THE IMPACT OF POLITICAL CORRUPTION ON SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY: A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW OF MALAYSIA'S WELFARE SYSTEM AND POLITICAL FINANCING

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Abstract

This study investigates the relationship between political corruption, funding mechanisms, and social welfare policy development, with a focus on Malaysia. Political corruption, defined as the misuse of public office for private gain, significantly affects the formulation, funding, and implementation of welfare policies. Rather than addressing social inequities and enhancing access to essential services, corruption redirects public resources and distorts policy priorities, resulting in inequitable outcomes. Budget manipulation and the use of external funding for political purposes further undermine welfare programs aimed at poverty alleviation, healthcare improvement, and education access. Malaysia's patronage-based political system, characterized by weak oversight and centralized control, fosters corruption. This system allows welfare policies to be selectively implemented, rewarding political supporters while marginalizing vulnerable populations. Socio-economic disparities and ethnic dynamics exacerbate these challenges, as policies often prioritize political incentives over societal needs. The study underscores the need for institutional reforms to combat corruption and ensure equitable welfare policies. Enhancing financial accountability, transparency, and inclusive governance is vital to safeguarding welfare systems from political manipulation. By synthesizing key findings, this review provides actionable insights for policymakers and researchers aiming to mitigate corruption's effects, improve resource allocation, and strengthen social welfare policies in politically sensitive environments like Malaysia.

INTRODUCTION

Political corruption is an enduring global issue, with far-reaching implications for governance, social welfare, and public trust. In particular, the relationship between political corruption and social welfare policy is of critical importance, especially in electoral authoritarian regimes where state resources are often used to reinforce political power. Corruption is a multifaceted issue, driven primarily by personal gain, as explained by the principal-agent model. This theory highlights those politicians, while expected to act in the public interest, often exploit their positions for personal benefit due to an imbalance of information (Klitgaard, 1988; Shleifer & Vishny, 1993; Groenendijk, 1997). Corruption is a global problem, negatively impacting economic prosperity, resource allocation, and public trust, with the poor being disproportionately affected (Siddiquee & Zafarullah, 2022). Despite extensive anti-corruption efforts, especially in developing countries, progress has been slow. Malaysia, despite a strong anti-corruption framework, experienced a worsening corruption crisis during Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak's tenure (2009-2018), marked by high-profile scandals that tarnished the nation's reputation and hindered economic growth (Siddiquee & Zafarullah, 2022). Corruption is widely defined as the misuse of public authority for personal gain, a definition endorsed by Transparency International and accepted as a global standard (TI, 2017; Rose, 2018 as cited in Siddiquee & Zafarullah, 2022). Public sector corruption specifically involves unethical actions

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by officials who exploit their positions for personal advantages beyond legal entitlements (Graycar, 2015; Mungiu-Pippidi, 2006 as cited in Siddiquee & Zafarullah, 2022).

Purpose and Importance of the Study

This study examines how political financing and corruption impact social welfare policies, particularly in Malaysia, where the intersection of politics and welfare systems has historically influenced the distribution of public services. The primary aim is to assess the extent to which political corruption undermines the equitable and effective implementation of welfare policies. By synthesizing key theoretical perspectives and empirical findings, this study highlights critical factors such as political financing mechanisms, institutional corruption, and socio-economic dynamics that shape welfare outcomes. Importantly, the research contributes to the existing literature by offering a nuanced understanding of how corruption distorts welfare systems, identifying areas for reform, and providing insights for policymakers and researchers seeking to mitigate these adverse effects.

Structure of the Study

The study is structured into several key parts to ensure a comprehensive analysis. The first part introduces the research background, highlighting the significance of welfare policies and the challenges posed by political corruption. The second part presents a detailed literature review, examining theoretical frameworks and prior studies that explore the relationship between political financing, corruption, and welfare systems. The third part analyzes the Malaysian context, focusing on the socio-political dynamics that influence welfare policy implementation. The fourth part discusses the findings, identifying gaps, trends, and critical challenges. Finally, the conclusion offers policy recommendations, emphasizes the study's contributions to the field, and suggests directions for future research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature on the relationship between political corruption and social welfare policy is extensive and multidimensional. Research highlights that political corruption often distorts the original intent of welfare policies, which are designed to alleviate poverty, provide safety nets for vulnerable populations, and promote equitable social development. Instead, corrupt practices reorient these policies to serve political interests. Scholars such as Hu (2011), Templeman (2012), and Peschard (2006) underscore how authoritarian regimes manipulate political financing regulations to maintain their hold on power. These regimes often engage in corrupt practices to exploit state resources, including welfare programs, as tools for political gain (Table 1).

Theories like the principal-agent model (Klitgaard 1988; Shleifer and Vishny 1993) provide valuable insights into the dynamics of political corruption. This model highlights the conflicts of interest that arise when public officials, as "agents" of the state, prioritize their own self-interest over the public good. In the context of social welfare policies, this often means that welfare programs are manipulated to serve the political agendas of elites rather than addressing the needs of the population.

In Malaysia, political corruption and social welfare policy have been deeply intertwined, particularly under the dominance of the United Malays National Organization (UMNO). Studies by Levitsky and Way (2010), Bunce and Wolchik (2011), and Ufen (2015) emphasize how the selective enforcement of political finance regulations favors the ruling parties, allowing them to use state resources, including welfare benefits, to secure electoral support. This practice not only skews the distribution of welfare benefits but also undermines public confidence in the

welfare system. Research by Transparency International Malaysia (2014) and Gomez (2014) further examines how welfare policies are often co-opted for political financing and vote-buying, resulting in policies that fail to meet the needs of the most vulnerable citizens while consolidating political power.

Political Finance

Political financing, often referred to as "political finance," includes the raising and utilization of funds by political parties and candidates to win elections, support routine party activities, and manage campaigns. It covers costs such as maintaining offices, conducting research and polls, campaign advertising, and mobilizing voters. Political finance encompasses both obtaining funds and spending, not only during election campaigns but also outside election periods, including expenses for media opportunities, research, and voter registration.

According to the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (IDEAS, 2014), four key elements of political finance include: prohibiting or limiting contributions, public financing (direct or indirect), spending rules for parties and candidates, and financial reporting with transparency in amounts and donors. Scholars like Gomez (1994) argue that "money politics" involves the use of finance to gain political influence, often linked to business interests and illicit activities, such as bribery and vote-buying, to secure contracts and government opportunities.

In Malaysia, political finance has been associated with corporate misconduct, especially after the New Economic Policy (NEP). Business owners often act as political donors to gain influence in elections, sometimes resulting in corruption. Scholars like Shahriza et al. (2013) and Khairiah et al. (2013) note that money politics involves illicitly obtaining funds for election campaigns and bribing voters, especially in socio-economically disadvantaged areas. This leads to promises of tenders, contracts, and material compensation in exchange for political support.

Jamaie (2015) and Muhammad Agus (2005) define money politics as an abuse of power for private gain, often through bribery and financial inducements. It is closely tied to political corruption, where financial manipulation plays a central role in securing votes. Scholars such as Carlson (2007) also emphasize that political financing during elections often involves covert or overt financial manipulation to sway voters.

Political financing in the broadest sense, as defined by Norris and Van Es (2016), includes all financial transactions involving political parties and candidates. Gomez & Tong (2017) highlight issues in Malaysia, particularly vote-buying in intra-party elections, which is lightly regulated. These practices contribute to public distrust and suspicions of corruption, especially when candidates seek funding from unreliable sources.

Welfare Concept in Malaysia

In contrast, the concept of a welfare state in Malaysia revolves around prioritizing the well-being of its citizens through policies aimed at poverty eradication and addressing socio-economic disparities. The New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1971 aimed to eradicate poverty and restructure society, but demographic shifts have exposed inequalities, particularly between urban and rural areas (Farrah & Ashray, 2018). The National Social Welfare Policy focuses on marginalized and disabled groups, aiming to integrate them into mainstream development and provide social protection (Zainudin, 2021).

Despite initial success, Malaysia's welfare system faces challenges due to population aging and socio-economic changes. There is a growing demand for welfare services, and increased scrutiny on social media has intensified pressure on the system (Farrah & Ashray, 2018). The

government recognizes the need for social justice and equity, aiming to provide access to essential services, education, healthcare, and employment opportunities for all segments of society. However, the social welfare system remains underdeveloped compared to Western countries (Farrah & Ashray, 2018). The government's role in ensuring social stability through a welfare state remains critical for the nation's inclusive development.

Table 1. Summary of Cited Literature

Author(s)	Year	Title	Objective	Key Findings	Relevance to Political Corruption & Social Policy
Templeman, K.	2012	*Electoral Authoritarianism in Southeast Asia*	To analyze the characteristics and strategies of electoral authoritarian regimes in Southeast Asia	Electoral manipulation by authoritarian leaders sustains political dominance	Shows how authoritarian practices influence policy formation and corruption
Gomez, E.T.	1994	*Political Business: Corporate Involvement of Malaysian Political Parties*	To examine corporate financing's role in Malaysian politics	Political parties rely on corporate financing, influencing policy direction	Highlights the link between financial interests and biased social policy outcomes
Transparency International Malaysia	2014	*Reforming Political Financing*	Investigates the need for reform in political financing	Reforming political finance is essential for reducing corruption	Shows the direct connection between unregulated political finance and corrupt social welfare policies
Shleifer, A. & Vishny, R.W.	1993	*Corruption*	To explore economic distortions caused by corruption	Corruption leads to inefficient resource allocation	Provides foundational understanding of how corruption weakens social welfare policies
Mungiu-Pippidi, A.	2006	*Corruption: Diagnosis and Treatment*	Proposes frameworks for analyzing and combating corruption	Emphasizes institutional roles in controlling corruption	Useful for understanding how institutional reforms can reduce corruption in social policies
Norris, P. & Van Es, A.	2016	*Checkbook Elections: Political Finance in Comparative Perspective*	Studies the impact of money in elections globally	Financial power undermines democracy by giving undue influence to wealthy actors	Highlights the global issue of financial influence on policy and its effect on social services
Zainudin, Z.	2021	*National Social Welfare Policy in Malaysia*	Analyzes the implementation of social welfare policies in Malaysia	Political considerations heavily influence the implementation of welfare policies	Relevant for understanding the influence of political corruption on the equitable delivery of welfare
Klitgaard, R.	1988	*Controlling Corruption*	Offers a framework to understand and reduce corruption	Accountability and reduced opportunities for corruption lead to better governance	Provides a systematic approach to designing anti-corruption measures within social policies
Hu, B.	2011	*Political Finance and Corruption in Asia*	Investigates political financing and corruption across Asia	Political financing exacerbates corruption in developing countries	Relevant for understanding how financing practices influence policy decisions in Asia

Author(s)	Year	Title	Objective	Key Findings	Relevance to Political Corruption & Social Policy
Ufen, A.	2015	*Political Financing in Southeast Asia*	Studies political financing in Southeast Asia	Explores the impact of political finance on governance and corruption in Malaysia	Focuses on the regional dynamics that exacerbate political corruption in social policies

METHOD OF REVIEWING

A systematic literature review, grounded in a specific domain, method, or theory, outlines a well-defined purpose and research question, establishes a clear research approach, and sets inclusion and exclusion criteria for academic studies. It employs techniques like content or thematic analysis to deliver a qualitative evaluation of the reviewed literature (Özdil & Konuralp, 2024, p. 5). This literature review employs a systematic and structured approach to identify, evaluate, and synthesize relevant studies on the relationship between political corruption and social welfare policy implementation. The primary aim of this method is to ensure the inclusion of high-quality and diverse sources that provide a comprehensive understanding of the research topic. The process consisted of several key stages, ensuring rigor, objectivity, and relevance throughout the review.

First, a targeted search strategy was adopted to collect relevant literature from multiple reputable academic databases, including JSTOR, Scopus, and Google Scholar. These databases were chosen due to their extensive coverage of scholarly publications across political science, public policy, and social welfare studies. Search terms were carefully formulated to capture the breadth of the topic. Keywords included *"political corruption," "social welfare policy," "political financing,"* and *"Malaysia"*. Boolean operators such as "AND" and "OR" were used to refine the search and identify studies that examined both the global and country-specific contexts of political corruption and welfare policy implementation. Additionally, alternative phrases and related terms like *"money politics," "welfare state," "institutional corruption,"* and *"governance reforms"* were included to capture diverse perspectives and ensure comprehensive coverage.

To maintain the relevance and quality of the sources, specific selection criteria were applied. The review prioritized publications from the last two decades (2000–2023) to ensure that the findings reflected contemporary developments in political corruption, political financing, and social welfare systems. Sources were limited to peer-reviewed journal articles, scholarly books, and reliable institutional reports to uphold academic rigor. Papers with significant citations and empirical studies offering quantitative or qualitative data were given precedence. Grey literature, such as policy briefs and reports from organizations like Transparency International and World Bank, were also included where relevant to provide practical and policy-driven insights.

After collecting the relevant sources, each study underwent a systematic analysis to extract key insights and identify thematic connections. This process involved three main stages:

i.   Content Analysis: Each source was thoroughly examined to identify core arguments, theoretical frameworks, and empirical findings related to political corruption and its effects on social welfare policy. Key elements analyzed included the objectives, methodologies, data sources, and conclusions presented in each study.

ii. Thematic Categorization: Common themes and patterns were identified, such as the role of institutional weaknesses, political financing as a driver of corruption, and the misuse

of welfare programs for electoral or political gain. Emerging trends, such as the socio-economic implications of corruption and its effect on vulnerable populations like Malaysia's B40 group, were highlighted.

iii. Critical Evaluation: The reliability and validity of each study were critically assessed. Factors considered included the robustness of the methodologies, limitations of the data, and the generalizability of findings. Studies employing case studies, comparative analyses, and mixed-method approaches were particularly valuable for understanding the complexity of corruption in welfare policy implementation.

To enhance the comprehensiveness of the review, cross-referencing was used to identify additional relevant sources. References cited in key studies were reviewed to uncover further literature that may have been overlooked in the initial search. This iterative process ensured that the most significant and influential studies were included in the analysis.

In summary, this method of reviewing adopted a systematic approach to collecting, analyzing, and synthesizing scholarly literature. By focusing on high-quality, peer-reviewed sources and critically evaluating their contributions, the review effectively captured the multidimensional relationship between political corruption, political financing, and welfare policy implementation. The inclusion of both global and Malaysian-specific studies offers a well-rounded perspective, providing a solid foundation for understanding the broader impacts of corruption on social welfare systems. This systematic approach not only ensures academic rigor but also identifies critical gaps in the existing literature, paving the way for future research in this field.

DISCUSSION

The literature reviewed reveals a complex and often detrimental relationship between political corruption and social welfare policy, particularly in Malaysia. The manipulation of political financing regulations by ruling parties significantly impacts the design and distribution of welfare benefits, leading to outcomes that serve political rather than social objectives. Welfare programs that should be aimed at reducing poverty and inequality are often used as instruments for securing political loyalty, with resources disproportionately allocated to areas or groups that can offer electoral support in return.

The principal-agent model is particularly relevant in explaining how political elites misuse their positions to exploit welfare systems for personal or party benefit. Politicians, acting as agents of the public, divert welfare resources to serve their own interests, whether by securing votes or enriching themselves and their allies. This distortion of welfare policy not only undermines the integrity of social safety nets but also perpetuates socio-economic inequalities, as the intended beneficiaries of welfare programs are often marginalized in favor of politically strategic groups.

Moreover, the practice of using welfare policies for political financing is prevalent in Malaysia. Research indicates that welfare programs, such as cash transfers and subsidies, are strategically deployed during election periods to secure votes, a practice that diminishes the effectiveness of these programs as genuine tools for poverty alleviation. As a result, welfare policies become less about addressing social needs and more about entrenching the power of political elites, leading to widespread disillusionment with the welfare system and weakening public trust in government institutions.

Figures 1 and 2 illustrate the fluctuation pattern for the past 12 to 18 years of Malaysia Corruption Perception Index, Gross Domestic Product and Public Spending on subsidies and social assistance for better understanding of local trend.
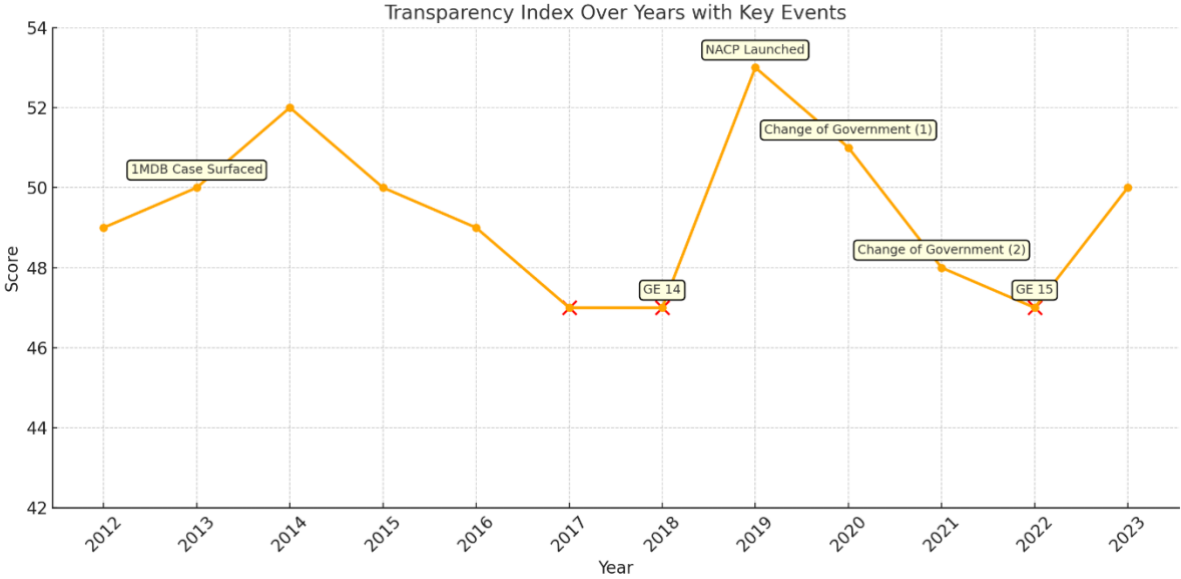
Figure 1. Malaysia Latest 12 Years Corruption Perception Index CPI (T.I)
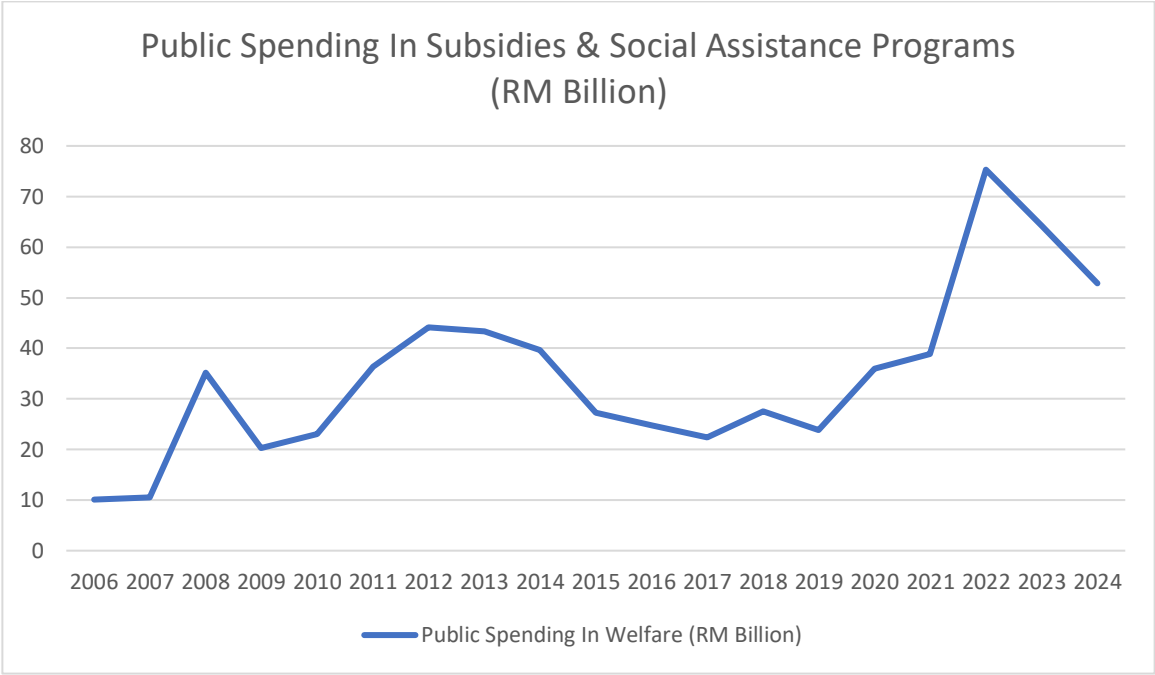*Source:* Based on data from Transparency International Malaysia (2023)

Figure 2. Malaysia Latest 18 Years of Public Spending on Subsidies and Social Assistance Programs (RM billion)
Source: Malaysia Ministry of Economy (2024)

Projection of the Knowledge Frontier and Research Gaps

The projection of the knowledge frontier in the field reveals several key theoretical and regional insights. Dominant theories, such as the principal-agent theory (Klitgaard, 1988) and institutional corruption frameworks (Mungiu-Pippidi, 2006), provide foundational explanations for the persistence of corruption in political systems and its influence on social welfare policies. Regionally, studies like those by Gomez (1994) and Ufen (2015) shed light on the unique dynamics of political corruption in Southeast Asia, particularly in Malaysia, where political parties leverage corporate financing to maintain power, often skewing social policy implementation to benefit financial backers. On the institutional front, researchers including

Transparency International (2014) and Norris and Van Es (2016) emphasize the importance of political financing regulations and other reforms to curb corruption and enhance the delivery of social welfare.

Despite these advances, significant research gaps remain. Most existing studies focus on the short-term effects of corruption, leaving the long-term consequences on social welfare sustainability underexplored. Additionally, there is a notable lack of community-level insights, with research primarily addressing institutional and elite perspectives, neglecting the experiences of vulnerable groups who depend on welfare programs. Comparative regional analysis also remains limited; while region-specific studies exist, there is a need for broader comparative work examining how different Southeast Asian countries approach corruption in social policy. Furthermore, the potential of emerging technologies, such as digital governance tools, to improve transparency and mitigate corruption is underrepresented in the literature.

Suggestions

To counteract the misuse of welfare policies for political gain, it is essential to place a strong emphasis on transparency and accountability in the administration of welfare programs. One critical step in this direction is implementing clear, enforceable regulations that ensure welfare benefits are distributed based on objective criteria, such as need, poverty levels, or specific socio-economic factors. This would help ensure that welfare programs serve their intended purpose without being manipulated for political purposes. A key component of this effort is the creation of independent monitoring bodies responsible for overseeing the distribution of welfare resources. These agencies must operate without direct influence from political actors to safeguard the integrity of welfare programs. For instance, they could audit the allocation of welfare funds to ensure equitable distribution across different regions and demographic groups, thereby eliminating favoritism towards politically strategic populations. This would ultimately restore public trust by showing that welfare policies are designed to promote social equity rather than political patronage.

Political corruption often stems from the way political parties finance their activities, with welfare programs occasionally exploited to generate electoral support. Comprehensive reforms to political finance laws are, therefore, crucial. These reforms should focus on limiting the influence of money in politics, which frequently drives corrupt practices. This can be achieved by setting stricter caps on political donations to prevent wealthy individuals or corporate entities from wielding disproportionate influence in exchange for political favors. In addition to stricter donation caps, enhanced disclosure requirements should be implemented. Political parties and candidates would be required to publicly report all donations and financial activities, making it more difficult to conceal illicit funding or misuse welfare resources for vote-buying. Independent regulatory bodies must also be established to enforce political finance laws. These bodies would have the authority to investigate violations, impose fines, and prosecute offenses. A robust regulatory framework that monitors political finance effectively will reduce opportunities for corruption and prevent the manipulation of welfare policies for political ends.

A significant challenge in tackling political corruption lies in ensuring that anti-corruption agencies are truly independent and empowered to act without political interference. These agencies must have greater institutional independence and the legal authority to investigate and prosecute cases of corruption, especially those involving the misuse of welfare funds for political purposes. To achieve this, anti-corruption bodies need sufficient resources—both in terms of funding and expertise—to fulfill their mandates effectively. These agencies should be staffed by professionals who are not affiliated with any political party, and their operations must be transparent to maintain public confidence in their impartiality. By strengthening anti-corruption institutions, governments will be better equipped to hold corrupt officials

accountable. This would send a clear message that the misuse of public funds, including welfare resources, will not be tolerated, ultimately rebuilding public trust in the welfare system and political institutions. This trust is critical for the long-term sustainability of welfare programs.

Addressing political corruption also requires a cultural shift in how citizens engage with governance. Public awareness campaigns can play a pivotal role in educating the population about the harmful effects of corruption, particularly how it undermines social welfare programs intended to benefit the most vulnerable members of society. Civic education programs should be developed to inform citizens of their rights and the importance of transparency in governance. These programs can shed light on how political corruption diverts critical resources away from essential services like healthcare, education, and social safety nets, worsening socio-economic inequalities. Such education fosters a politically engaged and informed citizenry that can hold political leaders accountable.

Moreover, increased public engagement through mechanisms like town halls, social audits, and participatory budgeting empowers citizens to take an active role in overseeing the design and implementation of welfare programs. When the public is involved in these decision-making processes, it becomes much more challenging for corrupt officials to manipulate welfare policies for their own gain. This active civic engagement ensures that welfare programs are aligned with the population's needs, rather than the political objectives of elites.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This systematic literature review highlights the profound impact of political corruption on the formulation and implementation of social welfare policies, particularly in Malaysia's socio-political context. Corruption, primarily through the manipulation of political financing mechanisms and the strategic repurposing of welfare programs for political gain, undermines the intended goals of reducing poverty, addressing inequalities, and improving access to essential services. The review underscores that these practices not only distort policy priorities but also exacerbate socio-economic disparities, leaving marginalized and vulnerable populations underserved. Weak institutional frameworks, centralized power structures, and the intertwining of political and economic interests allow corrupt practices to persist, hindering the effectiveness of social welfare initiatives.

Political corruption distorts the integrity of welfare systems, where public resources are often diverted for political patronage rather than addressing societal needs. In Malaysia, the centralization of power and the reliance on patronage networks facilitate corruption, leading to selective implementation of welfare programs to consolidate political influence. As a result, welfare benefits often fail to reach those in genuine need, particularly among the B40 group (the lowest 40% of income earners), further perpetuating socio-economic inequalities.

Moreover, the manipulation of political financing exacerbates these issues. Political parties and elites often exploit welfare policies as tools for electoral support through vote-buying and biased resource allocation. This compromises policy outcomes and reduces public trust in government institutions, creating long-term challenges for sustainable development and social equity. Institutional weaknesses, such as lack of transparency and ineffective oversight, further exacerbate these problems, allowing corrupt practices to flourish unchecked.

Policy Recommendations

To address these critical issues and strengthen the integrity of social welfare policies, the following recommendations are proposed:

(1) **Enhance Institutional Oversight and Governance**:

Establish independent oversight bodies with legal authority and financial resources to monitor welfare policy implementation and prevent misuse of funds.

Strengthen anti-corruption agencies to ensure they operate independently, free from political interference, and are empowered to investigate and prosecute corruption cases effectively.

Improve auditing mechanisms to monitor budget allocations, ensuring transparency in public spending.

(2) **Promote Transparency in Political Financing**:

Reform political financing laws to limit excessive campaign spending and introduce stricter caps on political donations.

Mandate full disclosure of political contributions, donors, and the utilization of campaign funds to minimize opportunities for misuse.

Establish independent regulatory bodies to enforce compliance with political financing laws and penalize violations.

(3) **Ensure Inclusive and Needs-Based Policy Design**:

Develop welfare policies that are transparent, evidence-based, and inclusive, with clear criteria for resource allocation based on poverty levels and socio-economic needs.

Foster citizen participation through public consultations, town halls, and stakeholder engagement to ensure policies reflect societal priorities rather than political agendas.

Implement mechanisms for equitable distribution of welfare benefits to marginalized populations, particularly in urban centers such as Kuala Lumpur.

(4) **Strengthen Public Awareness and Civic Engagement**:

Launch public education campaigns to increase awareness about the consequences of political corruption on welfare systems.

Promote civic engagement initiatives, such as social audits and participatory budgeting, to enable citizens to hold policymakers accountable.

Suggestions for Future Research

While this review synthesizes existing knowledge on the interplay between political corruption and welfare policies, several research gaps remain. Future studies should focus on: (1) Evaluating the effectiveness of institutional reforms and anti-corruption initiatives in improving policy outcomes; (2) conducting empirical case studies to explore the specific mechanisms through which corruption distorts welfare systems in other developing nations for comparative insights; (3) assessing the role of digital tools, such as blockchain technology and e-governance platforms, in enhancing transparency and reducing corruption in welfare distribution; (4) investigating the long-term socio-economic impacts of corrupted welfare systems on vulnerable populations, particularly in post-pandemic recovery contexts.

Limitations of the Study

This study is not without limitations. Firstly, the literature reviewed primarily focuses on Malaysia, which may limit the generalizability of findings to other countries with different

political and institutional frameworks. Secondly, while the review draws on theoretical and empirical studies, the absence of primary data collection restricts the scope for in-depth contextual analysis. Lastly, the study does not comprehensively address emerging forms of corruption in digital governance and technology-driven welfare systems, which require further exploration.

Conclusion

In conclusion, political corruption remains a significant barrier to the effective formulation and implementation of social welfare policies in Malaysia. Addressing these challenges requires a multi-pronged approach that prioritizes institutional reform, transparency in political financing, and inclusive policy design. By implementing robust governance mechanisms and fostering civic engagement, policymakers can ensure that welfare systems fulfill their intended purpose of reducing inequalities and improving social well-being. Future research should aim to bridge existing gaps, offering practical strategies to combat corruption and enhance the integrity of welfare policies in politically sensitive environments.

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