

The Moral Degradation of Corruption Perpetrators from The Perspectives of Pancasila and Criminology

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Abstract

Corruption committed by public officials in Indonesia is inseparable from the problem of moral degradation and the erosion of individual integrity. This study aims to examine the deviant behavior of corrupt actors from a criminological perspective and to analyze the role of Pancasila as a moral foundation in preventing the formation of criminal intent (*mens rea*) in acts of corruption. This research employs a normative juridical method with a conceptual and philosophical approach, analyzing legal norms, doctrines, and ideological values. The findings reveal that corruption is best understood as a form of white-collar crime, which is not driven by economic necessity but rather by greed and opportunity, as explained in the gone theory. Such behavior is learned and shaped through social interaction within permissive environments, as outlined in the differential association theory. On the other hand, the values of Pancasila, through containment theory, offer an internal mechanism of moral control known as inner containment that theoretically inhibits deviant actions. However, the weak internalization of Pancasila among public officials contributes to their failure to uphold ethical responsibilities in governance. This study concludes that corruption should be viewed not only as a legal crime but also as an ideological violation against the philosophical foundation of the Indonesian state. Therefore, anti-corruption strategies must combine legal enforcement with moral reconstruction grounded in state ideology.

Keywords: *corruption, criminology, pancasila, public ethics*

Abstrak

Korupsi yang dilakukan oleh pejabat publik di Indonesia tidak dapat dilepaskan dari persoalan degradasi moral dan lemahnya integritas individu. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji perilaku menyimpang pelaku korupsi dari perspektif kriminologi serta menganalisis peran Pancasila sebagai benteng moral dalam mencegah terbentuknya niat jahat (mens rea) dalam tindakan korupsi. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode yuridis normatif dengan pendekatan konseptual dan filosofis terhadap norma, doktrin hukum, dan nilai-nilai ideologis. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perilaku korupsi dikategorikan sebagai kejahatan kerah putih (white-collar crime) yang tidak dilatarbelakangi oleh kebutuhan ekonomi, melainkan oleh faktor keserakahan dan peluang, sebagaimana dijelaskan dalam gone theory. Perilaku ini dipelajari dan dibentuk

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melalui interaksi sosial dalam lingkungan yang permisif terhadap korupsi, sesuai dengan penjelasan dalam differential association theory. Di sisi lain, nilai-nilai Pancasila melalui containment theory memberikan instrumen internal berupa pengendalian diri untuk mencegah penyimpangan moral. Namun, lemahnya penghayatan terhadap nilai-nilai Pancasila menyebabkan pejabat publik kehilangan kontrol moral dalam menjalankan amanahnya. Penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa korupsi bukan hanya kejahatan hukum, tetapi juga pelanggaran ideologis terhadap Pancasila. Oleh karena itu, upaya pemberantasan korupsi harus dilakukan melalui pendekatan hukum yang disertai pembinaan moral berbasis ideologi negara.

Kata kunci: etika publik, kriminologi, korupsi, pancasila

1. INTRODUCTION

Corruption in Indonesia is frequently perceived as a structurally embedded phenomenon, commonly associated with cultural and bureaucratic norms that have persisted over time. This perception, although widespread, is a reductive generalization that disregards the broader historical and global dimensions of corruption. Empirical evidence confirms that corruption is neither unique to Indonesia nor culturally inherent; rather, it is a transnational and transhistorical form of deviance that has manifested across various political systems and legal traditions.¹ Within the theoretical framework of criminal law, corruption represents a persistent challenge to normative legal order and the legitimacy of governance. Although the Indonesian legal system positions criminal sanctions as a last resort, the enforcement of Law No. 31 of 1999 in conjunction with Law No. 20 of 2001 has not demonstrated substantial deterrent effect, as corrupt practices remain pervasive. This enduring reality necessitates a broader analysis that transcends punitive formalism and incorporates interdisciplinary approaches, particularly those rooted in ethical, cultural, and criminological perspectives. Understanding corruption as both a legal and moral issue offers a more comprehensive foundation for reform.

The manifestation of corruption in daily life reveals an alarming erosion of public morality in Indonesia, evidenced by routine practices such as facilitation payments, administrative manipulation, rent-seeking behavior, and time-related misconduct. These

¹ Maisondra, *Semangat Aparatur Melawan Korupsi (Seri Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia Aparatur)* (Bandung: CV R Tujuh Mediaprinting, 2022).

forms of corruption reflect not only legal infractions but also deeply ingrained behavioral patterns that normalize unethical conduct within institutional frameworks. The metaphor of corruption as a terminal disease is apt, as it conveys the degree to which it has metastasized throughout the structure of the state, affecting the economic, judicial, defense, and political sectors.² Corruption undermines institutional effectiveness and impedes the realization of public goods, ultimately eroding public confidence in the rule of law and democratic governance.³ The Indonesian Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) characterizes corruption as an act of dishonesty and moral decay, involving the abuse of power for personal or group gain, in violation of ethical and legal responsibilities. As such, corruption should be addressed not merely through legal sanction but through ethical revitalization, institutional restructuring, and civic education. A multidisciplinary response is essential to confront the moral and structural dimensions of this persistent problem.⁴

The 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia outlines the fundamental objectives of the state: to protect the entire population and homeland, promote public welfare, develop national intelligence, and contribute to global peace. These constitutional imperatives are mutually reinforcing, and their realization depends on the integrity of state institutions and public morality. Corruption obstructs the achievement of these goals by distorting public administration, misallocating resources, and perpetuating social injustice. Although Indonesia's Corruption Perception Index (CPI) score improved modestly in 2024, rising from 34 to 37 out of 100, and elevating its rank from 115th to 99th out of 180 countries, such progress remains insufficient in addressing the systemic nature of the problem.⁵ Transparency International Indonesia has

² Rohma Nurunisa et al., "Implementasi Pancasila Terhadap Kasus Korupsi Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Kewarganegara Indonesia* 2, no. 4 (December 31, 2025): 172–80, <https://doi.org/10.61132/jupenkei.v2i4.886>.

³ Abelia Duta Simanjutak. Rahmadani Putri Erdiyanti Manurung, "Strategi Dalam Memberantas Tindak Pidana Korupsi Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Riset Ilmu Hukum, Sosial Dan Politik* 2, no. 2 (2025): 105–117., <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.62383/demokrasi.v2i2.877>.

⁴ Dwi Hastuti Sumaryati, Suyadi, *Pendidikan Antikorupsi Dalam Keluarga, Sekolah, Dan Masyarakat* (Yogyakarta: UAD Press, 2019).

⁵ Sumiadi, Laila M Rasyid, and Ikramsyah Irwali, "Corruption Crimes in Indonesia: A Comparative Study," *International Journal of Law, Social Science, and Humanities* 2, no. 1 (March 9, 2025): 171–80, <https://doi.org/10.70193/ijlsh.v2i1.224>.

emphasized the urgency of restoring institutional independence, strengthening governance in economic sectors, and reinforcing democratic and civil liberties. These recommendations highlight the necessity of integrating legal enforcement with ethical governance and civic participation. Therefore, corruption eradication must be conceived as a comprehensive reform agenda, grounded not only in law but also in ethical values and constitutional commitments.⁶

Pancasila, as the philosophical foundation and source of all legal norms in Indonesia, provides a moral framework that underpins the nation's legal and political systems. The five principles of Pancasila serve not merely as symbolic references but as substantive ethical directives meant to inform the conduct of individuals and institutions alike. As the nation's grundnorm, Pancasila demands the cultivation of justice, integrity, and social solidarity as guiding values in governance. However, the persistence of corruption suggests a significant disjunction between these normative ideals and practical realities within public administration. The widespread absence of shame and public accountability among corrupt actors reflects a broader deterioration of ethical consciousness and civic responsibility.⁷ To address this gap, the values of Pancasila must be internalized and operationalized within institutional practices, legal policy, and public ethics. Such integration is essential to restoring a legal culture that aligns with Indonesia's foundational philosophical identity.

Historically, the new order regime institutionalized corruption through elite collusion and legal impunity, embedding it into the structure of state governance. Despite the democratic reforms introduced during the post-reformasi period, corruption has not significantly declined; in many respects, it has evolved into more decentralized and sophisticated forms. This continuity indicates that democratization alone has not dismantled the social and institutional mechanisms that enable corrupt behavior.

⁶ Tinuk Dwi Cahyani and Nu'man Aunuh, "The Reconstruction of The Corruption Eradication System in The Perspective of The Criminal Law in Indonesia," *Aloha International Journal of Multidisciplinary Advancement (AIJMU)* 2, no. 2 (February 28, 2020): 29, <https://doi.org/10.33846/aijmu20202>.

⁷ Orin Gusta Andini, Nilasari Nilasari, and Andreas Avelino Eurian, "Restorative Justice in Indonesia Corruption Crime: A Utopia," *Legality: Jurnal Ilmiah Hukum* 31, no. 1 (April 13, 2023): 72–90, <https://doi.org/10.22219/ljih.v31i1.24247>.

Criminologically, corruption must be viewed not only as a legal offense but as a complex social pathology that intersects with power, class, and bureaucratic culture. While conventional criminology has predominantly focused on street-level crimes, the analysis of white-collar crime including corruption remains underexplored, particularly in developing contexts such as Indonesia. Expanding the criminological inquiry to include the motivations, justifications, and social reinforcements of corrupt behavior is critical to designing effective policy interventions.⁸ Criminology thus holds substantial relevance in explaining the dynamics of corruption and informing the development of empirically grounded criminal justice responses.

A number of recent studies have contributed to advancing the discourse on corruption in Indonesia by adopting interdisciplinary and empirically grounded approaches. Handrawan et al⁹ in 2024 explores the potential for restorative justice in corruption cases, particularly when traditional punitive measures may not produce proportional or rehabilitative outcomes. These studies highlight the importance of integrating legal, educational, and philosophical perspectives in constructing a more coherent and sustainable anti-corruption framework. Akmal¹⁰ in 2025 underscores the gap between legal substance and enforcement, arguing that overly formalistic interpretations of anti-corruption statutes limit their practical deterrent value. Teki et al¹¹ in 2025 emphasize the role of Pancasila-based education in fostering ethical awareness among younger generations, proposing it as a long-term preventive strategy. However, existing literature has yet to comprehensively address the intersection between moral

⁸ Nurwinardi Nurwinardi, Pujiyono Suwadi, and Hartiwiningsih Hartiwiningsih, "Eliminating Corruption Through A Criminological Perspective On Corruption Crime Strategies," 2024, 115–23, https://doi.org/10.2991/978-2-38476-218-7_18.

⁹ Handrawan Handrawan et al., "Rekonstruksi Restoratif Justice Dalam Pemberantasan Korupsi: Membangun Keadilan Menuju Indonesia Emas 2045," *Jurnal Hukum IUS QUIA IUSTUM* 32, no. 2 (September 20, 2025): 475–504, <https://doi.org/10.20885/iustum.vol32.iss2.art9>.

¹⁰ Diya Ul Akmal, "Penataan Peraturan Perundang-Undangan Sebagai Upaya Penguatan Sistem Hukum Di Indonesia," *Jurnal Legislasi Indonesia* 18, No. 3 (September 30, 2021): 296–308, <https://doi.org/10.54629/Jli.V18i3.761>.

¹¹ Yuli Kurniasih. Teki Prasetyo Sulaksono, Kokom Komalasari, Prayoga Bestari, "Fostering The Young Generation Based On Pancasila Values To Strengthen The Nation's Character.," *SOSIOEDUKASI: Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan Dan Sosial* 14, no. 4 (2026): 4764–4770, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.36526/sosioedukasi.v14i4.7072>.

degradation, criminological theory, and the ethical philosophy embodied in Pancasila. This lacuna offers a critical space for scholarly inquiry into the ethical deficits within institutional culture and the normative foundations of anti-corruption policy.

This study is designed to provide a systematic and interdisciplinary examination of the moral deterioration exhibited by corruption offenders in Indonesia, analyzed through the dual frameworks of criminological theory and Pancasila philosophy. It seeks to conceptualize corruption not only as a legal infraction but as a moral failure shaped by socio-political structures and cultural permissiveness. By exploring how criminological perspectives interpret white-collar crime and how Pancasila provides ethical guidance within public service, the research aims to construct a theoretical and normative foundation for more effective anti-corruption policies. The study emphasizes the integration of empirical criminological analysis with normative legal and philosophical reasoning to produce a comprehensive understanding of corruption as a deviant practice. Through this approach, the research aspires to inform future legal reforms and policy strategies that align with Indonesia's constitutional values and national identity. The findings are expected to contribute both to academic discourse and to the practical development of criminal policy and public ethics in Indonesia. Ultimately, the study advocates for a culturally embedded, ethically grounded, and empirically informed framework to support systemic anti-corruption efforts.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a normative legal research methodology, which is primarily concerned with the analysis of legal norms, principles, doctrines, and statutory regulations. Normative legal research, often referred to as doctrinal or library-based research, focuses on secondary data derived from legal literature, legislation, judicial decisions, and scholarly writings. According to Soerjono Soekanto and Sri Mamudji¹², normative legal research is defined as "legal research conducted by examining library materials," distinguishing it from empirical legal research that relies on primary data

¹² Soerjono Soekanto dan Sri Mamudji., *Penelitian Hukum Normatif: Suatu Tinjauan Singkat* (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2013).

derived from field studies or observations. The essence of this approach lies in the systematic identification, classification, and evaluation of legal norms relevant to the research problem.¹³ It allows the researcher to explore the internal logic, consistency, and normative coherence of the legal system, particularly in relation to the philosophical and criminological dimensions of corruption. Through the analysis of legal texts and doctrines, this method aims to construct legal arguments, assess normative gaps, and propose refined interpretations or reformulations of existing legal provisions.

The normative legal method is applied to examine the phenomenon of corruption through the integrated lens of Pancasila values and criminological theory. Legal materials, including statutory regulations such as Law No. 31 of 1999 and Law No. 20 of 2001 on the Eradication of Corruption, constitutional texts, jurisprudence, and scholarly commentaries, serve as the primary sources of analysis. In addition, secondary sources such as legal journals, books, and previous research are utilized to enrich the analytical framework and support the doctrinal and theoretical positioning of the study. The integration of normative legal analysis with philosophical reflection is essential for exploring how the moral degradation of corruption offenders relates to both the normative structure of the law and the ethical ideals enshrined in Pancasila. Accordingly, this method enables a structured examination of the legal and moral dimensions of corruption as a form of normative deviance in Indonesia.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Criminological Perspectives on the Deviant Behavior of Corruptors

Corruption, when examined through a criminological framework, reveals itself as a manifestation of deviant behavior and moral decline among individuals entrusted with authority. This form of deviance is particularly complex because it is often committed by those in positions of social, political, and economic power. The perpetrators are not driven by economic survival but by ambition, greed, and opportunity, facilitated by systemic weaknesses. Within Indonesian institutions, corruption frequently becomes a calculated

¹³ Jonaedi Efendi & Johnny Ibrahim, *Metode Penelitian Hukum Normatif & Empiris*, vol. 1, cet. 2 (Jakarta: Kencana, 2016).

act embedded in bureaucratic routines.¹⁴ Criminology provides conceptual tools for understanding how this behavior emerges and becomes institutionalized. The explanation of corruption must extend beyond legal infractions to consider the sociocultural and normative dimensions of misconduct. A comprehensive criminological approach is necessary to analyze how individuals deviate from moral expectations in environments that reward unethical conduct.¹⁵

The classical school of criminology, which emphasized biological or psychological deficiencies, is insufficient in explaining the actions of white-collar offenders. Cesare Lombroso's theory of the "born criminal" characterized deviance through physical traits and hereditary factors.¹⁶ However, corrupt behavior in modern governance often originates from rational decisions made by cognitively capable individuals in strategic positions. These individuals exploit legal ambiguities, administrative discretion, and hierarchical influence for personal or collective gain. Rather than arising from inherent criminal tendencies, such behavior stems from social learning, structural vulnerabilities, and moral disengagement.¹⁷ The criminological lens must therefore shift focus from individual abnormality to institutional deviance. A deeper inquiry into cultural permissiveness and the rationalization of unethical acts becomes central to understanding the roots of corruption.

White-collar crime theory, introduced by Edwin H. Sutherland, is essential for comprehending the unique characteristics of corruption as a high-status offense. Sutherland redefined crime by including acts committed by individuals of respectability in the course of their occupation. His theory challenged the traditional association of crime with poverty and emphasized that the socially privileged are equally capable of serious violations. Many of these crimes cause greater harm than street-level offenses, yet

¹⁴ Nursya A, *Beberapa Bentuk Perbuatan Pelaku Berkaitan Dengan Tindak Pidana Korupsi* (Jakarta: CV Alungadan Mandiri, 2020).

¹⁵ Dewi Setyowati Dewi Setyowati and Sisca Muji Rahayu, "Aspek Kriminologi Tindak Pidana Korupsi," *Perspektif Hukum*, November 11, 2021, 74–90, <https://doi.org/10.30649/ph.v21i2.104>.

¹⁶ Topo Santoso, *Kriminologi Suatu Pengantar* (Depok: Rajawali Pers, 2025).

¹⁷ Hudi Yusuf Ginanjar, "Tindak Kejahatan Korupsi White Collar Crime Menjadi Trend Dikalangan Pejabat Negara Studi Kasus : Korupsi Bansos Covid-19," *Jurnal Intelek Insan Cendekia* 2, no. 7 (2025): 13889–98.

they are often treated with administrative leniency. This disparity in response reflects societal biases and institutional complicity.¹⁸ Legal systems may distinguish between forms of crime not based on their consequences but on the social standing of the perpetrators. Criminological analysis must therefore question the unequal enforcement of law and the invisibility of elite deviance in public discourse.

The moral degradation of corruption offenders becomes evident through the lens of differential association theory. According to Sutherland, deviant behavior is learned through interaction with individuals who hold favorable attitudes toward crime. In political and bureaucratic institutions, newcomers may be exposed to normalized forms of bribery, favoritism, and abuse of power. These behaviors are often internalized as mechanisms for survival, success, or loyalty. Ethical standards are replaced by pragmatic rationalizations, and compliance with formal rules is seen as naive or obstructive.¹⁹ When institutional culture tolerates or rewards such practices, moral resistance erodes over time. The learning process involves not only the techniques of corruption but also the ideological justifications that neutralize guilt. Criminology reveals how systemic exposure to deviance leads to a gradual but consistent decline in personal and collective morality.

The gone theory, developed by Jack Bologna, further elaborates the factors that contribute to fraudulent behavior. Greed, as a psychological driver, reflects the desire for more than what is morally or legally acceptable. Opportunity arises when systems lack adequate controls, transparency, or accountability, thereby facilitating unethical decisions. Need may manifest in subtle ways, such as lifestyle pressures or institutional expectations that encourage consumption and accumulation. Exposure, or the lack thereof, refers to the low probability of being caught or sanctioned in permissive environments. These four factors interact dynamically, creating conditions where

¹⁸ Petter Gottschalk, "Convenience in White-Collar Crime: A Case Study of Corruption among Friends in Norway," *Criminal Justice Studies* 33, no. 4 (October 1, 2020): 413–24, <https://doi.org/10.1080/1478601X.2020.1723084>.

¹⁹ Muh Fadli Faisal Rasyid, "White-Collar Crime Prevention Through Corporate Governance Mechanisms: Evidence from Emerging Markets," *Proceeding of the International Conference on Law and Human Rights* 2, no. 1 (June 30, 2025): 19–35, <https://doi.org/10.62383/iclehr.v2i1.49>.

deviance is not only possible but often profitable.²⁰ In Indonesia, the presence of weak enforcement mechanisms and informal patronage systems amplifies these risks. Criminological perspectives help explain why rational actors persist in corrupt behavior despite legal prohibitions.

The normalization of corruption reflects not only individual moral failure but also organizational complicity and structural inertia. Public office, ideally a position of trust, is frequently viewed as an asset to be exploited rather than a responsibility to be upheld. Institutional cultures often prioritize loyalty, efficiency, or political survival over integrity and public service. When corrupt practices become embedded in routines, ethical values lose their normative force. Individuals justify misconduct as necessary, expected, or even virtuous within the internal logic of the institution.²¹ Legal frameworks become symbolic, lacking the authority to challenge ingrained behaviors and collective rationalizations. Criminological inquiry focuses on how such cultures are formed, transmitted, and sustained over time. Only through institutional reform can the cycle of moral degradation be disrupted.

The systemic nature of moral decline among public officials in Indonesia is evidenced by the recurrence of corruption scandals. Despite the establishment of anti-corruption bodies and stricter laws, the recurrence of high-profile cases indicates that legal deterrence remains insufficient. Officials who are convicted often re-enter public life or maintain social influence, further weakening the deterrent effect. Within such environments, corruption is not merely a risk but a rational career strategy. This reality reflects a deeper moral crisis, where public interest is subordinated to personal gain without significant social or legal consequences.²² Criminology allows researchers to

²⁰ Jaka Isgiyata, Indayani Indayani, and Eko Budiyni, "Studi Tentang Teori GONE Dan Pengaruhnya Terhadap Fraud Dengan Idealisme Pimpinan Sebagai Variabel Moderasi: Studi Pada Pengadaan Barang/Jasa Di Pemerintahan," *Jurnal Dinamika Akuntansi Dan Bisnis* 5, no. 1 (January 4, 2018): 31–42, <https://doi.org/10.24815/jdab.v5i1.8253>.

²¹ Kiki Kristanto, "Embezzlement in the Private Sector: Legal Challenges and Regulatory Gaps in Corporate Governance," *IJCLS (Indonesian Journal of Criminal Law Studies)* 10, no. 2 (November 1, 2025), <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijcls.v10i2.24881>.

²² Hermanto, Rhogust, M., Endah Lestari, M., Bahri, S., "A Criminological Study of Social and Economic Factors in Corruption Crimes.," *Journal of Management*, 1, no. 1 (2022): 90–103., <https://doi.org/10.1016/jsags.2023.02.005>.

connect these outcomes to underlying institutional and cultural dynamics. Addressing corruption, therefore, requires a broader transformation that includes ethical leadership, value-driven policy, and civic participation.

Moral degradation among corruptors represents a convergence of personal ambition, institutional opportunity, and normative collapse. The failure is not only legal but also ethical, reflecting the erosion of civic responsibility and the weakening of public morality. Criminological theories help uncover how such deviance is socially produced, rationally justified, and culturally tolerated. Punitive measures alone are unlikely to produce sustainable change in the absence of moral reconstruction. Reform strategies must involve not only legal innovation but also educational and ethical interventions. Institutions must cultivate environments where integrity is expected, rewarded, and protected. Without addressing the underlying moral deficit, efforts to eradicate corruption will remain incomplete.

3.2. Pancasila as a Bastion of Morality to Prevent the Evil Intent (Mens Rea) of Public Officials in Indonesia

Indonesia's 1945 Constitution articulates the state's duty to protect all its citizens, promote general welfare, foster intellectual advancement, and contribute to a global order grounded in justice and peace. These constitutional mandates are inseparable from a broader moral imperative, which is deeply rooted in Pancasila as the philosophical foundation of the Indonesian state. Upholding these values requires more than administrative compliance; it demands ethical commitment from all state actors.²³ Corruption, which continues to plague the public sector, represents not only a legal violation but also a profound moral failure. Addressing this issue necessitates the revival of Pancasila as a living ethical framework rather than a symbolic state ideology. Through moral education and character formation grounded in Pancasila, public officials may be

²³ Andre Setyo Nugroho, "Pancasila as a Source of Law in Enforcing Corruption in Indonesia," *Indonesian Journal of Pancasila and Global Constitutionalism* 2, no. 1 (January 26, 2023): 103–38, <https://doi.org/10.15294/ijpgc.v2i1.59806>.

guided toward integrity and public accountability. Moral reorientation, therefore, must become a central strategy in Indonesia's anti-corruption agenda.²⁴

The etymology of Pancasila derives from the Sanskrit words *panca*, meaning five, and *sila*, meaning principles. These five values were introduced by Soekarno on June 1, 1945, during the BPUPKI session. The principles, belief in God, just and civilized humanity, national unity, democracy through deliberation, and social justice, serve not only as the foundation of the Indonesian state but also as a comprehensive moral system. However, the persistence of corrupt practices indicates that these values have not been sufficiently internalized by those entrusted with public office. Pancasila should not merely serve as a theoretical or ceremonial reference, it must function as a practical ethical guide that shapes decision-making and behavior. Embedding these principles within public institutions is essential to rebuilding ethical governance. Without such moral grounding, legal instruments alone will remain inadequate.

A criminological lens provided by Walter Reckless's containment theory offers valuable insight into the role of moral restraint in preventing deviant behavior. According to this theory, individuals with strong internal controls, such as conscience and self-discipline, are less likely to engage in criminal activity. In the Indonesian context, Pancasila has the potential to function as a mechanism of inner containment that counters both systemic pressures and personal temptations.²⁵ Internalized national values reinforce ethical resilience and reduce the likelihood of forming criminal intent. Rather than relying exclusively on external sanctions, this approach emphasizes the proactive development of personal moral standards. A consistent decline in ethical behavior is more often the result of eroded internal values than of sudden impulsive decisions. Consequently, strengthening moral character must be treated as an essential component of anti-corruption efforts.

²⁴ Ruhadi, "Corruption Prevention Strategy in Indonesia through Strengthening Character Education of Pancasila Ethics," *Semarang State University Undergraduate Law and Society Review* 5, no. 2 (2025): 1734-55., <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.15294/lsr.v5i2.31711>.

²⁵ Muhammad Falahudi Ramadhan, "Analisis Containment Theory Terhadap Fenomena Perjudian Sabung Ayam Di Wilayah Ciputat Kota Tangerang Selatan," *IKRAITH-HUMANIORA* 8, no. 2 (2024): 398-410, <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37817/ikraith-humaniora.v8i2>.

Belief in the one and only God, the first principle of Pancasila, establishes a spiritual and ethical foundation that transcends institutional accountability. This value fosters humility, reverence, and an awareness of moral responsibility beyond legal obligation. Public officials who internalize this belief are more likely to view power as a trust to be fulfilled rather than as an opportunity for personal gain. In this sense, ethical decision-making is guided not only by state authority but also by the conviction that actions are accountable before a higher power.²⁶ The presence of spiritual accountability reinforces self-discipline and reduces the appeal of corrupt practices. Where legal mechanisms falter, moral awareness can serve as a powerful deterrent. Integrating this principle into public service training enhances the ethical orientation of governance.

The second principle, just and civilized humanity, emphasizes fairness, respect for human dignity, and justice in all public affairs. Ethical governance requires a commitment to inclusivity and equal treatment for all citizens, particularly those most vulnerable to the effects of corruption. Violations of this principle result in a degradation of public trust and an erosion of state legitimacy. Officials who uphold this value recognize that their responsibilities extend beyond administrative efficiency to include the moral obligation of ensuring equitable outcomes. Promoting this principle involves fostering empathy, institutional compassion, and a culture of service.²⁷ These elements are critical for transforming public institutions into vehicles for social justice. Embedding human dignity into governance frameworks directly counters the individualistic mindset that fuels corrupt behavior.

National unity and democracy through deliberation, as the third and fourth principles, stress the importance of inclusive governance and shared responsibility in decision-making. Corruption threatens national unity by generating disparities, weakening solidarity, and damaging public confidence in government institutions. It also distorts democratic processes when decisions are made through favoritism or coercion

²⁶ Kusuma Adi Rahardjo, *Simbol, Nilai Dan Implementasi Pancasila, Dalam Antologi PANCASILA: Kontekstualisasi, Rasionalisasi, Dan Aktualisasi* (Malang: Future Science, 2024).

²⁷ Ashfiya Nur Atqiya et al., "Peran Pancasila Dalam Pencegahan Dan Pemberantasan Korupsi : Perspektif Hukum Tata Negara," *Desentralisasi : Jurnal Hukum, Kebijakan Publik, Dan Pemerintahan* 1, no. 4 (November 20, 2024): 228–39, <https://doi.org/10.62383/desentralisasi.v1i4.306>.

rather than informed and inclusive dialogue. Officials guided by these principles are more likely to prioritize participatory leadership and transparent governance. Strengthening deliberative democracy contributes to institutional accountability and long-term social cohesion. A values-based leadership culture fosters consistency in ethical standards and public expectations.²⁸ These principles, when operationalized, help prevent corruption by embedding moral checks within institutional structures.

Social justice for all Indonesians, as the fifth principle, calls for equitable access to resources, services, and opportunities across all sectors of society. Corruption obstructs this goal by diverting public funds and weakening essential services intended to support disadvantaged groups. Upholding social justice requires that public officials actively oppose discriminatory policies, resist self-serving interests, and champion equality in resource distribution. Institutionalizing this value enhances the responsiveness of government programs and reduces vulnerability to exploitation. Leaders who internalize this principle serve the broader public interest rather than narrow group agendas.²⁹ Prioritizing justice ensures the legitimacy of policy outcomes and reinforces ethical behavior across administrative systems.

A comprehensive internalization of Pancasila's values provides an ethical foundation that effectively inhibits the formation of *mens rea* among public officials. Legal deterrence remains necessary; however, it cannot function optimally in the absence of deeply rooted moral awareness. Ethical behavior is more likely to emerge when public servants are guided not only by fear of legal consequences but also by a profound sense of spiritual responsibility and personal integrity. Institutions responsible for education, recruitment, and leadership development must incorporate Pancasila's philosophical principles as essential criteria for evaluating character and suitability for public office. Ethical governance cannot be built on technical competence alone; it must be grounded in civic virtue and moral integrity. Reinvigorating Pancasila as a practical ethical doctrine,

²⁸ Catleya Azka Aninda, "Pancasila Values in the Study of Corruption Cases in Indonesia," *Jurnal Scientia Indonesia* 3, no. 1 (April 30, 2017): 35–46, <https://doi.org/10.15294/jsi.v3i1.36013>.

²⁹ Sukron Mazid et al., "Professional Ethics and the Exemplary Behavior of Public Figures: A Literature Review from a Pancasila Perspective," *Pancasila: Jurnal Keindonesiaan* 5, no. 2 (October 1, 2025): 166–81, <https://doi.org/10.52738/pjk.v5i2.839>.

rather than preserving it as a symbolic or ceremonial ideal, is imperative for strengthening institutional legitimacy and public trust. In this regard, Pancasila stands not only as the philosophical foundation of the state but also as a strategic moral bulwark against systemic corruption.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

This study concludes that the deviant behavior of corruption offenders in Indonesia is best understood as a form of learned white-collar crime, shaped by systemic exposure and normalized within institutional environments. Drawing on sutherland's differential association theory and bologne's gone framework, the findings reveal that greed and opportunity are dominant motivating factors, rather than economic necessity. Furthermore, the failure to resist corrupt acts reflects a breakdown in internal moral control, as outlined in reckless's containment theory, indicating a weak Inner Containment among public officials. From the perspective of Pancasila, corruption constitutes an ideological transgression that contradicts each of its five foundational principles, thereby undermining the moral and constitutional identity of the state. Addressing corruption, therefore, requires not only legal deterrence but also a philosophical reorientation toward ethical governance, wherein the internalization of Pancasila values becomes a primary defense mechanism against the formation of criminal intent (*mens rea*).

Preventing corruption requires not only legal enforcement but also the institutionalization of moral integrity grounded in Pancasila values. Recruitment systems in the public sector must prioritize ethical competence through integrity screening and value-based assessments. Ethical education and leadership training should internalize Pancasila as a living moral doctrine applied consistently in governance practices. Sanctions must evolve to include restorative and symbolic penalties that emphasize personal accountability and societal impact. Collaboration across educational institutions, religious communities, and state bodies is essential to cultivate a national culture that views corruption as a fundamental violation of public trust and national philosophy.

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