

## Political corruption

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**ABSTRACT:** *Corruption has been identified by the World Bank as the number one obstacle to the development of countries. Politicians also contribute a lot to this phenomenon (corruption). Older research or documents (until 2005) did not actually distinguish between political and administrative corruption. There have been attempts to define political corruption, but researchers have defined it too broadly and in defining it have used forms of corruption that are more or less broadly present in one way or another. Even later research did not differ much from these and one rarely comes across articles that would treat political corruption as a stand-alone corruption. Yet, they treat it as corruption at the highest state levels. Political corruption operates on two or three levels (depending on each country's local self-government). The first, highest level is at the state level, where the bearers of political corruption are the government and politically appointed or elected state officials. The second and third level are a step or two lower (depending on the system of government), at the level of regions, provinces or municipalities. These bearers of political corruption are also politically appointed or elected officials and holders of power at a lower level, such as. mayors, municipal or provincial councillors. Thus, the purpose of this article is to try to define exactly what political corruption is, what it involves, where it happens and how it passes from the field of legal (unpunishable but not legitimate) political corruption to the illegal (criminal) field of political corruption.*

**KEY WORDS:** *Corruption, politicians, State Capture, political corruption, government officials, state administration*

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Wherever politicians show up, everyone wants to shake hands and all TV cameras are pointed at them. Everyone wants to take pictures with MPs. Politicians feel good being celebrities with a status. It is in their power to throw money at poor, humble people. In their posture as well as by task, they are the new feudal lords, and they want to maintain this stellar position, just as they want to maintain taxes and similar matter (EL Hudgins in RM Ebeling, 1999).

In the late 1990s, the World Bank formally announced a change in policy toward political corruption, recognizing it for the first time as something, which had such an economic impacts that, in the event of political corruption, the intervention of the World Bank would also be required. Prior to that, the bank treated political corruption as something that did not concern it or something that it could not or should not influence, since intervention was contrary to the banking order against interfering in the political regimes of individual countries in which it operated. Although it would be an exaggeration to say that the experience in Central and Eastern European countries was the only reason for policy change, there is no doubt that the experience in Central and Eastern Europe and the Bank's own cooperation and research of these countries contributed the most. The change was accepted - nowadays, the bank lists corruption on its website as the number one obstacle to the development of countries. However, most researchers equate political corruption with administrative corruption or treat them as uniform corruption, which is a largely erroneous starting point in research into either political or administrative corruption. Thus, the purpose of this article is to try to define exactly what political corruption is and how it passes from the field of legal (unpunishable but not legitimate) political corruption to the illegal (criminal) field of political corruption.

The definition of corruption (which is just one of many definitions of corruption), according to Transparency International (<https://www.transparency.org>, 1993), states: "Corruption is the abuse of position or trusted power to gain one's own benefit." However, the definition does not define what kind of benefit is involved. Therefore, if one looks at it more broadly, it is not just about the benefit in the form of money or other, tangible goods (though honestly, money is ultimately the driver of everything), it is also about survival and power, defeat or election victory, as well as for prestige... And political corruption could be included in this second part.

One of the more interesting and simple definitions of corruption is the definition of corruption, shown by a mathematical formula, where corruption is defined as a dependent variable influenced by three independent variables (Fitzsimons, 2003, p. 61) and thus covers the actual content of corruption:

$$\text{CORRUPTION} = \text{MONOPOLY} + \text{DISCRETION} - \text{RESPONSIBILITY}$$

Thus, if this equation is transferred to the topic under consideration, i.e. political corruption: the monopoly over decision-making (what will be implemented - e.g. certain infrastructure projects) that politicians have and the discretion (e.g. who will implement this project), which is also have in the hands of politicians, leads in the absence of accountability to major corruption risks.

It therefore often happens that power stuns one to such an extent that the person, intoxicated by power, loses touch with reality and does everything to stay in power, or rather, in the desire for power does everything to take it, which however, can lead to immoral and ultimately criminal offenses.

## **II. DEFINITION OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION OR WHAT POLITICAL CORRUPTION IS**

Older research or documents (until 2005) did not actually distinguish between political and administrative corruption. There have been attempts to define political corruption, such as Philp's (1997), however, in his article Definition of Political Corruption, he defined the phenomenon too broadly and used forms of corruption that are more or less present in one way or another also broadly. Interestingly, however, through his reflection on political corruption, he finds a narrow difference or similarity between the incompetence of politicians and political corruption: incompetence can be directly detrimental, can contribute to delegitimization, and can undermine the effectiveness of political solutions to problems. Yet this differs from corruption, not because corruption involves intentional misconduct, but because corrupt action directly destroys the distinction between the interests of an individual or a group and the responsibilities of politicians, thereby undermining the ethical distinction, which the area of politics, in its ability to resolve conflicts, relies on. Thus, many things can nullify the ethical force of political power without corrupting it. And one those is the incompetence of politicians (unintentional actions of incompetents).

Philp's second definition of political corruption from 2005 came closer to its true definition, or rather to the corresponding definition of political corruption; political corruption refers to abuses of public office so that private interests, which are formally excluded by the rules and regulations of these offices, can secure policy decisions and redeployments to which they are not entitled. More formally, political corruption can be defined as follows: political corruption includes: a public servant or official (A) who, for personal gain, contrary to the norms of public office, harms the public interest (B) in favor of a third party (C), who rewards A for the access to goods or services that C would not otherwise acquire. Nevertheless, this definition has remained too broad.

Similarly, Della Porta and Vannuci's (1997) description of political corruption was also too broad, when on the example of Italy they transferred it to public administration and wrongly interpreted it corruption in public administration: the effectiveness of the companies that predominately cooperate with the public administration will deteriorate over time, which will lead to increasingly strong barriers regarding the entry of external companies. Arbitrariness and non-transparency of public decision-making increase over time as corrupt civil servants are interested in maintaining privileged relationships with the companies they bribe. Diversion of corruption adds stimulation to this process of "reverse selection", the end result of which is the well-known inefficiency of the Italian public administration, "the delays in completion, inflated final costs, poor work, more frequent completion or incorrect completion of works that may create additional opportunities for corruption.

However, Amundsen (1999) drew nearer the precise definition of political corruption when he found that corruption becomes political when political decision-makers use the political power they have to maintain their power, status and wealth, and political corruption is therefore something more than a deviation from formal and written legal norms, from professional codes of ethics and court decisions. Political corruption happens when rulers more or less systematically abuse laws and other regulations, circumvent them, ignore them, or even adapt them to their interests. Thus, political corruption differs from bureaucratic or official corruption, which is corruption in public administration or administrative corruption (at lower levels of decision-making), as it occurs at the highest level of the state and has political consequences. Admundsen was therefore the first to separate political corruption from corruption in public administration, however, he did not set the levels correctly, as he placed political corruption at the highest level of state governance, forgetting the lower levels of decision-making in the country, which are also run by elected politicians (municipalities, provinces...), who by their decisions can also cause damage and irrationally spend taxpayers' money.

Della Porta and Vannuci (1997) thus correctly concluded that the political costs of corruption must be added to the economic and social ones (or that political corruption creates them). A series of vicious circles leads to the parallel growth of corruption, inefficiency, clientelism and (under certain conditions) political protection of organized crime.

However, most new research and documents (after 2005) do not offer any progress in this area. Thus, the document of the Council of Europe: "Promoting integrity in leading the fight against political corruption" mixes all types of corruption, not only political and administrative (Council of Europe, 2017). The article entitled Political Corruption (Ceva and Ferretti, 2017) was promising, where the authors try to show the negative effects of political corruption, but actually descend into the field of administrative corruption, as shown in the next section (quote), where they mix politicians (elected officials) with public officials who are part of the public administration: "But what exactly is political corruption and what kind of error does it mean? Political corruption is often associated with the idea of a public official violating his or her professional duties in exchange for personal gain. A standard example is bribery. The question remains, however, how exactly should we separate an official's behavior as an example of political corruption from other forms of personal violations. Is it a necessary feature of political corruption that the point is some kind of material and personal benefit for a corrupt public official? What is the relationship between the corrupt behavior of an official and the corruption of the entire institution? "

Similar to Ceva and Ferretti, the definition of political corruption was approached by Victoria (2018), who listed the following as elements that make up political corruption, thus also moving to the field of administrative corruption or combining political and administrative corruption into one:

- It is carried out by people or groups who perform any public function, whether representative in nature or indirectly appointed;
- the public function must include the exercise of a public authority in connection with resource management;
- in addition, there must be a personal interest of the individual, which drives his behavior, and this interest too can be direct or indirect as a benefit to be granted to a third party or to himself in the case of a direct beneficiary.
- Finally, the individual must be aware that the conduct is contrary to the rules laid down by those who have entrusted him with the management of the public office, and as a result this conduct will be carried out in a covert manner.

The first real separation of political from administrative corruption was encountered only in the book Corruption - When self-interest comes before the common good (Schirrmacher and Schirrmacher, 2019, p. 38), where the authors distinguish between the two forms, but are in describing political corruption are oriented only towards the elections and the national level (government and parliament), while omitting lower levels where political corruption is also present.

Navot (2014) also defined political corruption quite well, giving a conventional understanding of political corruption that is not only related to definitions but also to connotations: political corruption is not just an abuse of public power for private gain; there is also an implicit presumption that the abuse of public power for private gain as such is wrong, negative, bad, and so on.

Thus, it would be more correct to distinguish political corruption from administrative, and define political corruption more narrowly as any irrational and unjustified use or misuse of public money and / or misuse of public authority and / or willful breach of the law, in order to secure, achieve or maintain political power or influence or self-interest alone, by an elected or politically appointed official (thus distinguishing political officials from public officials).

### III. FORMS AND LEVELS OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION

Navot and Beerli (2018) investigated political corruption based on three concepts:

- The first is the conventional notion of political corruption, which has at its core the idea of the abuse of public power for private gain. Practices such as bribery are a paradigm of corruption according to the conventional concept, because in such cases the link between the abuse of public power and the private earnings of the office holder - for example, payment in some form for some kind of service - is unambiguous.
- The second is the judicial concept of political corruption. The essence of this concept is the idea that power perishes by itself and therefore the pursuit of power is immoral in itself.
- The third concept, however, is the permissible notion of political corruption, which says that there are circumstances in politics in which it is lawful to act inappropriately or even immorally.

However, like most other researchers, they dealt with bureaucratic or administrative corruption (civil servants) and investigated the perception of corruption in public and the causes for political / administrative corruption rather than the actual description or definition of it. However, their study showed what we need to look out for in identifying political corruption and what actually needs to change to get a realistic picture of political corruption in society:

- public understanding of corruption (people often have misconceptions about what corruption is, what forms of corruption are and how widespread it is),
- sources of public information (often do not show the true image),
- behavior of politicians and institutions.

In order to understand political corruption as such, i.e. that the actors of it are elected or politically appointed officials, it is necessary to first define the levels in the country where officials are elected or appointed to a job by a political decision. Political corruption operates on two or three levels (depending on each country's local self-government). The first, highest level is at the state level, where the bearers of political corruption are the government and politically appointed or elected state officials. The second and third level are a step or two lower (depending on the system of government), at the level of regions, provinces or municipalities. These bearers of political corruption are also politically appointed or elected officials and holders of power at a lower level, such as. mayors, municipal or provincial councilors.

However, a clear distinction needs to be made between officials and career officials and between politically appointed and elected officials, as although in both cases they may be perpetrators of corruption, political corruption takes place only in the case of politically appointed or elected officials (in the case of corruption among officials and career officials, the corruption is administrative).

And where does political corruption begin - with populism that goes hand in hand with it. This form of corruption, political populism, especially at the local level, creates enormous economic damage, as huge sums of money are wasted unproductively, all with the intention of being liked by the voters. Local politicians are redirecting large sums of money to investments that are not a priority or are altogether unnecessary, all in order to gain as many votes as possible in the elections. Thus, various stadiums, sports or other multi-purpose halls are being built, new, not necessarily necessary infrastructure is being built from the budget or already good infrastructure is being restored in densely populated areas, while sparsely populated areas where the voter base is small are forgotten (Šumah 2018, p.92)

Political populism is actually the most visible form of legal political corruption, where everything is allowed in the fight for the voters, including promising the impossible, i.e. miracles, and politicians are often in fact presented as messiahs who will save the world (the country).

**Table 1: Two levels of populism as the beginning of political corruption and its consequences**

|  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| Promises to voters, promises to supporters and funders | <b>State level</b>  | Issuing an invoice to taxpayers (including voters, supporters and financiers) for the fulfillment of promises made (even irrational ones), through new taxes, new fees or new excise duties. |
|  | Government, politically appointed or elected high-ranking officials |  |
|  | <b>Municipal, provincial level</b>                                  |  |
|  | Mayors, politically appointed or elected officials                  |  |

Source: Own

Political corruption is basically not a crime in itself, but it is often morally and ethically questionable. Many political decisions are based on the number of votes cast by an individual constituency, which is why it often happens that promises are made and decisions are made on the basis of them, which are neither realistic, nor rational, nor fair. Thus, e.g. a road in a settlement with a thousand potential voters is resurfaced when no repairs are needed at all, but the road outside the center is not asphalted because only fifty or a hundred potential voters live next to it. It is similar with other basic infrastructure (water supply, sewerage). Here, too, political decisions, which are also based on the number of voters, may prevail, putting a certain number of people (minority) in an unequal position with the majority.

This has already been pointed out by Hessami (2014, p. 387), who explored how political corruption affects the composition of the state budget, but more in the context of how much more can be earned with large projects (commissions, bribes). However, he neglected the local level (local community budgets) and political populism as one of the most important weapons in the struggle for power. Naturally, large projects are also being implemented at the local level due to the interest of individuals in illegal earnings, but unproductive / unjustified waste of money to obtain votes is nevertheless more characteristic of populism.

The research History of public utility regulation (Troesken, 2006, p. 263-279) showed the development of corruption in public enterprises in the United States; how politicians in the late 19th and early 20th century, especially at the local level, used public enterprises to win elections. In cities where utilities (water, sewerage...) were publicly owned, i.e. owned by cities or other local communities, workers earned up to 40 percent more per hour and worked up to 17 percent fewer hours than comparable workers in the private sector. Often, however, employees therefore had to make contributions to cover election campaigns at the local level. The amount of the "voluntary" contribution was between 2 and 4 percent of the employee's annual salary, depending on the employee's employment. Politicians also often employed more workers in public companies than needed, just to secure more supporters when the time for the elections came. The prices of services were, of course, lower than where these services were provided by a private company. In the long run, all this endangered the financial

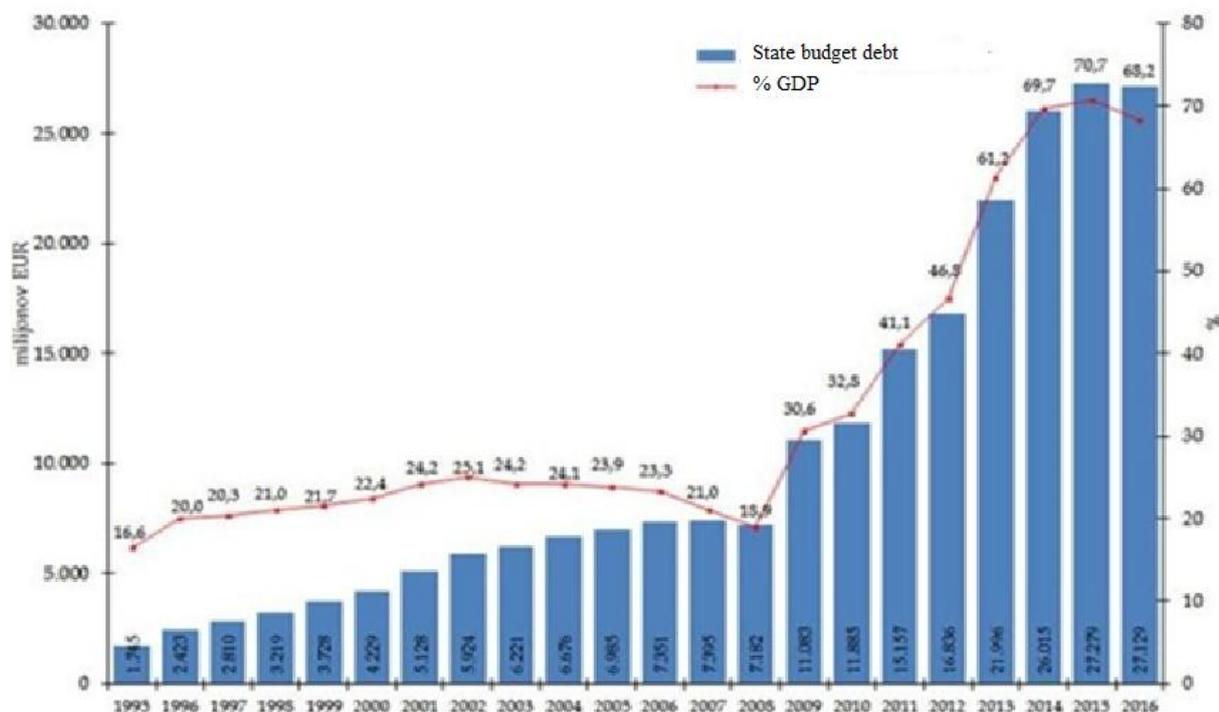
capacity of public services, the city or municipal treasury, and at the same time also the much needed improvement of infrastructure.

Or salaries and pensions; before elections, promises are always made or even wishes of certain interest groups met, interest groups that represent a wide base of voters, be it pensioners, teachers, employees in companies owned by the state or local community or government officials. These cases in fact represent political corruption in the sense of direct, legally permitted bribery of individual interest groups.

There are examples that show how, due to the influence of populism and the clumsy behavior of the government before the elections, the government can lose the elections. Thus, due to the introduction of the single payment system in Slovenia in 2008, the previous government lost the elections. With the introduction of the single payment system, which started operating just before the elections, the wage ratios between individual stakeholders changed, there were also errors in the system or in the first calculation and the first salary paid under the new system was for some in the public sector a severe blow. Part of the public sector then naturally turned against the government of the time or the ruling parties in the elections and chose an alternative in the opposition, which, in comparison with the government, acted in a very populist manner.

However, the new government at the time of the crisis, with its often populist actions, could not cope with the challenges posed by the economic crisis less than a year later, all of which resulted in abnormally high borrowing and a prolonged recession in the country. The costs of this, populist action and, of course, the irrational, unintended and also unjustifiably spent money, were ultimately borne by the citizens. Political corruption is not punishable for providing public support and social peace, but it costs money. It costs the taxpayers. Such an example of the effect of political corruption as populist behavior is shown in the graph below, which shows how much the public debt is rising precisely because of populist promises, which could not be fully fulfilled, and despite all the borrowing, there was simply not enough money to fulfill the promises.

**Figure 1: Government indebtedness growth**



Source: Jančič, 2017

However, the government of the time could have acted in a populist manner and waited for the introduction of a single wage system for the post-election period, raising, albeit only a bit, the wages of the public sector and, would thus most probably, retain power. Although many analysts attribute the change of government at the time to the corruption scandal (which later turned out to be fabricated in order to blacken the then prime minister and the strongest party) of the prime minister, the scandal did not have as strong an influence on the election as the introduction of a single wage system did. Simply put, it can thus be said that political corruption always begins when politicians actually buy someone with his own money, which they had beforehand taken from his wallet through taxes.

And why is political corruption dangerous, even if in the first phase it is not yet illegal or has not yet been committed in the form of crimes? Because the gap between political corruption, which is legal (but not moral), and political corruption, which is criminal, is relatively small, and because it is a generator of other forms of corruption. And as Philp (1997) noted, moderate corruption could only exist if it did not encourage severe corruption; but where moderate corruption is tolerated, it inevitably leads to widespread corruption, and only where it is systematically fought and appropriately punished can it be curtailed.

Walczak (2018) is also right in his find that the line between corruption as a criminal act and legal (political) corruption is becoming increasingly blurred and therefore it is not easy to distinguish where one passes into the other. Thus, according to Waczak, it is not possible to precisely define e.g. difficulties in citing examples of attractive state sinecures adopted by arbitrary decisions in the appropriate legal form of appointment. The latter means that all decision-making processes can be assessed and interpreted on an ethical and moral level (as controversial), however, they cannot be questioned from a legal point of view. But the public does not know the background, which could also be legally controversial (godfathers from the background).

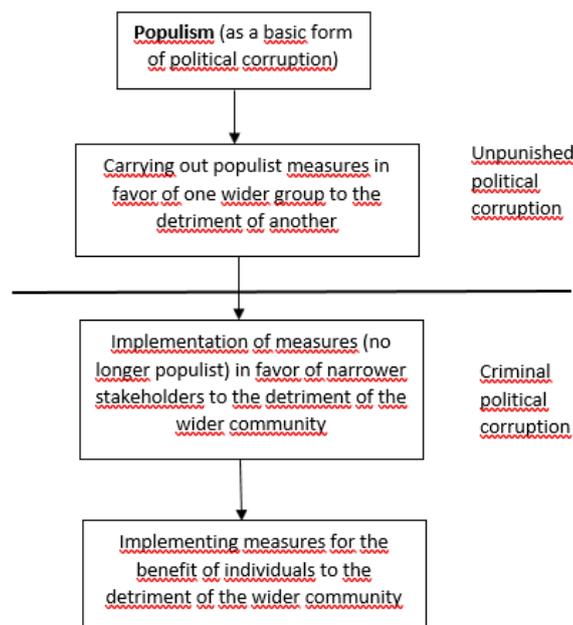
Thus, political corruption quickly degenerates into a form of classic corruption, where the benefit of individual interest groups that are still on the verge of what is allowed changes in favor of individuals, i.e. when it suddenly moves from political topics to economic, personnel and other topics. If, in the run-up to the election, promises of privileges are allowed to individual broader stakeholders in the fight for votes (albeit to the detriment of others, including wider interest groups), this changes when privileges are narrowed to narrow interest groups or even individuals for personal gain, (for oneself as a politician, for one's family, for one's relatives, friends...) or for others (e.g. companies or individuals who paid for the election campaign).

Another such example is when the government, i.e. the ruling politicians, start to literally buy non-governmental organizations, to which state donations represent the majority of their income and they therefore actually lose their meaning; they let themselves be bought, and politicians are left alone by them. However, at that point there is already a shift from general benefit to narrower yet influential stakeholders. And, once the general benefit (albeit to broader interest groups) is shifted to the benefit of narrower interest groups or individuals, the line between permissible and legal, albeit morally contentious form of corruption, is exceeded. From there on, political corruption is a crime that must, according to the law, be prosecuted.

The problem, however, is that the first form of corruption is visible and also widely accepted, while the second (criminal) is usually well hidden and carried out far from the public eye. Often, however, politicians also cover their corrupt practices well with laws that cover and justify the visible part of the corrupt act, while the background where the actual influence, power, and money revolve remains hidden.

How political corruption transitions from basic, legal political corruption to a criminal form of corruption is shown in the following figure.

**Figure 2: Transition from legal corruption to illegal form of corruption**



Source: Own

However, the transition between one and the other political corruption is very difficult to determine; it is very wide. Once measures are implemented for the benefit of a narrow stakeholder group (e.g. construction or civil servants), it is difficult to distinguish at the outset whether these measures are politically beneficial for all members of this group (all construction workers and all civil servants) or only for a narrower group of the privileged. However, the measures are also becoming increasingly covert and the line between the two types of political corruption is becoming increasingly blurred. The focus of politicians or the political elite is slowly shifting from working toward the common good to personal enrichment, and political corruption is turning into ordinary, illegal corruption (through clientelism and cronyism into bribery, extortion, fraud...).

In general, however, the line becomes thin between legal and illegal political corruption when it comes to repaying debts or services (e.g. financing of election campaigns, generating public opinion by one interest group before elections, and the like). Everyone who participated in the rise to power in one way or another expects their share of the pie, one through well-paid deals with the state, other through well-paid services, some through salary increase to a limited interest group... And here the Rubicon separating legal corruption from illegal is quickly crossed. Personnel is hired through adapted tenders, public procurements are organized and the like.

Politicians are also often involved in the bodies of various sports or other associations (especially at the local level) and here obtaining a deal with the state or municipality is often conditioned with a donation to these associations. And that donation is always, one way or another, included in the deal. Thus, the taxpayers from whose funds (through taxes, fees, excise duties...) such a business is financed (it is mainly about various infrastructure) also pay an involuntary contribution to various associations. So, simplified, if a road section is built in one municipality with 10,000 taxpayers and the contractor is a donor of a larger amount to the local football club, this amount will be paid indirectly by the taxpayers of the whole municipality, as the contractor will make sure that the loss is not his own but the amount is included in the price of construction. Although at least 9,000 taxpayers in this municipality are not interested in football, they have indirectly been forced to become donors to the local football club. The other 1,000, who are football fans, however, remain or become loyal voters to the local political elite that arranged the donation.

It is even worse when it comes to personal gain in the case of making the acquisition conditional. At this point these are no longer involuntary donations to clubs or associations in the sense of narrow interest groups, but a criminal act aimed at enriching the individual. And so taxpayers become involuntary donors to politicians or politicians in building their villas, buying new cars, or just in personal enrichment.

Common forms of political corruption are:

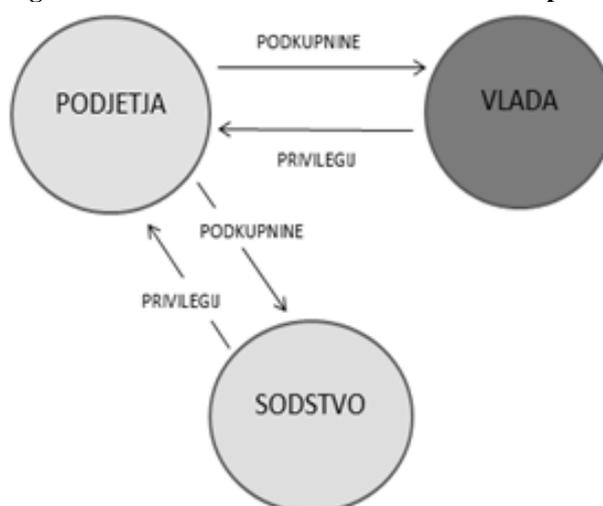
- Clientelism<sup>1</sup>, which occurs because there is an opinion in society that only representatives of the strongest party can enjoy benefits in the country. Therefore, many people join the strongest party, not because they would share basic and fundamental thoughts and would otherwise defend these views, but only out of self-interest (<http://dosierkorupcija.com>, 2002). Šoštaršič similarly states (2009, p. 21): Clientelism is the exploitation of political or party connections, rewarding with good positions for party affiliation, sympathy, financing and all possible other services.
- Nepotism<sup>2</sup>, which is defined in the GREAT DICTIONARY OF FOREIGN WORDS (Tavzes et al., 2002) as the granting of high-ranking offices, well-paid jobs, etc. to relatives, or giving priority to relatives. Nepotism is similarly defined by other authors, and in general, nepotism is about favoring relatives or placing relatives in well-paid positions (including political or government positions) that they do not deserve, given their ability, experience or education. Nepotism, in the sense of favoring individuals, is a very widespread phenomenon in recruitment, causing significant costs to both public and private organizations. This form of opportunism is possible if the skills required for a particular job are not verifiable and there is a possibility of subjective assessment by a competent person when assessing suitability. In a labor market where nepotism is prevalent, individuals are discouraged from investing in knowledge because they are not adequately rewarded and also the capable look for less demanding jobs. In addition to reducing efficiency, nepotism also violates the principle of equal opportunities and reduces people's confidence in justice (Ponzo and Scopa, 2010, p. 17).
- Chronism, which is a broader concept than nepotism, and which also encompasses situations where friends and acquaintances are favored. Above all, chronism is visible in the countries of Africa and the Middle East, where important state functions are based primarily on trust, belonging to a particular religion or tribe! Komič (2013, p. 22) defined chronism as giving priority to politicians, the so-called "comrades", close and long-term friends, which means appointing friends, regardless of their qualifications, to high positions.

<sup>1</sup>Clientelism derives from the Latin word *cliens*, meaning protégé (in ancient Rome a plebeian under the leadership or protection of an patrician). When speaking about clientelism, we can speak of an informal relationship between people of different economic and social statuses, which involves the exchange of unequal services that result in harm to someone or the provision of greater benefit to one of the participants.

<sup>2</sup>The word nepotism comes from the Latin word *nepo*, which means nephew or grandson (Italian *nepote*, *nipote* or also nephew, grandson). Historical nepotism stems from the habits of the Vatican, where popes assigned high ecclesiastical offices to their relatives regardless of their abilities, often to persons who they presented as their nephews (*nepo*), but who were in fact their natural sons.

- In addition to the previously mentioned types of corruption, there are a whole bunch of other actions present in political corruption (which are also characteristic of other types of corruption), which politicians use to achieve their goals, such as e.g. various political pressures, blackmail, threats... as well as bribery and fraud. The highest form of political corruption, however, is State Capture. State capture or stolen state is a situation in the state when the state is abused (by someone) for private purposes, and not run or managed in the public interest. The notion of state captivity always encompasses three entities, namely: the one who takes over the state, what is taken over (laws, decrees, regulations; what symbolizes the state) and as the third - the aggrieved entity, which is always the public. State capture is a form of institutional corruption and legislative corruption. In institutional corruption, certain people - interest group members, civil servants - abuse their position in a way that benefits the interest group or its members. Such people with a dual role are patrons who have their protégés. This kind of corruption forms a network of patrons, which dictates the formation of relations between the state, the private sector and citizens. It is also associated with the so-called legislative corruption - the corruption of member of parliament, in which laws are passed that are written right up the street of those with whom they are corruptly connected. This is also called State Capture (OSI / EU, 2002, p. 24). However, state capture is not just about political corruption, but much more, because capture requires the cooperation of a whole bunch of subsystems, intertwined with different types of corruption, with all paths ultimately leading to politics.

**Figure 3: Hellman-Kaufmann model of state capture**



Source: Mungiu-Pippidi et al, 2011, p. 39

The capture of the state actually means bribing MPs and officials and civil servants in the form of non-transparent payments in order to encourage them to adopt such laws, rules, regulations and decrees from which bribe-takers will benefit to some extent (Kudamatsu, 2002, p. 2) as well as the bribery of the judicial and executive (police) branches of government.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

In fact, political corruption, like other forms of corruption, is a multifaceted process. Although it is considered that in the case of corruption the provider is the beneficiary on the one hand, and the recipient on the other, both are aware of actions that remain hidden (the third link in the chain is everyone else; the victims), however, that does not apply to political corruption at least in its first, legal phase, since its secrecy of the act appears only at the stage when political corruption becomes illegal.

Although every act of corruption is not yet a criminal offense, it is unethical and detrimental to the economic and political development of society. Normally, people with political and economic power and power of decision-making are involved. The philosopher Karl Popper also wrote in his book "The Open Society and its enemies" that the biggest problem is not who should command, but how to control the one who commands, therefore how the political and social institutions should be organized in order to prevent weak and incompetent rulers from doing too much harm. However, since there does not exist a general and unmistakable way to prevent the tyranny or corruptions of important member of society, the price of freedom is eternal alertness (Brioschi, 2003, p. 125).

We will never eradicate political corruption (as well as other forms of corruption), neither legal political corruption (as there will still be politicians who promise the impossible and their voters who will

believe them), nor illegal political corruption (greed will always be present; both greed for power as well as greed for wealth).

There are, however, levers with which to limit it. Thus, by limiting the number of seats for other politicians and public officials (elected and politically appointed), not only for presidents, as is currently the practice in democracies, their networks could be severed and at least temporarily disabled.<sup>3</sup> However, the restriction should not be absolute and should (after a pause of one term) allow for re-election. It should also be easier to recall politicians or officials in the event of corruption or other illegal acts.

Therefore, Ariely's (2012) proposal is interesting, which is based on the fact that petty crimes (in this case petty corruption phenomena) should not be overlooked, justified or ignored, as this will only increase the problems. According to him, this is especially true for politicians and public officials (as well as directors and celebrities). He otherwise wonders if it were unfair if these people were subject to stricter standards than ordinary people, however, it should be noted that people who are more under the scrutiny of others have a greater influence on the behavior of viewers (and followers) and the consequences for the society are therefore greater if they are the ones who transgress. Therefore, all phenomena of corruption, even the smallest ones, should provoke an immediately reaction without any grace, for the only way to fight corruption is to practice zero tolerance towards it. Politicians, public officials and the like should be under even tougher scrutiny, both in terms of their actions and their financial situation.

In short, mechanisms need to be put in place to limit the possibility of illegal political corruption. However, there is only one evaluator for assessing legal political corruption; the voters, who decide to what extent (legal) political corruption is still morally acceptable to them. Unfortunately, they often have all too loose standards.

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<sup>3</sup>After all, if one thinks about it realistically, the president of the country (if it is not exactly a presidential democracy) can do much less damage with his limited powers than the mayor of a small municipality, who has no term limits, but has extremely large powers in his area, which he can abuse and with his networks intertwined over several terms absolutely controls the entire public scene (investments, municipal companies, municipal finances, staffing).