A Network Perspective and Hidden Corruption

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Abstract

This study examines the hidden aspects of corruption from a network perspective. Through networking, we understand the nature and functioning of hidden corruption, because hidden corruption relates to various acts of corruption that are difficult to observe and prosecute legally. The dimensions to understand hidden corruption are structural and institutional corruption, distorted network, and grey corruption. Different types of illegal, criminal, or unethical networks are understood through two dimensions (structural and institutional corruption and distorted network) of hidden corruption. Grey corruption is another dimension of hidden corruption, but has no defined network existence. The main types of hidden, unethical and criminal networks that exist around the world are greed-oriented institutional network, old-boy network, and clandestine network. Emphases on digital expertise and reforms targeting attitudinal, cultural, legal, and institutional changes have been identified as ways of addressing the phenomenon of hidden corruption from a contemporary standpoint, because of emerging events/realities.

Keywords: network theory, hidden corruption, structural and institutional corruption, distorted network, grey corruption, greed-oriented institutional network, old-boy network, and clandestine network

1. Introduction

Corruption as a phenomenon has been widely studied in many disciplines. The idea to study corruption could be informed by different motives; but central to all is preventing all forms of exploitation in different aspects of human existence. As a phenomenon, corruption is social, economic, political and cultural. The fear of corruption is the beginning of wisdom for a clean and open system or administration. Corruption emanated from a biological metaphor: "corruption of organism," which shows that things are not healthy (English, 2013, p. 7). Corruption is part of every culture. According to Hyyryläinen (2010, p. 7), corruption exists

in both public and private lives and found in all cultures. From the perspective of Mulinge and Lesetedi (2002, p. 51), corruption as a problem is both endemic and universal that affects all world nations, but in varying levels and types. Corruption studies over the year have revealed different typologies, classifications, causes, and effects. The common types of corruption identified over the years include grand corruption; petty corruption; individual corruption; systemic corruption; and moral corruption. The classifications of corruption include high corruption vs low corruption; public sector vs private sector corruption; administrative corruption vs political corruption; and nonfunctional vs functional corruption. The causes and effects of corruption have been analyzed from social, economic, cultural and political perspectives.

However, corruption studies/researches over the years have failed to present a suitable framework in understanding the visible or invisible patterns and functioning. Figure 1 is a presentation of corruption in a visible and hidden demarcation:
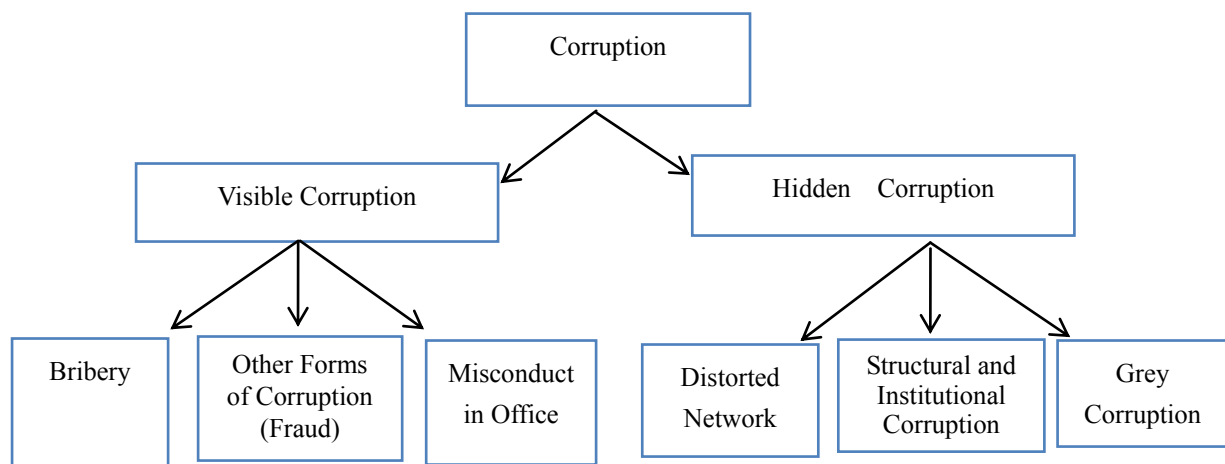

Figure 1. Corruption in its visible and hidden forms (Author)

Visible corruption relates to open or clear acts of integrity and legal violations. There are no clear dimensions to measure visible corruption (Gorta, 2016), but understood through its various manifestations. The key manifestations of visible corruption are related to the issues of bribery, misconduct, fraud etc. Bribery is an act that is defined by reciprocity (Rose-Ackerman, 1999, p. 92); it is unethical/illegal offering of money or other resources in order to obtain a returned benefit or favor. Fraud represents act of stealing/theft and betrayal of trust. Misconduct represents different acts of integrity violations such as abuse of office/position and mismanagement. According to Zimring and Johnson (2005), visible corruption is more often related with more primitive levels of economic and political development.

Hidden corruption is different from visible corruption, though the former helps the later to flourish, exist, or manifest. Corruption in its hidden form is a pattern of classifying every dimension (structural and institutional corruption; distorted network corruption and activities; and grey corruption) of corruption that is not visible. According to Caiden (2003, p. 2),

corruption that is antithesis of morality thrives in darkness and complexity. We discuss hidden corruption, because it is "network collision" that involves numerous organizations, departments, and people (OECD, 1995; Osifo, 2012). Hidden corruption is network embedded and to properly understand and study hidden corruption the network framework is imperative. In this regard, networking becomes one crucial model that helps in exploring the nature, activities, and solutions to hidden corruption from a contemporary standpoint. The network theory informs a good framework to study the nature of networks in order to have a deeper insight and understanding of network activities. The network theory helps to clarify in description and relevance the elements of relationship, reciprocity, influence, and loyalty.

This article tries contributing to a contemporary study of the concept of corruption by focusing on the hidden aspects and how the networking perspective could help in understanding the nature and functioning of elements and groups/institutions associated with hidden corruption. The article is divided into six different sections. In the first section, an introductory presentation is executed, here the concept of corruption and its clear demarcation (between visible and hidden) are described; in addition, is how networking is related to hidden aspect of corruption. The second section is dedicated to the review of network theory. The third section examines the occurrence and dimensions of the hidden aspect of corruption. The fourth section looks at the nature of criminal, illegal and unethical networks from a network theory perspective. The fifth section focuses on the contemporary ideas and activities of hidden networks and modern strategies for fighting network activities; in addition, is the international comparative outlook of nature and functioning of hidden networks in some selected countries. In the concluding or sixth section, the general arguments on hidden corruption and networking are reconciled.

2. The Network Theory Revisited

Tensions, competition and cooperation are natural to man and groups (Tidström, 2014, p. 261). Networking and collaborations are key issues of discussion in social science discourses. The importance of collaborative networks has become more visible in contemporary social and management studies. A considerable part of research on social networks goes with ideas, behaviors, and trends relating to interrelationships. Most parts of intra and inter relationships are studied and understood through network theory, because bilateral exchange is often embedded in networks. (Di Cagno & Scuibba, 2010; Casssar & Rigdon, 2011; Tzoumas, Amanatidis & Markakis, 2012.) According to Osifo (2013), trustworthiness and conflict are other essentials we can learn through the network theory. From the perspective of one of the most notable scholars in the area of network studies Granvovetter (1973: 1360), it is a fact that the level of overlap of two individuals' relationship networks changes directly with the strength of the tie to each other.

Network theory offers a holistic view on structures of interpersonal and inter-group interactions. It is common to observe how structural analysts adopt unique patterns in their studies; in this regard are the formalists and structuralists experts. The formalists focus on the form rather than the substances of a network, because they are of the opinion that uniform shapes of relationship may have uniform behavioral outcomes when separated from the

substantive context. On the other hand, the structuralists focus on the substantive questions relating to both the pattern and the type of links between the nodes. Understanding network centrality variations gives a clearer overview about the ability to coordinate, because centrality is a structural attribute of nodes in a network. The difference between formal and informal sources of influence is that informal power emanates from an actor's position in communication patterns and interaction, while formal sources are defined by position in the organizational hierarchy. (Lehtmäki, 1996; Gelfand, Beng -Chong, & Raver, 2004; Hossain & Wu, 2009.)

In criminology, political science, and public management, network ideas are popularly regarded as a vehicle for tackling and understanding more challenging or complex societal issues. In this regard, "networks trust" is the main point of focus, because it helps to understand the important condition that enhances information exchange and learning among actors, which also helps in improving network performance. Research findings have shown positive relationships between the level of trust and network performance. In addition, empirical findings have also shown that the number of network management strategies has a positive relationship with both network performance and trust from one perspective and the level of trust and output legitimacy from another perspective. Many experts are of the view that trust stimulates exchange of information and knowledge in the areas of governance and business. (Klijn, Sierra, Ysa, Berman, Edelenbos, & Chen, 2016: p. 1-6.)

The social network idea, which falls under the broader network theory helps to reveal the nature and modes of social exchange and interactions. According to Shaw (2009, p. 21 & 26), the social learning process is complementary to the social narrative process that depicts social realities amidst complexities and ineffectiveness. Social networks are often described via a critical analysis of the patterns of social networks as well as an analysis of positional and cohesive structures within the networks; social network gives a better understanding to organizational behavior (Krackhardt & Hanson, 1993; Lehtimäki, 1996). According Eng (2006), experts in the field of Supply Chain Management (SCM) for example, have shown that a key avenue of cost savings and improved service performance in the supply link is via increased collaboration and integration among supply chain participants.

The social exchange idea shows that the effects of networking properties on cronyism can be analyzed by identifying two types of network, which are "clique and entrepreneurial". In addition, it is possible to discover the forms of competition (inter and intra) and most importantly, network competition enhances the chances of cronyism and also the effect of competition on cronyism is moderated by network. Social network idea is key to understand cronyism, because it offers insight into accessibility of information, mutual support, cooperation, and trust; cronyism is culture specific, because culture sometimes create conditions for cronyism to exist (Begley, Khatri, & Tsang, 2010, p. 281-282; Light, 2013, p. 6).

3. The Hidden Corruption Focus

Many recent global events have brought the hidden unethical, illegal and criminal activities of various networks around the world into spotlight. The findings by a law firm (Mossack

Fonseca) in Panama show how rich, powerful, and connected individuals perpetuate different acts of hidden corruption in assets ownership by setting up secrete offshore companies and accounts to hide billions of dollars. The hidden network includes political, global, and business leaders from Russia and other European countries, Africa, Americas, Asia, Australia, and Middle East. Main aim of members in this network is to avoid tax payments in their original countries of residence (Mullen, 2016). According to Transparency International (2017), Cayman Islands is another money laundering destination; the tax haven has become a favorable location for various forms of hidden global networks which engage in corruption and tax evasion; this to a great extent deprive citizens around the world of much-needed public services while at the same time undermining institutions and democracy. Developing countries alone suffer an estimated deficit of US$1 trillion each year to illicit financial flows. In addition, many criminal and terrorist organizations have committed unspeakable horrors against women, children and the weak people in many countries.

The act of corruption is mainly the violation of ethical and legal norms. The hidden enhancers of corruption can make corruption to become very pronounced and visible, because they feed corruption from different perspectives (Rose-Ackerman, 1999). According to the Ministry of Justice (2009, p. 1), corruption has a strong hidden perspective. The gravity of damages that follow visible corruption helps to reveal, understand, and combat the hidden aspects of corruption. (Della Porta & Vannucci, 2012, p. 1-2.) Technically, visible corruption exists because of hidden corruption.

Corruption in its hidden form cut across different aspects (administrative corruption, political corruption, business corruption, and economic corruption). Administrative corruption is prevalent in the public service and it is related to different unethical actions and behaviours exhibited by public servants during the formulation and execution of public services (Khan, 1989). Political corruption according to Scott (1972) has to do with the abuse of power to offer undue benefit and favour to political associates, supporters, friends, and family member; in addition is election-connected corruption such as rigging and political party manipulations. Hidden corruption in the business sector is often influenced by multiple networks that act or help to avoid taxes, launder money and promote exploitative strategies (Ogrean, 2007).

Hidden corruption existing in both administrative and political forms is highly reflected in the Watergate scandal of 1972. The Watergate scandal in America was a clear manifestation of hidden decay in social, economic, moral, and technical aspects of the society, because most of the perpetrators and directors of Watergate misdeeds were reputedly honest and upright persons before they entered the political campaign or the administration. Most of the misdeeds are connected directly or indirectly to the subject of ethics in the public service. The former United States President (Richard Nixon) who was the main actor in the Watergate scandal and others in his administration defended most of their actions on the justification that previous administrations have committed worse violations. (Mosher, 1974, p. 343–348.)

Delay in meeting up with hidden corruption agreements such as a promised bribe often lead to other broader societal ills like terrorism and kidnapping in many countries. Hidden corruption is not common in some countries and while it is key part of public administration

and other societal structure in many other countries. Corruption in both visible and invisible forms today in most societies is sanctioned, because a wide range of regulatory mechanisms and administrative structures for corrupt exchange are springing up voluntarily or spontaneously. This in comparison to the anomic reality of the Hobbesian state of nature where all round mistrust and inability to make predictions were the order of day, we could say a tremendous amount of progress has been made. However, regulatory mechanisms and other societal structures create informal institutional limitations and resources that could assist actors of corruption to become more sophisticated or hardened. This becomes one of the backgrounds that influence researchers to examine the hidden order of corruption by researching the codes and mechanisms that govern and stabilize the relationships between corrupters and corruptees; in addition, are factors that help in increasing the resources (authority, economic, information, relations and many others) available to them, which enhance the dark side of power.   (Della Porta and Vannucci, 2012, p. 2.)

Hidden corruption is recognizable through the dominance of irregularities, excessive rent seeking and unhealthy network. Understanding exchanges that go on in a corrupt network is adopting institutional approach that helps to understand the hidden order in an internal governance that allows actors to accept the risk of illegal deals, trust each other, and develop and enforce invisible codes, norms, and reciprocity of rules Hidden corruption network in the public realm is made up of relative flow of money and resources between client and official. Hidden corruption exchange is sustained by the money (bribe) and other private resources that flow from the client (briber) to the public agent, who in return creates discretionary decisions and information, which can guarantee a rent within a principal-agent model of public corruption. Hidden order of corruption turns public power to become hidden and unaccountable, which is never healthy for democracy in every aspect. (Della Porta and Vannucci, 2012, p. 3-5.)

3.1 Dimensions of Hidden Corruption

We talk about hidden corruption mainly conceptually, but the manifestations in real life situations, events, and experience are related to various acts of corruption, which are difficult to observe and prosecute legally. Hidden corruption is understood from the dimensions of structural and institutional corruption; distorted network; and grey corruption.

3.1.1 Structural and Institutional Corruption

Hidden corruption is similar and synonymous with structural and institutional corruption in many perspectives (Thompson, 1995). We study institutional corruption in order to know the individual conduct in structural conditions in a particular social system. According to Light (2013, p. 3), institutional corruption signifies legal, systemic, and structural forms of corruption, which culprits do not see or interpret as corruption. One aspect that differentiates structural corruption and systemic corruption in the public realm perspective, is that the former goes with reputation, informal norms of reciprocity and conditional cooperation, menace of exit from the deal, while the latter is identified with third-party enforcement of informal norms, hierarchical subdivision of responsibilities within corruption networks partially overlapping with organizational tasks (Della Porta & Vannucci, 2012, p. 39).

Thompson (1995, p. 369) has seen institutional corruption as a representation or situation where external influences are placed on institutions for the aim of promoting defined political and economic gains for a specific group that in returns weaken institutions and betray public trust. According to Light (2013, p. 5), a dependence approach to institutional corruption will reveal the size and limit of the institutional dependence; the responses of the dependent trapped within this structure; and the actions of financiers. The linkage of structural corruption to hidden corruption is justified by the fact that different social structures allow hidden corruption to exist at differentiated levels; while some social structures allow hidden corruption to flourish, others fight and control its existence and excesses. Structural corruption is a "situation" rather than an "act" (Kingston, 2008).

International evaluations and findings shows that structural corruption is dominant in the area of business where the line between the market/enterprise and the state is not clear and is not even properly regulated, because distinctions between what is public and what is private are obscure. In the similar manner, regulations invite economic agents to find new ways, including bribing public officials in order to gain all round advantage/benefit. (Pďajeva, 2011, p. 576.) Another key area that structural and institutional corruption is common is electoral and political parties' activities.

3.1.2 Distorted Network

Distorted network existence is premised on the unhealthy interactions of members. Defining features of distorted network are the protection of members, gratitude, and friendship. One important point to note is that actors in distorted network often do not channel and distribute their own finances or other cash benefits, but rather public resources and money within their disposal or jurisdiction. Relationships in distorted networks are often not equal, because some actors are closer in comparisons to other actors. Two types of distorted networks exist from a theoretical point of view: firm ties, where the network is small and relationships are tight; and loose ties where the network is broader and relationships are poorly organized. (Salminen & Mäntysalo, 2012; Salminen, 2013, p. 62 -63.)

Distorted network limits the ability of public officers or organizations to effectively carry out their responsibilities to citizens, because it distorts their priorities and decision-making (Light, 2013, p. 6). Heidenheimer writing of 2002 sees cronyism as embedded in networks of complex, indirect, and mutually reinforcing social exchanges between members who engage in implicit, unspecified, and reciprocal transactions with no defined time frame during which favors must be reciprocated (Begley et al., 2010, p. 282). According to de Graaf and Huberts (2008, p. 640), the true nature of corruption is understood through enduring relationships, because corruption normally occurs within enduring relationships since the process of being corrupt can be classified as a slippery slope; and the relevant motives of corruption aside from material benefits include friendship or love, status, and the willingness to impress others. Two main representations of distorted network are clandestine network and old-boy network

3.1.3 Grey Corruption

Grey originally lies between white and black. Grey corruption is part of hidden corruption,

because it represents areas that are not clear in perception and judgement. According to Salter (2010, p. 3), grey areas of corruption include legal and ethical violations that are not easily understood or recognized as violations. Grey corruption is extremely ambiguous, because from one perspective it is illegal and from another angle it is taken to be legitimate. According to Bønsing and Langsted (2013, p. 163), grey area of corruption appears when public servant has possibly gone beyond administrative rule, but has not yet reached the criminal area; the ambiguity that follows informs grey corruption discussion.

Graft and bribery could sometimes be cut up in a web of conflict of interest, because graft for example could be classified into the categories of "honest graft and dishonest graft"; people often talk about graft on a general note, but without effort to distinguish between honest graft and dishonest graft. Honest graft exists when personnel use official information to plan ventures or deals that would be of economic and financial benefits to them ahead of time, perpetrators of honest graft often view the whole process as the utilization of opportunity and nothing is seen wrong with the act; it is also easy for perpetrators of honest graft to see and judge others who engage in direct soliciting or lobbying for financial and economic gains from official responsibilities to be dishonest. However, in a balanced judgement, honest graft is dishonest graft. (Riordan, 2007, p. 89-90.) Areas where grey corruption is common in administration and business are issues related to discrimination/misjudgement, delay/red-tape, and lobbying.

Grey corruption is not understood through any known network, but existence is premised on conscious or unconscious philosophies of an individual or group.

4. Types of Criminal, Illegal, and Unethical Networks

Networks are increasingly becoming active in modern globalized societies: international bankers, financial regulators, law enforcement officials, even legislators cooperate informally beyond national borders in order to share information and coordinate policies. Modern day networks are not just restricted to the areas of international politics and finance, but also in the areas of arms dealership, drug trafficking, money laundering, human trafficking, terrorism, occultism/fraternizing, gambling, prostitution and many other social vices; activities within these spheres have been enhanced by modern technologies and strategies that help easy coordination between different parts of the world. (University of Cambridge, 2017.)

The foundation for understanding the different kinds of illegal, criminal, or unethical networks is premised on two dimensions (structural and institutional corruption and distorted network) of hidden corruption earlier presented. Grey corruption is another dimension of hidden corruption, but has no defined network existence. Members in different criminal, illegal or unethical network can belong to different groups at the same time and activities of one group could complement the activities of another group. However, the division into different groups is for the purpose of better clarity. The various criminal, illegal, and unethical networks studied in this paper are old-boy network, clandestine network, and Greed-oriented institutional network.

4.1 Old-Boy Network

Old-boy network exists mainly in the formal sector. Old-boy network is a type of distorted network that negatively affects a society in many ways. Scholarly descriptions of old-boy network vary.   Heald (1983), describes it as a network of men, who finished from the same school of higher learning (e.g. Harvard and Cambridge) and from this description the gender perspective is awaken, because women are said not to be part of these networks. In past decades when womeńs -rights movement became popular in many parts of the world, the professional challenges (e.g. old-boy network) encountered by women have been brought to limelight. The huge economic development, strong growth in personal wealth, and the emergent of the "Information Age" have all shaped the faces of careers around the world, but irrespective of the gains these innovations have brought about, the walls of discrimination that hinder women to grow to the highest levels in many field of endeavors still exist globally (Gamba & Kleiner, 2001, p. 101). However, the gender perspective in old-boy networks explanation is strongly related to culture and society, because male are dominant in some societies and cultures while male and female are equally dominant in other societies and cultures.

Some other descriptions of old-boy network go beyond the old school mate explanation, but also friends and colleagues that have same social backgrounds (e.g. politicians and executives). According to Taylor (2000), memberships of old-boy networks are reserved for groups governed by personal contact and interaction, the main reason is that members of old-boy networks protect each other from unqualified individuals; progressive recruitment in old-boy network informs extra value for network members. Unravelling old-boy network and other networks help to understand the key governance structure that could help different forms of corruption to grow in administrative and political systems from one perspective and destruction of traditional form of legitimacy, which could later lead to the legitimacy of corruption from another perspective (Choi, 2007; Paul, 2008). Members of old-boy network are part of the broader corruption networks that form a lasting relationship in order to stabilize or destabilize corruption in a social system (de Graaf; Huberts, 2008). Gamba and Kleiner (2001: 104), have proposed the following as ways to tackle the problem of old-boy network: 1) Networking, networking and networking; 2) Mentoring, hiring and promoting women and other minorities; 3) Demonstrating superior performance; and 4) Developing skills and communication techniques more traditionally associated with men.

4.2 Clandestine Network

Clandestine networks mainly exist in the informal sector. Clandestine networks are criminal/illicit groups that often like to operate in the hidden or informally. Some clandestine networks have flat structure and others hierarchical structure. In most cases, the exclusion of centralized leadership in clandestine networks makes decision-making difficult; especially, as it concerns complex decisions such as resource allocation and mode of operation. (University of Cambridge, 2017.) Cartel (e.g. Mexican drug cartels) is one type of clandestine network, which is a group of producers/suppliers that operate with the key aim of preserving the status quo in relation to prices and limiting the abilities of opponents/competitors to work against

group interest. According to Eilstrup-Sangiovanni and Jones (2008: 7), studying international organized crime and terrorism in relation to networking is a key issue in international relations, because it is through this we understand the consequences of the network structure and challenge conventional wisdom about network-based threats to different countries.

A deeper examination of clandestine network would include how networks differ from hierarchies. Researches have proven that most networked organizations are flat and decentralized in the view that decision-making and action dispersed among multiple actors enjoying significant local autonomy and relating to each other through informal and horizontal relationships. In comparison to hierarchies, which are characterized by top-down command, authoritative rules and legal arbitration; networks are defined by self-enforcing governance structures disciplined by reputation and reciprocity; it is based on this background that networks are often premised on direct personal contacts between individuals of the same orientation, objectives and trust for each other. The informal and flexible designs of clandestine networks make them better than hierarchies in relation to learning, innovating and adapting to new challenges and environment. (University of Cambridge, 2017; Eilstrup-Sangiovanni & Jones, 2008.)

Communication is important for clandestine network to exist and flourish and it is for this reason that researchers with interest in understanding the workings of clandestine network try to examine the internal communications of underground cells of individuals who network to accomplish defined groups task (McCormik & Owen, 2000: 175). McCormik and Owen (2000: 175) further argue that any model that must address clandestine network nature of distorted network should be designed to highlight the tradeoff between operational capacity and operational security of clandestine groups; in addition to how money/resources are made and distributed. Also to be targeted are middle-men at the primary center of emergence and convergence.

4.3 Greed-Oriented Institutional Network

The greed-oriented institutional network exists both in the formal and informal sectors and often having hierarchies; the activities of the network are mainly business/entrepreneurial related matters and interests. This type of network exist mostly in developing/emerging markets; examples of such countries are China, Brazil, Nigeria, and Russia and in some instances developed markets. Institutional networks could be either positive or negative, because they exist for the different reasons. The positive institutional networks main interest is international expansion for their SMEs and observe how SMEs awareness, access and usage of institutional network-based resources influence their internationalization processes (Green & Mole, 2006). The greed-orientated or negative institutional networks main interests are monopoly, exploitation, and profit maximization. In attempt to maintain the status-quo or actualize only self-interest, the networks often engage in large-scale national and international bribery, product adulteration, counterfeiting and other grievous illegal and unethical practices.

The existence of economic motives and commercial agendas in wars is not so much a new phenomenon as a familiar theme in the history of warfare. Most civil and cross-border wars

have become a vast private and profit-making enterprise. Many experts believe that conflicts are supported by most private, international and non-government organizations and from a comparative perspective, economically motivated actions and processes in generating and sustaining contemporary civil conflicts exist around the world. (International Peace Academy, 2001.) Greed-oriented institutional networks are defined by the negative and exploitative relationships that exist between institutions' management team, employees, families, and friends; other members of the network could include like-minded customers, suppliers, competitors, government agencies, distributors, bankers, and any other groups that help the internationalization or nationalization of the objectives of networks (Zain & Ng, 2006).

5. Ideas and Activities of Hidden Networks from a Contemporary Standpoint

From a contemporary standpoint, ideas of hidden networks have not changed much over the years, because realizing selfish interests, exploitative tendencies and causing of injuries/pains are still their guiding philosophies. However, what has changed from a contemporary standpoint is the means and avenues through which the activities of hidden networks are executed. The advancement in technology, have aided and made more complex the order of hidden corruption; irrespective of the fact that concepts and intentions of fraud and fraudster remain the same, but the technology and the means of committing fraud have so much changed (Tickner, 2015, p. 18). High profile cyber-crimes (scams, identity theft, hacking, child pornography, and money laundry, trafficking and many others) are on the rise. It was uncommon before now to hear of love scam on global and intercontinental scales. People can hide behind the internet these days to plan and execute high profile crimes. Different malwares (virus) are sent by anonymous internet users to compromise and corrupt the activities of other genuine internet users. Software categories exist today, which also play different roles in information technology usage. Some software purely play "encryption roles" to make the hidden order of corruption difficult to notice, evaluate, and tackle.

The belief that money enhances human action better that professional competence is popular among decision-makers and elites worldwide. However, this is not without consequences, because money is a hidden corrupter of professional knowledge. Money values, which originally should be narrowed to market exchanges is today playing important roles in present day political and economic world (neoliberalism and capitalism). Money to a great extent inflicts injuries when it is chosen above others (emotional issues for example) to determine values. Values relating to emotional issues (happiness and love for examples) become distorted when they are expressed as market transactions. The argument that neoliberalism is a corrupter of professional knowledge is centrally because public services are now executed through the market model; rational choice theory enhances and rewards dishonest behaviour and monopoly that network to corrupt professional knowledge. Market becomes even a more corrupter of professional knowledge when democracy becomes captive of powerful interests; and the need for moderate public regulations (compulsory food labelling as example) and trustworthiness are missing, because corruption and deception are also highly visible in state controlled economy. (Crouch, 2016, p. 1-11.) According to the rent-seeking theory, the extreme secretive and unproductive nature of rent seeking activities, in turn, are more chances of risk to security of private capital, which eventually leads to capital

flight and consumption (Wedeman, 1997).

Contemporary researches have proven that challenges and advancements are two key factors that influence the distortion of ideas and how activities are coordinated. It is fact that economic recession have led to increase in hidden network activities in many societies around the world. (Tickner, 2015, p. 7-276.) According to Transcrime (2017), economic recessions in different countries have boosted membership intake and volunteers for different unethical, criminal, and illegal groups such mafia and other occult groups around the world.

The functioning of hidden networks mainly occurs through the association formal agents (e.g. politicians) and various criminal groups of whom network formally and informally. Brainwashing of members and forcing of ideological compliance across national and international borders are key operational modes of hidden networks around the world. Financial contributions to legal/formal activities, extortion and intimidation; territorial control; murder, assassination; money laundry; human and drug trafficking; counterfeiting; and cyber-crimes of different natures are the main activities of hidden networks. In addition, the promotion of membership interests, profit maximization, and other hidden occult rituals are other key activities of hidden networks.

Presently, the activities of hidden networks have been labelled wicked problem. Wicked problem represents a cultural or social problem that is difficult to define, problematize, or measure from any perspective because it is ever changing in characteristics and mode of existence. In terms of nature and solution, "wicked problem" is different from "tame problems". Both hidden corruption and perceived corruption are wicked problems, because they are difficult to eradicate completely; and hidden corruption is a more wicked problem, because it is difficult to notice. According to Tickner (2015, p. 9): "Even if the ideal world of zero tolerance existed with sufficient counter-fraud resources to support it, the cleverest and most secretive corrupt and fraudulent individuals and organization would still find the means to defeat the defenders of the taxpayer´s purse…As a consequence, there will always be weaker areas to which the mendacious will turn their attention, even within a well-controlled and well-oiled state machine"

5.1 How Hidden Networks Activities are Controlled

Technological advancement such as increase in the usages of internet and social media have taken the activities of hidden networks to a more advance level, because various fraudulent activities such as tax evasion and money laundry have become more sophisticated to handle. For this reason, strong collaborative bond between authorities at various levels (local, national, and international) is being fostered to help address these emerging developments. Some nations´anti -corruption plan is now being premised on a four Ps´(pursue, prevent, protect, and prepare) framework; the first P´(pursue) is entirely about robust action, the second P´(prevent) aims at enhancing integrity in key public and private institutions, and the remaining two Ps´(protect and prepare) aim at enhancing other   watchdogging functions. (Tickner, 2015, p. 7-276.) Regional and international collaborations (information sharing) between relevant securities have become a key norm in addressing various forms of network activities in EU countries for example; in addition, enhancing digital expertise has become a

key task for anti-corruption agents and institutions (European Police Office, 2017).

Since the activities of hidden networks exist and flourish in almost every sector; reforms targeting cultural shift have included transformations of public service ethics and the emergence of a "get rich" ethos among political and business elites, in addition, whistleblowing, independence, and openness are now being encouraged among citizens, public institutions (judiciary as a key example), and media. Legislations proscribing corrupt activities and setting-up of sanctions in the public sector can be found in the Penal Codes of different countries around the world. In most of these legislations, key provisions are made for embezzlement, misappropriation at the expense of private persons, obtaining advantage from other individuals´error, extortion and corruption in executing an official responsibility. Oversight functions by the legislature and activities of other anti-corruption bodies such as the supreme financial audit authority, ombudsman, and courts have become viable in taming the high level of network activities in the public and business sectors. Legislative reforms targeting public personnel mobility and best practices importation in the public service are also being formulated and implemented in different countries around the world (OECD, 1999, p. 62-74; European Police Office, 2017.)

Attitudinal reforms that will change the perception and behavior of the citizens, business-executive and politicians have become a key task in different countries around the world; especially, in the areas of tax invasion, human trafficking, drug smuggling, and counterfeiting. The battle against activities of hidden network cannot be won unless citizens and officials are being encouraged to speak, testify, and fight against activities that jeopardize public or human safety around the world. Reducing or eliminating the activities of hidden networks requires governments at various levels to increase security spending to help police and other law enforcement agencies to tackle the negative phenomena. (Preston, 2012; Raitano & Fantozzi, 2015.)

5.2 An International Comparative Outlook

Hidden network varies in nature and functioning from one country to another. Table 1 below offers an overview of the most common type of distorted network and functioning in some selected countries around the world.

Table 1. A Country Specific of Distorted Network

Country	Source	Main Type of Criminal, Unethical, and Illegal Networks	Functioning
China	Yan Sun: *Corruption and Market in Contemporary China.* Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press (2004).	Greed-oriented institutional networks	Top wealthy officials, businessmen, bookies, and gangsters that use vast amount of money, which originally is not theirs to gamble in notable casinos centers around the world; this represents one part of China´s huge corruption and its record -breaking economic success. Large amount of the culprits are business executives and government officials that have stolen funds and taken large amount of

			bribes via smuggling, tax evasion, or other notorious business activities such as commodity adulteration and market manipulations.
Britain	T. Heald: *Networks: Who We Know and How We Use Them*. London: Hodder and Stoughton (1983).	Old-boy network	Vertical and horizontal networks of members who graduated from prestigious British schools. The mode of old-boy networking is premised on helping fellow graduates to enter top positions and offices in the society.
United States	Sarah Rand & Laura Bierema: *Exploring the Nature of the "Old Boy's Network" in the United States: Using Electronic Networks of Practice to Understand Gendered Issues in HRD*. England: Meeting of the University Forum for Human Resource Development (2009).	Old-boy network	Membership attainment is by being a white male and white collar. Women and people of color are highly restricted to becoming members; which thereby, make their career prospects less achievable. Members of this network use their competition and other advantages attained through formal structure to promote friendship and collaborations within the informal system. Increase in nationalism and its values has given more advantages to the activities of this group.
Japan	Schaede Ulrike: *The "Old Boy" Network and Government-Business Relationship in Japan*. The Journal of Japanese Studies (1985)	Old-boy network	Networks made of retired government officials who "descend from heaven" (amakudari) into the boardrooms of private organizations after retirement from the public service and using their previous experiences and connections from the public service to promote personal and fellow members interests.
Nigeria	Osakponmwen Daniel Edevbaro: *The Political Economy of Corruption and Underdevelopment in Nigeria*. Helsinki: Helsingin Yliopistopaino (1998).	Old-boy network	Serving and former military generals who finished from the same military college. These former colleagues use their influences and connections in the armed forces to influence political positions at different levels in order to loot the treasury and perpetuate other forms of corruption.
Colombia	David Gagne: *The Evolution of Criminal Influence in Colombia's Local Elections*. Insight Crime (2015).	Clandestine network	Criminal and armed groups that recruit members based on orientation of violence and extortion. Money made from criminal activities (drug and sex trafficking for example) are used to promote the political interests of members or any affiliate political party.
Russia	Masha Gessen: *The Myth of the Russian Oligarchs*. The New York Times (2014).	Old-boy Network	Small group of men (Oligarchs) who took advantage of the Russian privatization process in preceding decade to become very wealthy. The Russian Oligarchs were instrumental in picking politicians who occupied different political positions after the fall of communist government in 1991 in Russia; but have recently been forced by the present Russian leader (Vladimir Putin) to surrender all of their political power and some of their riches in exchange for safety, security and continued prosperity.

Australia and New Zealand	Shelagh Mooney: *The Demise of the "Good Old Boy Network" in Australia and New Zealand Hotel: Facts or Fiction.* The CAUTHE Conference (2008)	Old-boy Network	A group of men who finished from same schools of higher learning that uses their influences and positions to promote the benefits of their members in retaining and gaining top positions in different professional areas in Australia and New Zealand. Members of this network often impede women in getting into top positions in organizations, because of their inability to compete equally.
Afghanistan	Abdulhadi Hairan: *The Profile of the Talibans Propaganda Tactics:* Huffingtonpost (2017).	Clandestine Network	Members of secret societies such as Taliban, Al-Qaeda, ISIS, Hezbollah, Haqqani Network and many others that operate in Afghanistan and other countries like Pakistan, Syria, and Iraq. Members of these networks primarily take advantage of religious, ethnic and anti-modernization sentiments and propagandas to justify their objectives in politics, business, economy, and social life. In the ideologies of these groups, women are seen to be exploited or relegated; while non-believers (infidels) are either seen to be killed or enslaved. Advancement in technology (internet and social media) has aided in so many ways activities of these network globally.

It is obvious from table 1 above that different countries have their unique type of hidden network as a main ethical, humanitarian or security challenge. Unlike old-boy network whose operational boundaries are often limited to national boarders, clandestine network and greed-oriented institutional network often operate beyond national borders, because they have clients and members at both home and abroad. However, it is relevant to mention that other types of hidden network can be found in the selected countries presented above. In the case of Russia for example, clandestine networks (KGB and other criminal organizations) exist but the case of the Russians oligarchs is more dominant and have far more effect on the society.

6. Conclusion

This paper tries to contribute the study of the phenomenon of corruption by addressing the hidden corruption question and stressing the relevance of understanding hidden corruption via the network perspective. A summarized overview of this paper is presented in figure 2 below:
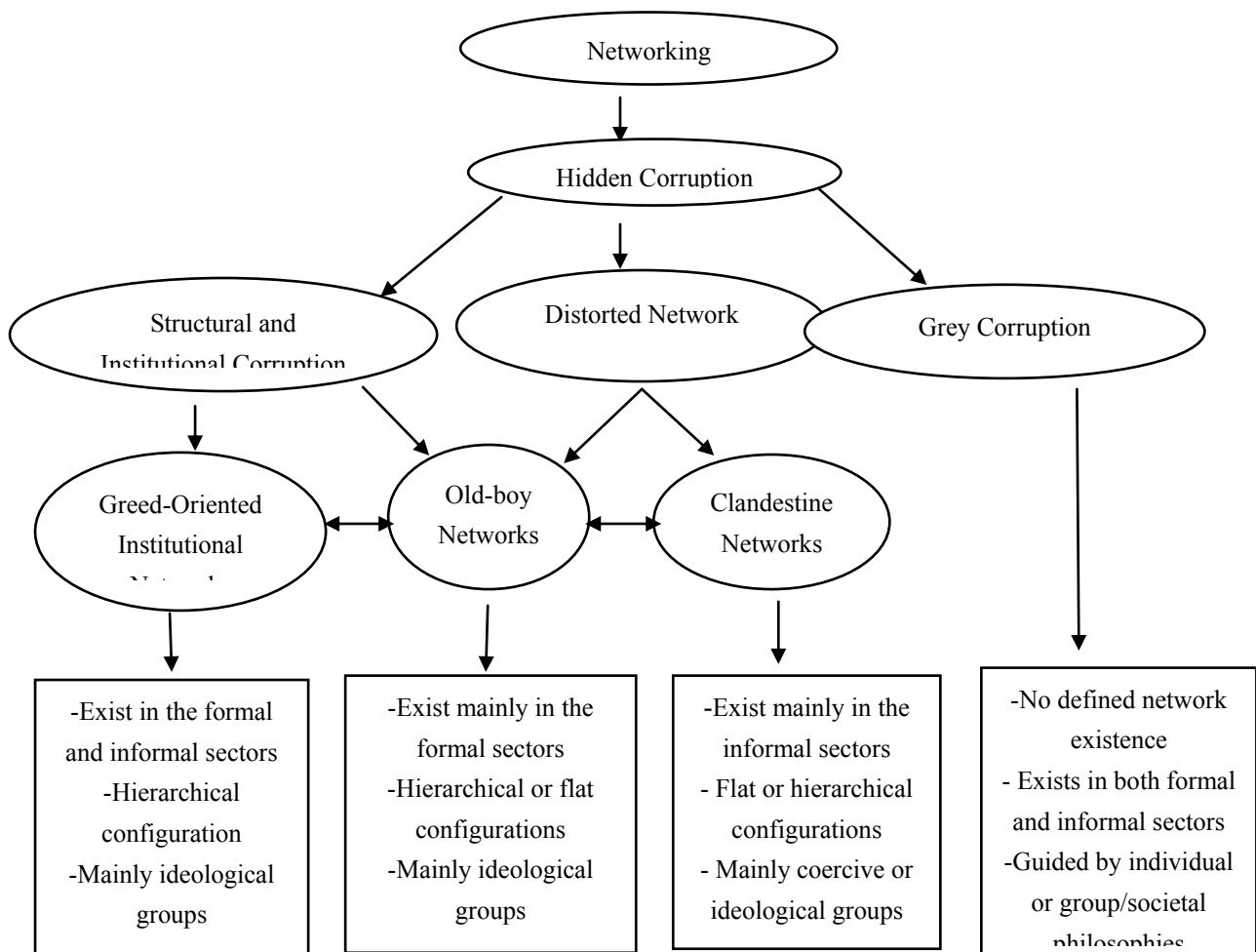
Figure 2. The Network and Hidden Corruption Framework (Author)

Through networking, we understand the nature and functioning of hidden corruption, because hidden corruption concerns various acts of corruption that are difficult to observe and prosecute legally. The dimensions to understand hidden corruption are structural and institutional corruption, distorted network, and grey corruption. Different types of illegal, criminal, or unethical networks are understood through two dimensions (structural and institutional corruption and distorted network) of hidden corruption. Grey corruption is another dimension of hidden corruption, but has no defined network existence. Members in different criminal, illegal or unethical network could belong to different groups at the same time and activities of one group could complement the activities of another group. The greed-oriented institutional networks are mainly hierarchical and ideological groups with key objectives of exploitation and profit making in the formal and informal sectors. The old-boy networks are mainly hierarchical or flat ideological groups with the key objectives of favoring and promoting members interest in the formal sectors. The clandestine networks are mainly flat or hierarchical; clandestine networks are coercive or ideological groups with key objectives of territorial control, profit making, causing pain/injury/death in the informal sectors.

Ideas and activities of hidden networks from a modern standpoint have been aided and made more complex by technological advancement and economic recessions in many countries. For these reasons, strong collaborative bond between authorities at various levels (local, national, and international) is being fostered to help address the activities of hidden networks. Digital and other technological expertise and tools are being developed among anti-corruption agents and institutions around the world in order to have a contemporary readiness in tackling the general phenomenon of hidden corruption. Additionally, reforms that target ideological/cultural and institutional changes are being formulated and implemented in different countries. However, a comparative perspective has revealed that the different countries have different types of criminal, unethical, and illegal networks as key ethical, humanitarian or security challenge at different periods.

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