structure from one society to another (HUNTINGTON, 1975, p.81).

It can be seen, in this perspective, that the emphasis in any society, already developed or in the process of modernization, with high levels of politicization or precarious indices of political development,

richer or poorer, is the existence of the phenomenon of corruption that permeates social, political and economic relations and is constantly reflected in them, with harmful effects that are protracted in time and reveal themselves under the most varied insidious and increasingly perfected forms.

So intense are the reflections of corruption in the current stage of humanity that there are even projections from the perspective of its perspectives eventually favorable to the development of human relations, from the interrelationship between society and the State, and the performance of public administration. In this bias, Seña (2014, p. 61) warns that the consequences of having a corrupt public administration are varied, and its observation depends on the point of view with which to analyze the phenomenon as a whole. An adherent of this revisionist thought, Huntington proclaims:

A relatively incorruptible society—a traditional society, for example, in which traditional norms are still powerful—may find that a certain amount of corruption is a great lubricant to accelerate the path to modernization. A developed traditional society can be improved – or at least modernized – by a bit of corruption; but it is unlikely that a society in which corruption is already widespread will be improved by more corruption. Corruption naturally tends to weaken or perpetuate the weakness of government democracy. In this respect, it is incompatible with political development. There are occasions, however, when some forms of corruption can contribute to political development by helping to strengthen political parties. The corruption of one government is the generation of another. Similarly, the corruption of one government agency can contribute to the institutionalization of another (HUNTINGTON, 1975, p.83).

In the context of the "revisionist theses", there are several arguments suggested to support the indications favorable to corruptive practices. The first of them claims that corruption can allow the inconveniences caused by the unclear, extensive legal and institutional tangle that grants broad discretionary powers to the public officials of certain developing countries. In these cases, such are the obstacles to establishing oneself in the economic-business field that corruption is necessary to overcome the enormous uncertainty, ineffectiveness, and inefficiency of public institutions. Corruption has become, in this prism, a mechanism that confers stability, security, and certainty referring to the actions of private agents who interact with the State. Related to this argument, there is what Seña (2014) identifies by *engrase payments*, consistent in bribes to expedite, not in a normative way, but through the facts, and certain procedures. It's about asking the employee to do their duty. However, to do so more quickly, it is given advantages/rewards (corruption). It points out that, in Spain in the 1980s, it was customary for the parties to pay advantages (*las astillas*) to court officials to comply with certain warrants that required their removal from the judicial office, institutionalizing the payment of these amounts that were added to the salary of the employees. The same can occur, for example, with the payment of amounts to speed up the procedures in customs, sectors identified with high complexity for the circulation of goods (SEÑA, 2014, p. 63-64).

Corruption could also be salutary for economic and social development. It is argued that members of certain ethnic, religious, or political minorities, to exert influence and ascend in their relations, need to negotiate with the State, because their interests would not be met in their respective contexts due to the numerical insignificance or even lack of political expression of the members. It would be possible, through

corruption, the participation and social cohesion of minority categories on the margins of society (SEÑA, 2014, p. 65).

Under these perspectives, corruption as a factor of economic, political and social development would be morally justified. It happens, however, that adherence to revisionist theses means, in the final analysis, consenting and inserting oneself in the context of corruption itself, assimilating it and adhering to all its effects and consequences.

By accepting corruption as a phenomenon from which one can extract salutary perspectives for society, the economy and the politics of a country, one is, above all, turning a blind eye to a whole negative panorama that such a practice fosters. One cannot lose sight of, as pointed out elsewhere, that the term corruption itself embeds a negative conceptual charge, since it means deterioration, putrefaction, and rupture with the healthy natural structures of any environment, natural or social. The advantages that can be glimpsed are geometrically inverse to the harms it provides. It is equivalent to saying that the option to foment corruption to achieve human development presupposes the absence of absolute capacity to find diverse solutions, extracted from lawful and morally justifiable behaviors.

Therefore, Seña (2014) points out that a corrupt person is not a social reformer. It is very diverse, because it has strong incentives to carry out conservative actions and, in this way, continue to obtain the benefits that its privileged position gives it. This explains the fact that many corrupt people in various countries amass large sums through corruption, diverting them to accounts kept in tax havens, hidden, without any return to the society from which they were diverted. In addition, it points out that administrative corruption generates feelings of resentment, rejection and frustration among honest public officials and often subjects them to situations of difficult solutions and even embarrassment because they need to take a stand. Either they stand in favor of corruption and on the side of their corrupt comrades and superiors, or they must resign from their offices because they cannot maintain themselves in them. There is, therefore, a frustration for honest and competent public officials, also generating a disincentive to provide good services to society, since those who benefit from corruption get everything from the State. Ultimately, the best public officials, because they are honest, leave the public service or remain discouraged, while those who remain are conniving or practitioners of corruption (SEÑA, 2014, p. 69-70).

In this light, effectively, when corruption becomes systemic in a given political environment, it will be unusual to find public agents willing to confront the layers holding power and involved with corruption. Reprisals and persecutions, as well as political, economic and even influence in the media, will be exercised with all vigor to maintain the *status quo* and disparage those who dare to fight corruptive practices. One starts to have levels of courage and boldness diminished to face the layers inserted in the corruptive system. With this, the system remedied corruption and its beneficiaries become increasingly dense and powerful. Its structures are rarely broken from within, that is, from the conflicts of interest between the corrupt themselves, who feel passed over or harmed by the slices of power and resources seized by others. What is found is, when corruption becomes systemic, that its rupture is more likely to occur from within,

intrinsically so, because the extrinsic forces are increasingly fragile and insufficient, since they are subjugated and discouraged from acting against the corrupting system. Even when the links of the systemic corruptive chain are broken, it is not long before new forces are reorganized for the resumption of the spaces previously occupied. And, at the slightest chance of rebirth, they present themselves with even more vigor, since their members resume spaces aware of the mistakes previously committed, perfecting the model and the ways of practicing corruptive acts.

There is no way to accept the argument that corruption allows the overcoming of the obstacles arising from bureaucracy. In this sense, the assimilation of corruptive practices for this, if at first, it will allow overcoming bureaucratic barriers, at the same time will foment a vicious circle that will lead the administrative machine to function only through corruptive impulses. It cannot be forgotten that, in this perspective, the "good citizens" will be subjected to the ills of the corruptive system and, for those who do not achieve it, barriers will be imposed that will make it impossible to access indeclinable public goods and services. There will, therefore, be an inclusive model for those perverted by the system, and an exclusionary for those on the margins. And, it is known, any unequal and unjust political, social, or economic model is reckless, and naturally susceptible to succumbing at any time.

Another untenable argument from the revisionist perspective concerns the possibility of the rise by the corruptive route of certain minority layers to the economic, political and power circles, without which they would be excluded. It turns out that once they are part of the circles of power through corruption, those who until then were excluded will move to other minority layers still excluded to the end of the queue. Not to mention, moreover, that they will swell the ranks of the extracts that throw their tentacles to suck up the precious public resources, thus providing more and more of the need for the State to raise resources to meet the needs of its machine. The process of suction, through corruptive means, will rise, because a greater number of people will be at its base draining the fruits of corruption, to the detriment of the needy social strata and that, in the final analysis, pay their taxes and sustain the public structure.

Even from an economic perspective, corruption becomes unfair to the vast majority of economic agents who do not use it to promote their activities. In this environment, there are marked losses for competition, for the smoothness of the means of production and even for the safety of the quality of the products elaborated and consumed by the population. When the mechanisms of quality control, the instruments of administration of free competition and full access to the resources necessary for the production and development of economic agents are loosened, there are imbalances, inequalities of treatment and injustices that, in the market environment, are harmful to the extreme, even providing situations of unemployment, losses and frustrations in the economy that can deteriorate, through economic fragility, the political system of a country.

In the institutional environment, the incidence of any corruption index in the intricacies of public administration fosters discredit and hopelessness in governments, in governments and, finally, in everything related to public power. Institutions are deteriorating, the credibility of public entities and their agents is

tarnished and consequently marked disharmony and social instability are established. In this sense, see the occurrence of intense popular demonstrations in Brazil in the years 2013 and 2014, when millions of people took to the streets to protest against the reality experienced as a result of the revelation of high rates of corruption confessed by several people. Since then, it is possible to affirm that there is no longer an environment even close to stability, aggravating the political, economic and, consequently and inevitably, social panorama in Brazil. In this sense, as already said, corruption is a historical phenomenon, transversal to the development of humanity in many parts of the planet. It happens that, more recently, the existence of technological communication devices enables the circulation of information instantaneously, fostering the exercise of opinions in social networks and communication vehicles with absolute dynamism. Thus, the feedback of ideological positions and antagonisms is accentuated, potentiating the effects of the political, social and economic impacts of corruption.

Encouraging therefore the conviction of Barata (2012) when he advocates that corruption is "[...] an idiosyncratic phenomenon that has its explicit origin in the plane of criminality or, at least, of public censorship [...]" . Their practices, however, reveal more of the order of the quality of public institutions and the political culture of communities. In essence, they reveal the content of the daily practical existence of the political regime. Corruption has been a central theme for much of the history of political thought, often integrating the dynamics of regime change, since Aristotle and Plato, as well as with Machiavelli and Rousseau. "The idiosyncrasy of corruption lies, therefore, in its relevance as a phenomenon and concept of political theory." Thus, as for its pejorative effects, it points out:

Admitting, on the one hand, the premise that a disruption of public space is at stake in the totality of practices that arise from corruption, and justifying, on the other hand, the assertion that public ethics has an essentially structuring function of public space, preserving interpersonal trust and commitment to the public good as a value to be pursued, precisely what corruption triggers, then results, as arguable, the thesis that public ethics is, from the point of view of the effects it produces, the opposite of corruption, thus constituting the instrument par excellence to face the phenomenon of corruption (BARATA, 2012, p.24).

The issue of corruption has always been in evidence on the world stage and deserves permanent attention in all spheres. In Brazil, from the end of the twentieth century and in the early twenty-first century, the revelation of corruptive practices assumed appalling contours, with political, legal, economic and social consequences, surpassing any other national priority approach, with effects that are still felt today.³

³ Just to mention a few emblematic cases: scandals in Italy - from Operation *mane polite*, initially called case *Tangentopoli* (bribery city, in Italian, about the city of Milan), was a large-scale judicial investigation in Italy, beginning in Milan, aimed at clarifying cases of corruption during the 1990s. (more precisely in the period from 1992 to 1996); following the Ambrosian Bank scandal in 1982, which implicated the Mafia and the Vatican Bank. This operation, coordinated by Judge Giovanni Falcone (killed in an attack by organized crime in 1992), led to the end of the so-called First Italian Republic (1945-94) and the disappearance of many political parties (1993-95). Politicians and industrialists committed suicide when his crimes were discovered, while others became fugitives, inside and outside the country. Also, the recent scandal "Panama Papers", revealed secret documents that were kept by the company by lawyers Mossack Fonseca in Panama, who show how hundreds of personalities, including 72 heads of state, managed to get fabulously rich from money embezzled through corruption. See also the FIFA Scandal, in which seven FIFA officials, including former CBF president Jose Maria Marin, were arrested in Zurich by Swiss police at the request of U.S. courts on a series of corruption charges. At the same time, the Swiss justice system aimed to question ten leaders of the entity about suspicions in the choice of the venues of the 2018 and 2022 World Cups.

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Corruption is not explained or can be understood solely from isolated concepts or specific historical episodes. It is an event that transcends the bonds that perhaps a certain field of knowledge imposes.

A conjectural analysis is necessary, such is the complexity of the corruptive phenomenon.

Moreover, if it were not enough to be a highly heterotopic phenomenon, corruption also spreads its effects far beyond the environment in which it occurred.

If it is possible to observe the natural degeneration of human beings, morals and values in various social environments, it is in the sphere of public administration that its sensitive effects can be located to the whole collectivity. Therefore, the focus given to the limits of this text had its apex when it was found that the phenomenon of corruption within the treasury is highly harmful, not only to the public coffers, but to institutions, political relations and even democracy, but also with deleterious consequences to the economy and social peace.

Brazil has long lived in an environment of great instability, which also coincides with the revelation of intense corruptive practices.

The warning that the conceptual approach and the prospection of the facts and proposed effects must be made is evident. It is equivalent to saying that the confrontation of corruption must be incessant, at all levels and degrees of its occurrence. In addition, the existence of strong and independent institutions is a prerequisite for its confrontation. And, above all, to conclude that the tentacles of corruption, notably when within the public administration, are equivalent to the hydra of Greek mythology, which according to legend, once having their heads cut off by Hercules, others were born in their place, becoming even stronger. His destructive power, moreover, was phenomenal. Only with much effort and intelligence was it destroyed. So is corruption. Once installed and unveiled their agents, they can regenerate, grouping forces and reacting even more with structure and organization. And if this occurs, the risks are even greater for the environment in which it developed, once its methods have been perfected and its anger instigated.

What encourages any perspective necessary to confront the phenomenon of corruption is the certainty that there will always be people and institutions with preparation, responsibility and fearlessness to fight it. And society, ultimately the most harmed instance, needs to be alert to discern symptoms that demonstrate, even subtly, the occurrence of corruptive practices.

Mention should also be made of the Bae System case, in which one of the largest security agencies from Europe and the world has been accused of corruption involving the United States and Saudi Arabia, not to mention some European countries. The company paid commissions to public officials in exchange for contracts. Another worldwide scandal was the KBR Halliburton case, in which the American energy company bribed Nigerian public officials in exchange for contracts that reached US\$ 6 billion, generating an amount of R\$ 1.8 billion in corruption. Also generating much worldwide repercussion was the case of corruption practiced by the multinational Siemens, which would have provided an amount of R \$ 5.1 billion in corruption of political agents in contracts concluded with public agencies.

In the end, it is believed that the existence of a consolidated Democratic State of Law and strengthened Institutions, with an enlightened society and intolerant of corruption, are the way to social pacification and common well-being, thereby raising the levels of citizenship and human dignity.

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